DEAN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES
of the meeting held on
Friday 2 September 2011

Present: Stephen Thurgate (Chair), Jim Piper, Kelsie Dadd, Trish Fanning, Barry Quinn, Bernard Mans, David Coutts, Helena Nevalainen, Karu Esselle, Lesley Hughes, Mike Poulsen, Paul Smith, Sharyn Eaton, Tracy Rushmer, Imtiaz Bhayat, Martina Stiemer, Andrea Lerche, Karl Lukezic, John ten Have and Jane Edgson

1. Apologies: - Peter Nelson, Mark Lackie and Tony Parker

The Dean welcomed Prof Jim Piper, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, to the meeting.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes: - no matters arising.

3. Occupational Health and Safety
JtH advised the committee that the installation of vehicle trackers will be completed in the next budget round. The Dive Code of Practice is under review.
Chiro – SE has received some complaints from students using the new labs about the level of noise from the construction on other floors of E5A. The lack of male toilets of the 3rd floor was also queried. KL advised that the noise of the renovations will continue for the rest of the semester and that the building complies with the current Code.
Biol – LH has concerns about the use of oxygen cylinders in confined spaces. Some experiments have been delayed whilst training is carried out.
EPS – A staff member injured their knee while walking upstairs, going from one lab to another. It is understood there is ligament damage and will need surgery to be fixed. A piece of concrete fell in the building construction in E5A, landing on a metal bookcase. JtH to follow up.
E&G – MP reported that Security had taken an hour to open a locked classroom in ‘F’ block.

4. Priority Institutions of Interest – Student Exchange Partnership Gap Analysis
The Dean had previously circulated an email to the HoDs relating to the review of partnerships. The university is looking to strengthen ties with prestigious universities but do not have data on where we have links. JP advised that the RO have a list of Cotutelle Agreements and Ren Yi would be able to provide a copy. Jason Davis from the Research should also be able to assist by providing a list of publications. The Dean suggested that a good area of contact would be the staff
recruited from other universities and he asked the HoDs to assist with obtaining this information.

5. Dean's Report

- The initial indication of the budget number for 2012 is that it will be similar to 2011. The budget will be very tight. Departments will be given a top line with a strategic allocation and a zero outcome for the end of the year. The estimated figure should be available soon, hopefully early next week. MS has produced a spreadsheet to assist the model. In 2011 we benefitted by undertaking more teaching than planned which helped us to maintain the budget. However, this could go the other way with a decline in international numbers in 2012. The committee discussed the people coming off project funds and returning to operational and vice versa. In 2011 this worked out evenly. The Dean has spoken to Scott Jenkins and it has been agreed there will be a –ve redundancy – turnover savings. DC advised that at the Dept level the uncertainties complicate the situation. ST to talk to MS about this in relation to managing the budget.

- ST has been working through the VS Eol’s and spoken to each of the HoDs about the impact and the need to improve processes in order to be able to make savings. Those who have requested VS and been accepted will be interviewed prior to a final decision being made. The recommendations will be progressed today and HR will contact those individuals over the next 2-weeks. To take advantage of the VS the Faculty will have to improve the efficiency of admin tasks. IB is reviewing the process and the largest task by far is finance, with HR second. He will be looking at finance in more detail to try and improve the work flows and make better use of Finance 1. DC asked IB to ensure that the whole picture is looked at as he doesn’t feel the tasks should be taken up by the Academics. The Dean agreed but stressed that one way or another there has to be changes in order to make the improvements. Processes have to be clear – we need to be smarter and better.

- JP advised the committee that following the Hickson Report the amount of money allocated to Research has been doubled over the next 3-years. However the competition for this will increase. There may be changes to HDR - modelling is currently being carried out. The RO recognises that in the short term success places a burden on the Faculty so the university has put in extra $s to help. This has benefitted Science this year but will be across the whole university next year. Many of these new initiatives will help science but we need to be very careful with resources – in particular salaries. The Dean advised he shares this view, that 2012 will be a tight year. However, if we maintain research income, HDR load and completions, and maintain growth in teaching, the new model should assist the Faculty. However the immediate issue is to face the tough challenges. We are still beneficiaries of FBE. Their profit funds the HDR and the Research Office. If international student numbers decline the whole university will suffer.

- From the Strategic Plan the Dean asked the committee – How do we get the good students? We need to attract the science and engineering students by
engaging in a scholarship scheme and identifying and attracting high performing students. To engage in this activity, ST suggested two new schemes:

1) Invite selected high school science teachers to join a research group for 3 weeks in the last 3 weeks of the break – Jan 6-26. Talk to people to find groups – motivated to come here. Bring names to DAC in 2 weeks time. BQ suggested Selective HS in the north-west and also Cherrybrook Technical HS. DC suggested we should acknowledge their contribution with a reward.

2) Target particular high performing year 11 students – invite them in for dinner and lecture. Repeat in year 12 for the same students. An annual event. Any thoughts on how to make this attractive to ST asap.

6. Any Other Business
IB reminded the HoDs of the request for the return of the space planning template. This is required by Wednesday 7 September for a meeting the next day and should include the refurbishment and research components. The Dean stressed the need for HoDs to engage with this as it is part of the new 3-year plan.

BQ asked if there was any news on the movement of Stats and Chiro into E6B.

MS advised that the Operational Plan is still to be sent out.

The meeting closed at 10:25.

Date of next meeting: Friday 9 September 2011 in E6A room 202.