Present: Mr Aleks Atrens, Professor Ross McAree (Chair), Associate Professor Rowan Truss. Ms Katie Gollschewski.

Apologies: Professor David St John, Associate Professor Han Huang, Professor Paul Lever, Mrs Kim Lamb.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2010 were approved.

1. **CRC Round 14 announced**

Members noted that round 14 under the CRC program was been announced in early November. Priority areas for the round included clean manufacturing, social innovation and sustainable regional communities. Kim Carr’s announcement is online at:


2. **Changes to HUPP 4.50.1 Research Budgets – Direct Costs and HUPP 4.50.3 Equipment Purchased from Research Funds**

Members noted that a number of changes have been proposed to these policies, most notably to clarify the purchase, use and disposal/transfer of research equipment purchased from research funds. Members of the Academic Board discussed these changes at the November board meeting.

3. **Milestone Chairs**

In October members discussed the composition of milestone review committees. A list of the current chair for each student’s milestone review was created and members requested that this be added an item at the next meeting so a list of independent chairs can be created.

These Chairs will be given training, including a list of focus questions and open ended questions that can be used as part of the written response to the student. Written feedback prior to the presentation and interview sessions is important as it ensures the review committee members read the confirmation report critically and provide constructive and formative feedback to the student. It was also recommended that members of the research committee act as observers for several milestone reviews.

4. **English Language policy**

Members noted that a standing sub-committee of CAPP has been formed to advise on English Language policy matters. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) as chair of that sub-committee will, with the DVC Academic and the Chair of the Academic Board, instigate a review the University’s policy on English Language Proficiency Admission Requirements for University Programs (HUPP 3.40.14). Members noted that there was a cohort of students in the school who needed additional support for their written and verbal English and requested that this item be addressed at the next meeting.

5. **Conference**

Members noted that the organising committee for the student conference commenced preparations for the 2011 conference and that the School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering and the Advanced Water Management Centre (AWMC) have confirmed they will be participating. It was recommended that the organising committee invite Ms Kim Jensen, Manager Community Partnerships, to join the committee to provide advice on organisation and marketing.

6. **Vivas**

In early 2010 members drafted a discussion paper addressing the duration of and uncertainty in the time to examine PhD and MPhil theses. One oral was held in late July and while the overall experience was positive, there were technical difficulties.

A second oral was held in early November and while technical difficulties were noted as an issue early in the process, the oral ran smoothly. Two members of the EAIT Information Technology Infrastructure Group worked with the Postgraduate Administration Officer, the candidate and the Principal Supervisor...
to determine the requirements for the oral. The IT officers determined the process to be used, and one member attended the oral and managed the session. It was noted by several attendees that having an IT officer present made the oral run smoothly; it reduced the stress on the candidate and allowed the participants to focus on the presentation.

Members noted that while the specialised room (78-621: Access Grid and VC) reduced the number of technical difficulties, the room could not accommodate a large number of students. These events should be promoted to a wide audience and attendance be encouraged to ensure academic rigour. Members noted that potential viva students should be located and the process promoted.

A set of guidelines on the objectives, composition and structure of an oral examination have been created by the Graduate School to help guide the organisation of these examinations. Once approved, these will be sent to the nominated convenor by the Graduate School. To assist our convenors, an example of a viva report will also be sent.

7. **ARC Australian Laureate Fellowships**

The next application round for the ARC Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme opened in November 2010. Members are encouraged to start searching for potential candidates to nominate to the Head of School.

8. **‘Reflections on writing research papers’**

On Monday 29 November, the School held a skills building workshop on ‘Reflections on writing research papers’. Three researchers presented to the group giving their perspective on the writing process, along with some general advice. There were approximately 50 research students and postdoctoral staff in attendance and at the end of the workshop it was proposed that a series of related workshops would be conducted in which students would be encouraged and guided in the preparation of manuscripts. A further two sessions, facilitated by A/Prof Rowan Truss and Prof Ross McAree will be held before the University break and will be advertised to all students and research only staff.

Members discussed the possible format for these sessions and it was noted that the journal Nature provided a guide on the structure of an abstract. Members requested that this guide be forwarded to A/Prof Rowan Truss and Prof Ross McAree for use in the session to help students focus their initial ideas.

9. **ARC Discovery Program Consultation Paper**

A Consultation Paper proposing substantial changes to the way Fellowships are supported under Discovery was forwarded to staff on 12 November for information and comment. The Chair gave a brief overview of the proposed changes which include:

- Introducing a dedicated new, separately assessed, flexible Fellowships scheme to support ECRs. The assessment criteria currently seem to lend a lesser emphasis to quality of track record.
- Removing the provision of the named Fellowships (such as APD, ARF/QEII, APF) altogether. These Fellowships have been a longstanding feature of the Australian funding landscape.
- Introducing into the Discovery Projects Scheme what appears to be a new [career] award targeted at mid- to late-career academics – apparently limited to 2-3 years duration.
- Removing five year Fellowships, except for the Laureates.
- Limiting/removing opportunities for five year DP grants. As a funding mechanism for longer term projects of significant size, five year DPs have been well subscribed by UQ researchers.
- The Future Fellowships scheme now becomes one of the major vehicles for Fellowships support – however the scheme’s longevity has not been explicitly specified. Moreover, there is no clarity on whether a candidate can hold an ARC Future Fellowship more than once.

The Chair also outlined the feedback received from several staff members. This feedback was concerned with the impact on early career researcher’s ability to secure funding under this scheme, the loss of recognised named fellowships and potential difficulties in retaining staff currently funded through these schemes.

Members discussed the changes and feedback noting that there was a need to promote teaching and research academics, not just-research only staff and to encourage high performers to take on continuing...
positions. Members recognised the difficulties for early career researchers to secure funding but that this new scheme was unlikely to reduce the School’s ability to cultivate current staff.

It was recommended that the Chair complete a draft submission of the ARC Discovery Program Consultation Paper Response Pro-forma which would be submitted to the Head of School.

10. Calendars
Members noted that a central research calendar to notify researchers of upcoming funding opportunities and deadlines for applications is in the final testing stage. Staff would have the ability to export events into their own calendar.

Members discussed the student skills training calendar and recommended that this be made available online once the Graduate School and Student Services finalise the sessions offered in 2011.

The School ran the first skills development session on 29 November and members noted that positive feedback had been received and this session should be repeated in 2011. Two sessions have been booked during orientation week semester 1 and 2 that would be a combined welcome to new students and a skills workshop. It was recommended that the February session be focussed on writing an effective CV. It was noted that there are two aspects to focus on: presentation standard and aspirational standard. Postdoctoral positions are highly competitive and it was recommended that a current postdoctoral staff member’s CV be used (with permission) as an example of the level expected. Members discussed other possible sessions and resolved to offer two sessions in February to help students prepare for the conference: Writing Abstracts and Presentation Skills.

11. Competitive research grants
Members noted that the Q-Index had been introduced at UQ. The Q-Index provides each UQ academic with an individual composite index of research performance over a rolling 6-year window plus the current year to date, e.g., 2004-2009 + 2010 year to date. Data is drawn from eSpace, Research Master, and SIR-net. Each staff member can see details of how their individual index has been calculated based upon the best available data, as well as a comparison against an average of their peers. Members briefly discussed this item but resolved to hold this over until the next meeting.