



## Academic Board Agenda

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### SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA (2) for the meeting on Wednesday 25 February 2009

Pages

- ★ 1. **Apologies**  
Apologies have been received from:  
Professor J White, Associate Professor T Masters, Dr F Collyer, Dr G McDonald,  
Dr L Scanlon, Ms M Stephens, Mr P Ball (Mr C Riley attending in his stead), Mr G  
Weary.
  
- ★ 5. **Discussion Topics**
  - 5.1 **Refurbishment of Professorial Board Room** 3-5  
  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Academic Board note the discussion of the Professorial Board Room.*
  
- ★ 6. **Report of the Chair**
  - 6.2 **Honours and Distinctions**
    - 6.2.2 **Chief Medical Officer of Australia** 6  
  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic  
Board on the honours and distinctions and congratulate the recipients,  
as set out in the report presented.*
  - 6.3 **General Report**
    - 6.3.5 **Actions taken by Chair since 10 December 2008 meeting** 6  
  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic  
Board on actions taken since the meeting of the Academic Board held  
on 10 December 2008.*
    - 6.3.6 **Position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)** 6  
  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Academic Board note the replacement of references to Pro  
Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) with Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
in terms of reference for Standing Committees of the Academic Board*

*and the addition of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) to the membership of the Research and Research Training Committee.*

★ 7. **Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

7.1 **Report on Senate Matters**

7.1.1 **Vice-Chancellor's report to Open Session of Senate**

*separate attachment*

7.1.2 **Report of the Senate meeting held on 2 February 2009**

7-9

**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note the report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on matters considered by Senate at its meeting held on 2 February 2009.*

7.2 **Report on Senior Executive Group**

7.2.1 **Issues arising for discussion**

- Bradley Review.
- Capital development opportunities.
- Student preferences.
- Definition of a student.
- ERA.

**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note the report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on matters considered by the Senior Executive Group at its meeting held on 19 February 2009.*

13. **General Business**

13.1 **Student Proctorial Panel**

13.1.1 **Appointment of members for 2009**

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**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board appoint members of the Student Proctorial Panel for 2009, as set out in the report presented.*

## AGENDA ITEM 5 Discussion Topics

### 5.1 Refurbishment of the Professorial Board Room

Until the mid- 1960's the current Professorial Board Room was the Reading Room of the University Library.

*When the south-east wing of the quadrangle was completed about 1918, it became a part of the library as the Periodicals Room (MacLaurin Hall was originally the Reading Room for the library). In 1964, after the new Library was built and the reading room became the MacLaurin Hall, the Periodicals Room was completely altered and re-furbished to become the Professorial Board Room, a meeting place for the body representing the academic staff that advised the Senate on all academic matters.*

*"As in the ancient monasteries, a handsome wooden stall, complete with canopy, is provided for the presiding officers at the end of the room, and opposing tiers of seats are arranged along its length for the members of the Board. The lighting is modern, in the form of cylindrical chandeliers, as are the blue curtains and the carpet, but the effect is essentially that of the days when wooden panelling and beamed ceilings were in vogue."*

*[extract from photocopy on File 061/0002/00072 – no details of source volume on file]*

One might hope that its design was state of the art at the time. We need to reflect on whether that design serves its purposes as they are now manifest.

There are two broad purposes of this meeting room that I believe should persist into the future. The first is broad conversation that engages "the wider academic community" in a fruitful exchange of ideas and information. The other is debate and contestation of ideas and propositions as a vital component of the Academic Boards' quality assurance role. I am thinking here of the consideration of innovative proposals for programs put forward by faculties that extend current practice.

I have become aware of the importance of the social dynamics of meeting spaces and the impact this has on the effectiveness and productivity of discussions held in them. I have not been able to find any literature specific to this issue, but would observe that I regularly attend meetings that are turgid and sterile while others are effective, productive and satisfying. The common factors seem to me to be those that describe positive interpersonal engagement. In the best of these circumstances, the engagement is dialectic in nature rather than confrontational, all parties seek learning and constructive consensus is the general outcome. It is an environment in which not only are old ideas and conventions retested, but true innovation can occur.

What are the problems that a refurbishment of the room must solve? By definition, there should be existing problems that interfere with the sort of positive engagement I have described.

- Sight lines are poor. Particularly when the chair is attempting to encourage participation in debate, about one third of the members are not clearly visible.
- The acoustics are poor, again limiting audibility from the meeting. As well, the sound reinforcement for the chair is crude and undependable.

