UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
FACULTY OF INFORMATICS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting 3/04 held at 1:30pm on Thursday, 17th June 2004 in the Faculty Meeting Room, Building 39, room 150A.

PRESENT: Dr S Gower (Chair), A/Prof C Alcock, Mr A Krishna, A/Prof P McKerrow, A/Prof G Naghdy, Dr M Nelson and Prof J Seberry.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Sheridan.

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies/Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from: A/Prof T Marchant and A/Prof T Wysocki

1.2 Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of 22 April 2004

The minutes of the meeting held 22 April were confirmed.

1.3 Business Arising from Previous Meeting

1.3.1 RIBG-Pool 2 Outcomes

Informatics was successful with 3 applications (including 1 joint application with Engineering):

- **Ultra-wideband Research Laboratory** $46,259
  Xiaojing Huang, Eryk Dutkiewicz, Joe Chicharo, Jiangtao Xi, Lei Ye

- **Multimedia Content Management Research Facility** $20,000
  Philip Ogunbona, Reihaneh Safavi-Naini, Igor Kharitonenko, Peter Eklund, Wanqing Li, Lei Ye, Yi Mu, Willy Susilo, Nicholas Sheppard

- **Purchase of a 60kg payload articulated serial robot to facilitate world-class research projects and postgraduate teaching programs in order to continue being world competitive in the field of industrial automation and robotics related research** $32,000
  Steve Gower, Chris Cook, Stephen Van Duin, Jeff Moscrop

The total funding received by the Faculty was approximately 19% of the $500k available. This compares favourably when one considers that we bring in 16% of research income from grants.

The Chair noted that the Faculty of Science was successful in securing approximately half of the funding available, which reflects the excellent grant writing skills possessed by researchers in that Faculty.
In response to a memo from SECTE, the Chair reminded staff that he is available to provide individual feedback on grant applications. All Informatics staff members have been notified via email of this opportunity. The Chair undertook to provide written feedback to all applicants.

**ACTION:** FRC Chair to provide written feedback to all RIBG-Pool 2 Applicants.

1.3.2 RIBG-Pool 2 Reflections

The Chair reported on the extensive discussion that took place at the University Research Standing Committee (URSC) ranking meeting regarding grant application procedures and guidelines:

- Specific discussion regarding the dichotomy of the urgent need to replace worn or non-operational equipment compared to equipment identified as part of a strategic need.
- Discussion re how it might be possible to clearly identify students such that they are not double counted across supervisors on the application.
- As a result, the guidelines and application forms will be given close scrutiny with the view of clearly outlining the strengths of each application. The FRC Chair will have a supplementary page to fill out for each application. Feedback provided on each application needs to be more detailed – “good”, “strong”, “weak” comments are not appropriate. The FRC needs to provide more information to the URSC to assist with ranking process/justification at that level.
- It was suggested that when the call for grant applications takes place, a selection of quality grant applications should be made available by the Office of Research. If staff can improve the quality of applications, then this is likely to be reflected with successful external grant applications.

The Chair reported generally on the Informatics grant applications and ranking process:

- The majority of Informatics applications did not clearly address the selection criteria point by point.
- The Faculty rank justification must be very strong.
- URSC interleaves applications from all Faculties - this method of assessment means that placing more competitive applications further down the Faculty ranking list means they most likely will not be funded. It is best to rank applications from strongest to weakest.

A/Prof Golshah Naghdy asked why applications from researchers who do not currently hold an Australian competitive grant were given priority over applicants who appeared to address and meet all the selection criteria. The Chair noted that he sought clarification on this issue with the PVC(R) prior to the FRC ranking meeting and was advised that a very strong application, which is strategically justified, will be successful if it meets at least one of the RIBG – Pool 2 objectives. In this case, meeting the scheme objective of providing the support for development of an area of recognised research potential – enhancing the prospects of future successful external funding, was deemed sufficient.
FRC Members raised the following points regarding the discussion of applications during the FRC meeting with applicants who are members of FRC:

