Present: A/Prof Ma Qian (Chair), Prof David Mee, Mr Brendon Lutwyche, Prof Richard Morgan, A/Prof Martin Veidt, Dr Kamel Hooman, Professor Andrej Atrens. Ms Katie Gollschewski

Apologies: Dr Bo Feng, Prof Peter Knights, A/Prof Han Huang, Prof Jin Zou, Dr Kaz Nogita, Mrs Kim Lamb.

1. Terms of Reference

Members noted the terms of reference, namely that the role of the International Development Group was to work closely with the EAIT Faculty and to make recommendations to the Head of School on the following –

- Implementation of the University’s Global Strategy and Internationalisation Plan and other relevant strategic plans;
- Development and implementation of the parts of the Faculty’s Enabling Operational Plan and the School’s Operational Plan that are related to internationalisation and international activities;
- Together with the Faculty, gain an understanding of regional markets and provide advice to the School on initiatives.

Members discussed the aims of the group, noting the need to ensure that the School’s priorities were addressed by the Faculty International Group. The Head of School, Prof Jin Zou and A/Prof Ma Qian were members of both the School and Faculty groups so a feedback mechanism was already in place. Members noted that the group must identify the key areas for the School to focus on and suggested enquiring how ITEE’s IDG functioned as they have a significant proportion of international students.

Members noted one goal should be to strengthen links with existing partners and improve the quality of process for students from our partner institutions. For example in 2011 several 3+1+1 students opted to undertake a research masters instead of coursework. These students had already successfully completed an undergraduate thesis with the School so there were tangible benefits to individual supervisors and the School to retain these students as researchers. This option could be promoted to students during their study abroad year, although there remained some concerns regarding the enrolment process.

2. Report from Senior Manager, International Development

The Senior Manager noted that –

- the Faculty received 48 applications for international scholarships, one of which was awarded to a mechanical engineering applicant;
- the changes to visa conditions as a result of the Knight Review (e.g. the right to two years of work after graduation) might result in an increase in applications;
- there would be a change in the English language proficiency requirements (IELTS applicants would still need 6.5 overall but with a minimum of 6.0 in all categories. TOEFL remains the same);
- the Faculty was currently working on the draft ‘EAIT International 2012 travel summary’ which would be forwarded for review soon.

3. Member Reports: Regional Specialists

Singapore

Prof Mee had visited Singapore Polytechnic, one of the premier institutions in Singapore, and noted this polytechnic had a large cohort of students and was running some Aerospace groups. There was an interest expressed in establishing links with biomedical engineering at UQ; however this falls outside the School’s research strengths.
Malaysian

Prof. Morgan had visited the University of Kuala Lumpur and noted that this institution was interested in collaborating, especially in the area of mechatronics, and in sending lecturing staff to UQ to obtain a research higher degree. It was noted that there were substantial scholarships to support Malaysian students for overseas studies at both the undergraduate and postgraduate research levels (e.g. MARA).

Members noted that it would be useful to have a list of partner institutions and a set of standard presentation slides which promote the University’s status (e.g. Go8) and the School’s status (e.g. ERA result) to give to staff travelling overseas. School staff should be encouraged to include visits to partner institutions when travelling to help strengthen existing collaborations. Members noted that most overseas flights include a stop-over and these could be utilised to a greater degree.

Middle East

Members noted that the Middle East was a large market and the School received high levels of enquiries from Iranian students and institutions. Members discussed two issues relating to this –

- the quality of applicants was variable and rating these appropriately could be difficult. It was noted that access to the NOOSR Guide would be beneficial. Members questioned the application process and were advised to direct all enquiries to the rhadmin@mechmining email address.
- there were government based scholarships available for many students (e.g. King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship Program), and that it would be useful to build relationships with the scholarship providers.

It was noted by members that the School/Faculty had strong relationships with European and Asian institutions, and that the School could consider building 2+2 relationships with institutions in the Middle East. Members also discussed creating collaborations with Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) but it was noted that this was unlikely to lead to fee paying students at the undergraduate level. Mr Lutwyche noted that new collaborations should be made with institutions of an appropriate standing and that the Faculty was happy to work with the School to create links with different institutions. He also indicated that members could be introduced to the relevant UQ International representatives.

China / Asia

Members noted that the School needed to focus on strengthening relationships with prestigious Chinese universities and recruiting high calibre students. As part of this, the School also needed to maintain appropriate expectations and assessment for international students. Members noted that the Head of School and an academic advisor met with the 3+1+1 students several times during their first semester to outline expectations and follow up on progress. The School also provided also some funding support for supervisors who undertake project work with these students (currently $1000 per student was deposited into the supervisor’s consultancy account). Members also noted that taking on students as occupational trainees might be a good opportunity to find potential research higher degree students and build networks.