Present: Professor Ross McAree (Chair), Dr Saiied Aminossadati, Mr John Varghese, Dr Vincent Wheatley, Professor Jin Zou, Ms Katie Gollschewski (Secretary), Ms Brianne Mackinnon (A/Secretary).

Apologies: Professor David Mee, Professor Han Huang, Associate Professor Rowan Truss, Mrs Kim Lamb.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2012, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

1. Supervision

At the last meeting, members noted that staff development opportunities for RHD advisors should be advertised to staff. This information was emailed to all teaching and research, and research only staff, and was also included in the School Newsletter. Members noted that progress through the supervision program should be monitored at annual staff appraisals.

2. Skills workshops

Members noted that the semester two skills workshop series was in the process of being finalized and the How to Write a Research Paper workshops were due to commence in late July. Members noted that any staff member interested in participating in any of the workshops should contact the committee chair or secretary.

3. Sub-Committee Report - Research Grant Preparation Scheme

At the May meeting, one member noted that the grant writing process should be commenced earlier so there is sufficient time for ideas to be developed and collaborations established. Members discussed holding the Research Grant Preparation Scheme earlier in the year, but determined that a second workshop with a different format may be more beneficial. It was suggested that three parallel sessions be held where staff could present their ideas for comment. This could help identify gaps in the submission including missing expertise.

It was proposed that there be three sessions:

- Materials – chaired by A/Prof Rowan Truss
- Mechanical – chaired by Dr Vincent Wheatley
- Mining – chaired by Dr Saiied Aminossadati

Members suggested that this item proceed with the formation of a sub-committee to make arrangements for these sessions.

4. Postgraduate Engineering Conference

The 2012 conference was held on 4 June 2012 and the winners of the School’s prizes were –

- The Professor Klaus Bremhorst Prize for best presentation related to Mechanical Engineering and Energy (Sponsored by the Queensland Geothermal Energy Centre of Excellence) – Rajinesh Singh
- The Professor Don Nicklin Prize for the best presentation related to Mining Engineering (Sponsored by CRCMining) – Peter Beasley
- The Professor Raymond Stalker Prize for best presentation related to Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (Sponsored by Centre for Hypersonics) – Dylan Wise
- The Professor Gordon Dunlop Prize for best presentation related to Materials Engineering (Sponsored by CAST) – Luigi Vandi
• The School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering Prize for Best 1st year presentation - John Dudley
• The School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering Prize for best journal article (Sponsored by the School Mechanical and Mining Engineering) – Dekui Mu

Members recommended that the winners of the School prizes be congratulated in the School Newsletter.

Members noted that there were some very good presentations, and for those that gave weaker presentations, it was a good learning experience.

Mr Varghese noted that the event went well and that a lunch for the conference executive was being held to discuss potential improvements to the conference. Mr Varghese noted that he would raise holding the networking event off campus, due to difficult arrangements on campus, and also selecting the invited speakers more carefully.

Members also recommended that the committee consider –
  o Encouraging Chairs to ensure that people keep to the allocated time for each presentation;
  o Removing the School’s prize for the best thesis from the conference, and awarding this at the Semester 1 orientation session (see Item 5, Student Engagement and Evaluation).
  o Award the ‘Best journal paper’ prize at the Semester 1 orientation session to improve engagement. Only 4 submissions were received this year. The requirement that students must participate in the conference in order to be eligible may discourage some students. The value of the prize could be increased to promote participation.
  o Holding a Faculty engagement event subsequent to the conference where the winners present their research to a broader forum including industry invitees. This could be arranged though the local branch of Engineer’s Australia as part of their seminar program or it could be done as a School engagement exercise working through the Faculty. The Chair indicated this item would be raised with Mr Jonathan Cosgrove, the Faculty Advancement Director.

5. Student Engagement and Evaluations

Members noted that the participation of research higher degree students in the skills workshop series was limited, noting that feedback had been received that while students saw value in the sessions, they were opting not to attend because they have ‘better, more urgent things to do’. Members expressed disappointment with this attitude, noting that attendance at workshops and seminars gave students a broader experience which could help clarify their own research.

As a result of this, members considered ways to address this issue, namely –

  a. Experience evaluation

Members noted that the School should evaluate RHD Student experiences at least once every three years. The last evaluation was within the School of Engineering in 2005 and was conducted by TEDI via a questionnaire. Our cohort has changed since the last evaluation, as have many processes, such as Milestones. Members also noted that the Graduate School should be invited to participate by providing feedback to the School and receiving a copy of the results of the evaluation.

A recent retreat was undertaken by the School’s administrative/finance/technical team. The retreat was undertaken by Niche consultants and involved a short, but comprehensive online survey and two half day workshops. A detailed report will be provided by Niche. It is proposed that Niche or a similar group could be contracted to conduct a survey of RHD students.