- The setup of the room, especially the ineffective drapes, means that natural light, especially in the afternoon, is a distraction and impediment, rather than a natural support for the meeting.
- The seating pattern is adversarial rather than inclusive. As well, it imposes some measure of isolation on individuals, so that engagement is forced rather than natural.
- Audio visual presentations are intrusive and inefficient. While I am a passionate antagonist of death by PowerPoint, there are many occasions when a thoughtful visual presentation is of significant additional value.
- In terms of personal comfort, neither the seats nor the air conditioning encourage sustained engagement: instead, they become significant distracters.

What are the costs in not refurbishing the room? The major costs are those, borne particularly by students, arising because inadequate conversation or debate has resulted in sub-optimal academic decisions. Social dynamics is not the primary determinant of the quality of our decisions, but if the right dynamics mean that a clarifying viewpoint is put forward rather than not; a proposition is seen as a contribution rather than as a contest; if debates are vital rather than sterile, there must be at least an incremental improvement in the effectiveness of the Board and the quality of its decisions.

In addition, the refurbishment should provide facilities not currently available. A new configuration should allow effective meetings of a range of sizes, from working parties to the full Board meetings. Given the dearth of high quality meeting spaces in the University, this would be of value to the Board and other members of the University community. As well, the uses to which the room could be put should be more diverse than at present.

What is the optimal design? I can find little literature on this: the closest I have managed is an article by O'Hare<sup>1</sup>. (Those of us who have learned to begin each lecture with the incantation: "While he makes the computer talk to the projector...." will be comforted by his remark on page 717.) O'Hare's comments on page 710 provide a design criterion for effective interaction that results in a tiered, concentric horseshoe layout in an approximately square room. As I will illustrate with a visual presentation, this has been achieved, giving a fundamental basis to the design.

Other features of the design which require emphasis are:

- Improved audibility through ubiquitous microphones and modern speaker systems;
- Permanent visual displays, although the room design does impose some compromise;
- Ubiquitous power and data connections for laptop computers and other devices;

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<sup>1</sup>O'Hare, M. (1998). Classroom design for discussion-based teaching. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17:706-720.

- Variable conformations allowing effective use for meetings from small groups to the full Board;
- Potential for videoconferencing.

The design process has reached a stage where the Board must fully engage with it, to confirm that the design direction is appropriate both for the present and for a significant reach into the future.

I look forward to your participation in the discussion.

***Recommendation***

*That the Academic Board note the discussion on the refurbishment of the Professorial Board Room.*

## AGENDA ITEM 6 Report of the Chair

### 6.2 Honours and Distinctions

#### 6.2.2 Chief Medical Officer of Australia

**Professor Jim BISHOP**, professor of cancer medicine at the University and chief cancer officer and chief executive of the Cancer Institute of NSW, is to take up the position of Chief Medical Officer of Australia.

#### **Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on the honours and distinctions and congratulate the recipients, as set out in the report presented.*

### 6.3 General Report

#### 6.3.5 Actions taken by Chair since 10 December 2008 meeting

#### **Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on actions taken since the meeting of the Academic Board held on 10 December 2008.*

#### 6.3.6 Position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Due to restructuring of some senior portfolios within the University it is necessary to update the terms of reference of Standing Committees of the Academic Board to reflect the change from the previous position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) to the new position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) position is also to be added to the membership of the Research and Research Training Committee.

#### **Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note the replacement of references to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) with Deputy Vice-Chancellor in terms of reference for Standing Committees of the Academic Board and the addition of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) to the membership of the Research and Research Training Committee.*

**AGENDA ITEM 7**  
**Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

**7.1 Report on Senate Matters**

**7.1.2 Report on the Senate meeting held on 2 February 2009**

Senate, at its meeting held on 2 February 2009:

- (1) approved the University's submission to the NSW Inquiry into Governance of NSW Universities.
- (2) resolved that a Senate Working Party be established to review the expressions of interest received for a review of Senate's performance, determine a way forward and select the reviewer.
- (3) endorsed the Vice-Chancellor's proposal to review whether Senate's present committee structure was best adapted to its current and future needs and whether some tuning of the structure might be needed.
- (4) approved in principle the designation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Registrar, and noted that the Vice-Chancellor would ask the General Counsel to advise in detail on the consequent changes required to rules, resolutions and delegations.
- (5) approved the proposed polling days for the following Senate elections in 2009:
  - four academic staff Fellows of Senate, 14 May 2009
  - one non-academic staff Fellow, 14 May 2009
  - one undergraduate student Fellow, 8 October 2009
  - one postgraduate student Fellow, 8 October 2009
  - five graduate Fellows, 11 November 2009
- (6) approved the revised Gift Policy and the University of Sydney Donor Charter.
- (7) approved the appointment of the Selection Committee for the Deanship, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies.
- (8) appointed the following to membership of the Student Appeals Panel to fill casual vacancies:
  - academic staff members:
    - Ms Pearl Rozenberg
  - undergraduate student members:
    - Ms Sophie McLeod
    - Ms Ineke Wever
    - Mr Nicholas Dixon-Wilmshurst
    - Ms Vera Younis
- (9) noted the following:
  - a briefing on the Report of the Chair of the Review of Australian Higher Education, which had been prepared by the Director, Policy Analysis and Communication.
  - Research portfolio updates on Education Investment Fund (formerly HEEF), New funding outcomes for 2009 and New research block grants for 2009.
  - reports from the Education Portfolio on Postgraduate studies and TIES grants