- As per the required process, applicants did not rank their own applications and did leave the room when their applications were discussed at the meeting. The ranking order, based on an aggregate of members' individual rankings provided prior to the meeting, did not change at any stage after the discussion of applications took place.
- It was at the confirmation stage of this unchanged ranking order that some additional discussion took place, which involved applicants (who had returned to the room) answering questions and clarifying aspects of their application. This did not affect the ranking order whatsoever.
- Members agreed that, although the ranking order was not changed, applicants who were members of FRC had a distinct advantage over those who were not present at the meeting to clarify aspects of their application.
- The Chair noted that the Faculty of Science requires Chief Investigators for applications to be on standby at the time of the ranking meeting to clarify any aspect of their application, if deemed necessary by the Committee. This may be an appropriate process to adopt in Informatics.
- The Chair also noted that, in future, applications cannot be revised after FRC ranking and before submission to URSC. However, the new form will include a section where FRCs can include information that URSC can take into account when considering applications.

Resolved (FRC04/01)
To ensure that no applicant is advantaged or disadvantaged, FRC recommends that the Faculty establishes procedures similar to those of the Faculty of Science for the ranking of research grant applications, whereby all applicants are given equal opportunity to clarify any aspect of their application during the ranking process, where deemed necessary by the Committee.

2. REPORT FROM CHAIR – VERBAL REPORT

2.1 Recent Faculty Research Successes

Congratulations to the following research groups:

- The Centre for Information Security has secured a contract to the value of $270k with the Defence Signal Directorate (DSD) on Next Generation Firewalls and Intrusion Detection Systems. The research team includes Prof Rei Safavi-Naini, Drs Willy Susilo, Yi Mu.

- The Power Quality Center has secured funding of $295,000/year for a new Centre starting in July. The new Centre will be known as the Integral Energy Power Quality Reliability Centre. This is more than double the funding of the present Centre and will contribute another academic staff member to the power engineering area. Dr Sarath Perera will be the Technical Director of the new Centre.
2.2 Grant Information

The un-audited grant income figures for the University of Wollongong indicate a 25% increase in grant income compared to the previous year. Important grant dates for the next month or two are:

- 2005 ARC Linkage Projects Round 1 – Announcements to be made soon
- 2005 URC Small – Call for applications late June
- June 25 - ARC Discovery assessments sent to applicants
- July 9 – ARC Discovery Rejoinders due at ARC

The URC Small Guidelines are currently undergoing a review with any changes to be reflected in the upcoming call for applications.

Committee members noted that, if not already provided, feedback on last year’s applications and any other relevant information should be distributed by the Chair as soon as possible.

ACTION: Chair to review 2004 URC Small Grants Applications and provide feedback before the 2005 URC Small Grants Applications are due.

2.3 HDR Student Spring Session Welcome Day and Honours Breakfast

The HDR Student Spring Session Welcome Day will be held on Tuesday, 20 July 2004 (Week 1). All newly enrolled Masters by Research and Doctoral students who have not attended a HDR Student Welcome Day have been invited to attend the Spring Session.

The Research Student Centre and UniAdvice will be holding the “Life After Honours – The Next Big Discovery” Honours student breakfast on Tuesday, 27 July 2004. The breakfast is for UOW Honours students to provide them with information on undertaking a HDR degree at UOW. Ms. Catherine Todd, a current SECTE PhD candidate, will be giving a talk on her path to a higher degree and her project.

2.4 Measuring Excellence in Research and Research Training

The 'Measuring excellence in research and research training' symposium to be held at The Shine Dome, Canberra, on 22 June 2004 will focus on reviewing current approaches to the measurement of excellence in research and research training and identifying options for improvement. The Chair indicated he would be attending. Other staff members are welcome to attend.

2.5 Annual Progress Report (APR) Online Reporting Process

The Chair noted that, as previously advised via email, the Research Student Centre is planning to move to an online system for the next round of the Annual Reporting process for HDR students (November 2004).

It is anticipated that the process will be simplified, and will result in:

- easier off-campus access;
- eliminating the elongated paper trail;
- reducing labour intensive and complex handling of paper documents;
• improved monitoring of progress at all levels and allowing easier access to reports (password protected); and
• increased level of document security and less risk of document loss.

Members raised concerns that the revised process would result in less contact with research candidates, and questioned what process would be used to ensure document security.

The Chair noted that questions or comments should be forwarded to Kim Roser in the Research Student Centre.