Members noted that this item should be incorporated in to the Operational Plan, and agreed that this item should proceed in a format that is agreeable.

  b. Welcome

Members noted that it had been recommended that there be a school-wide event held in orientation week each semester. At this event, graduated RHD students will be formally congratulated by the School and new students will be welcomed.
Students currently have an individual induction with the Postgraduate Administrative Officer on their first day, and the subsequent induction experience depends on the research group the student joins. The sporadic nature of commencements also means that new students do not engage with the wider cohort, so this welcome event would be a chance for students to network in an informal environment.

The prizes for best thesis and journal paper of the previous year would be awarded in the Semester 1 session. Similarly, any academics who received an RHD supervision award in the previous year could be congratulated.

c. RHD student/staff liaison committee

Members noted that the undergraduate student/staff liaison committees within the school were very effective and endorsed a suggestion that a RHD student/staff liaison committee be formed. The committee will be chaired by A/Prof Rowan Truss and will meet at least twice per year. The Terms of Reference and membership are outlined below –

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reporting to</th>
<th>Head of School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Administrative Officer (Academic) – Brianne Mackinnon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date last amended</td>
<td>5 July 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
<td>The objectives of the committee are -</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to improve the experience of RHD students within the School.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- to foster a culture of collegiality in support of excellence in research outcomes by RHD students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Ex Officio</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Postgraduate Coordinator – Associate Professor Rowan Truss (Chair)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Head of School – Professor David Mee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Chair of the Research Committee – Professor Ross McAree.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Postgraduate Administration Officer – Ms Katie Gollschewski, Ms Brianne Mackinnon (Secretaries)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Research Committee student representative – Mr John Varghese</td>
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<td>Other members</td>
<td>At least one academic staff member representing each of the disciplines of Materials Engineering, Mining Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least one student representative from each of the disciplines of Materials Engineering, Mining Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Arrangements</td>
<td>Members are appointed by the Head of School.</td>
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<td>Quorum</td>
<td>5</td>
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d. Final Seminar

Members noted that students are required to give confirmation presentations to a wide cohort, but there is no requirement for a final presentation at submission. The final presentation is generally a good overview of the research (with limited technical focus).

Members noted that these seminars help to keep staff and students up-to-date on research within the school. The main issue is lack of attendance. We graduate approximately 25 people per year, so the time load is not onerous on people.

Members recommended that attendance be compulsory for RHD students. The Postgraduate administrative officer will check the rules regarding this, and members indicated that students could enrol in a Pass/Fail course each semester and that the requirement be they attend at least X% of seminars to pass the course. Attendance would also be monitored at milestones.

6. Early Career Researcher Awards

An Early Career Researcher (ECR) is someone who is currently within his/her first eight years of academic or other research-related employment, allowing for uninterrupted, stable research development, following completion of postgraduate research training. The aims of the UQ ECR scheme are:

- to encourage research by new members of staff;
- to provide limited seed funding as a means of generating external research support; and
- to support, on a competitive basis, high quality research projects of modest financial cost from early career researchers.

Project Proposals are due in early September with budgets having a maximum limit $40,000. Applications are open to T&R and RO academics. The assessment criteria are -

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<td>To what extent is the proposed research original and innovative?</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>To what extent is the project soundly based in planning and methodology?</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>How would you rate the theoretical and technological or applied merit of the proposal?</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent is the project feasible, bearing in mind the expertise and research productivity of the applicant(s)?</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent is the budget justified and appropriate?</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>How strong is the track record, relative to opportunity?</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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At the last EAIT Faculty Research Committee meeting, members discussed the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Awards. An analysis of the EAIT ECR applications from 2010-2012 was provided to members.

The School’s performance in ECR has been patchy, and over the past three years –

- 4 T&R staff have applied for an ECR, but only 1 has been awarded;
- 17 RO staff have applied and 5 have been awarded and ECR.

Members noted that teaching and research (T&R) staff within the school do not have a good success rate for ECR. One of the many reasons for this, is that T&R staff have many responsibilities so the completion of applications are generally rushed and as a result, the applications are not as well constructed as RO submissions.

Publication record is taken strongly into account despite percentage weight indicated, and the ‘story’ presented is key to the application. Members noted that the materials staff excel at creating a ‘story’ for their applications. It was highlighted that if the Faculty committee cannot understand the research that will be undertaken, or its importance, then the application will receive a low ranking.

Members noted that this issue needs to be addressed and recommended holding an information session within the school for eligible T&R and RO staff. After this session, each T&R staff member who is preparing an application should be appointed a mentor.
At the information session, several senior academics will address the preparation of the proposal against criteria with reflections on what makes a successful application and the importance of arguing track record. Members agreed that there should be two separate sessions, one for T&R, and one for RO.

7. **Benchmarks**

Members noted the School’s quarterly benchmarks and requested that trend plots be created for the next meeting.

8. **Other items**

a. The postgraduate student representative noted that it would be useful to have a database like UQ Experts for research students within the School. This would be used to help students know what other people researching and their specialist area. For example, if assistance is required with operating CAD, a search of the database would identify a fellow RHD student who could assist.

b. One member noted an issue in applying for LEIF grants what space is available to the equipment. Members noted that the School Manager should be approached in the first instance with space issues.