- reports from the Finance, Infrastructure and ICT Portfolio reports on Financial performance, Information and Communication Technology, Triple bottom line reporting, Campus Infrastructure and Services, and Key people
- reports from the International and External Relations Portfolios on International conferences – China; International Student Office; Summer School; RIAP; Coming events; 2008 Year End Financial Performance (External Relations); Major alumni events and alumni achievements; and Alumni recognition.
- the report that the Directors of Government Relations and Policy Analysis & Communication had taken office, with the Directors of Philanthropy & Development and Strategic Planning to do so shortly. Urge for Senate to meet all the new Directors.
- that a report on the next stage of the Brand Project would come to the March Senate.
- that a further report on Indigenous signage and recognition would come to the March meeting.
- that the agenda for the Senate Retreat to be held on 21 March 2009 would be revised to include capital planning
- the report that the following had accepted Senate's invitation to receive an honorary award in 2009:
  - Tom Bass AM: Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa)
  - Esmond Ross Brown: Honorary Fellow of the University
  - Professor Gavin Brown AO: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)
  - David Dumas Coffey: Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa)
  - Keith Eric Cottier AM: Doctor of Science in Architecture (honoris causa)
  - Brenda L Croft: Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa)
  - Adjunct Professor John Vincent Egan: Honorary Fellow of the University
  - The Hon Justice Arthur Robert Emmett: Doctor of Laws (honoris causa)
  - Professor Peter Hall: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)
  - Emeritus Professor Trevor Heath OAM: Doctor of Veterinary Science (honoris causa)
  - Emeritus Professor Noel Hush AO: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)
  - Emeritus Professor Dame Leonie Kramer AC DBE: Doctor of Letters (honoris causa)
  - Ben Macpherson OAM: Honorary Fellow of the University
  - Robert Lee Maple-Brown: Honorary Fellow of the University
  - Bruce McWilliam: Honorary Fellow of the University
  - Mitchell Durno (Durno) Murray: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)

- Emeritus Scientia Professor Michael Paddon-Row: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)
- Philip Alexander Symonds PSM: Doctor of Science (honoris causa)

***Recommendation***

*That the Academic Board note the report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on matters considered by Senate at its meeting held on 2 February 2009.*

**AGENDA ITEM 13**  
**General Business**

**13.1 Student Proctorial Panel**

**13.1.1 Appointment of members for 2009**

Clause 64 of the University of Sydney By-law 1999 provides for the establishment of a Student Proctorial Panel. Membership of the Panel includes 9 members of the academic staff (of whom at least 4 are to be professors and at least 4 are not to be professors) appointed by and from the members of the Academic Board, and 9 student members of the Academic Board appointed by and from the student members of the Academic Board.

The following academic staff members have been submitted by the Provost for appointment to the Panel:

Associate Professor Sue Newberry	Faculty of Economics & Business
Associate Professor Merrilyn Walton	Faculty of Medicine
Dr Greg Castillo	Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning
Associate Professor Nick O'Dywer	Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr Inakwu Odeh	Faculty of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
Professor Brian Paltridge	Faculty of Education & Social Work
Associate Professor Roger Magnusson	Faculty of Law
Professor Jo-anne Brien	Faculty of Pharmacy
Dr Vanessa Barrs	Faculty of Veterinary Science

The student membership of the Panel has been filled by student members of the Academic Board, with one vacancy still to be filled. The following student members are submitted for appointment:

Mr J Quilty	Postgraduate Research Student, Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Mr W Chan	Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning
Ms R Santos	Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Arts
Mr A Thomas	Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Economics and Business
Mr D Brooks	Postgraduate Coursework Student, Faculty of Education and Social Work
Mr A McLeod	Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Law
Mr D Liu	Postgraduate Research Student, Faculty of Science
Ms L-M Syron	Postgraduate Research Student, Board of Studies in Indigenous Studies

**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board appoint members of the Student Proctorial Panel for 2009, as set out in the report presented.*