3. REPORT FROM POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY COMMITTEE (PRPC)

3.1 Meeting of 27 May 2004

A set of policies for postgraduate research management is before the Senate [see item 5 below]. The policies cover all aspects of PG student management, from acceptance, offer, proposal evaluation, yearly progress, completion and grievance. Once it is approved:

• there will be a Supervision Handbook
• Kim Roser and Tim Macdonald will visit the Faculty to discuss the main points of these policies.

Faculties need to start to look at the policy documents that they have and how recent they are. They should review their policies and make them in line with and an extension of University policies.

The policies will come into effect as soon as they are approved and will not wait until the start of the session.

Faculties need to make sure the staff know these policies and how to access them. It was noted that PG policies have been historically neglected because of smaller number of students and it is essential that this be dealt with, especially in the light of AQUA.

Professor Rei Safavi-Naini

4. RESEARCH PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Chair noted that the Faculty Research planning objectives and strategies will be retained as a standing item on the FRC Agenda for discussion as issues arise.

A/Prof Philip McKerrow noted that the Dean had recently requested Heads of Schools to provide a ‘wish-list’ of initiatives that may be suitable for the Faculty to fund. A/Prof McKerrow suggested that FRC should lobby the Dean and request for research initiatives to be prioritised for funding.

FRC members agreed that A/Prof McKerrow should compose a memo to the Dean, to be forwarded by Dr Steve Gower, as FRC Chair.

ACTION: A/Prof McKerrow to compose memo to the Dean regarding funding of faculty research initiatives, which is to be forwarded to the Dean by the FRC Chair.
5. **NEW/REVISED RESEARCH POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

FRC Members discussed and made the following comments about the policies relating to HDR students and their candidature, which have recently been approved by Academic Senate:

- **First Year Research Proposal Review Guidelines**
  - The guidelines require Faculties to establish a Research Proposal Review Committee, procedures for a formal review of HDR students' research proposal within the first year of registration, and supporting guidelines.
  - Agreed that FRC should devolve the responsibility of implementing the formal reviews (including Research Proposal Review Committee) to Schools. The FRC would play a quality assurance role, ensuring the procedures implemented by each School are appropriate and compliant with the University Guidelines.
  - Agreed that the above recommendation should be made to the Associate Dean (Research), when appointed.

- **Guidelines for Off-shore Higher Degree Research (HDR) Applications**
  - Noted that Off-shore HDR applications would only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and where demonstrable appropriate academic structure and support in place at the host institution.

**Recommendation to Associate Dean (Research)**

*That the Associate Dean (Research), when appointed, considers devolving to Schools the responsibility of implementing formal reviews of First Year HDR students' research proposals. The FRC would play a quality assurance role in the process, ensuring the procedures implemented by each School are appropriate and compliant with the University Guidelines.*

6. **ITEMS FOR NOTING**

6.1 **Change to PhD Testamurs**

FRC members noted that at the 21 April Academic Senate Meeting, it was resolved that:

i) from July 2004 graduation all PhD testamurs will record only the degree title, i.e. Doctor of Philosophy; and

ii) a certificate, signed and sealed in the same manner as testamurs and other official University documents, that confirms their thesis title, academic unit or research unit and an abstract outlining their research will be presented to students, together with their PhD testamur, at graduation.
7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Associate Dean (Research)

The Chair noted the there is no word yet on who has been appointed Associate Dean (Research).

The revision of the FRC Terms of Reference and composition will be held over and decided by the incoming Associate Dean (Research). As this is likely to be his last meeting as Chair, the Chair has gathered together some ideas which will be forwarded to the Associate Dean (Research).

7.2 2005 URC Small Grant Ranking

It is likely that URC Small Grants will be ranked at the next FRC meeting. The draft timetable indicates that applications will be received by the Faculty on 18 August, and that rankings will need to be returned to the Office of Research by 1 September. Given this timeline, it is likely that the next FRC meeting will be moved to at least a week earlier than the date listed below to accommodate the ranking process. Members will be advised of a date change after formal notification of the URC Small Grants Ranking Timeline.

ACTION: If required after release of URC Small Grants Ranking Timeline, Faculty Officer to revise next meeting date and advise members.

8. NEXT MEETING

TBA Faculty Meeting Room, Building 39/105A

Dr Steve Gower
Chair