



Research Degrees and Induction Committee

Meeting 05/08 of the Research Degrees and Induction Committee, Faculty of Education, held on the Wednesday, October 22, 2008 at 8:30am in room GO8, Building 6, Clayton Campus.

Mr Michael Enticott - Executive Officer

1. Introduction to Formal Business

1.1 Present

Assoc Prof Ilana Snyder (Chair), Assoc Prof Helen Forgasz, Dr Amanda Berry, Ms Ros Winter, Dr Helen Watt, Dr Anna Hickey-Moody, Dr Jane Southcott, Mr Mayur Katariya, Ms Hilary Monk, Mr Calvin Taylor and Dr Mindi Blaise

1.2 By Invitation

Assoc Prof Laura Brearley, Dr Zane Ma Rhea, Ms Bronwyn Dethick

1.3 Minutes

Mr Michael Enticott

2. Minutes

Motion:

The Minutes of meeting no. 04/2008 of the Research Induction Committee were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Mover: Assoc Prof Ilana Snyder

Seconded: Assoc Prof Helen Forgasz

Carried: Unanimously

3. Starring of unstarred items

Nothing to report

4. MEd Koori Cohort

Assoc Prof Laura Brearley presented a series of PowerPoint slides on the Koori cohort that she is currently working with. The cohort, which started at RMIT, is a cross faculty, trans-disciplinary group of students that are coordinated by Assoc Prof Brearley, in the Faculty of Education, Gippsland campus. She reported on recent trips to Canada and New Zealand where students and staff met with local Indigenous people and shared knowledge and information about similar cohorts they are running. Assoc Prof Brearley reported that information about the cohort is being spread into the wider Koori community, and that she expects a larger number of external students, which will require new ideas for how to best service these students (ie how technology and industry support can support the students).



The chair suggested that MRGS and the wider University community need to be made aware of this wonderful initiative and will arrange for Assoc Prof Brearley to speak at a relevant meeting. It was also suggested that a video or podcast be created and put online for Faculty staff and students. It was further suggested that the activities of the Koori cohort initiative be publicised through the print medium (for example, glossy postcards or brochures).

Hilary Monk advised that she is in contact with a New Zealand academic who is working with external indigenous students, and will put Assoc Prof Brearley in touch.

The Chair said that she is thrilled that this initiative is happening and that it has the full support of the Research Degrees and Induction Committee. She also offered help if anything further is required.

5. Reports

5.1 Update from MERC

Hilary Monk reported that 5 HDR students from the Peninsula MERC group recently went to the International Society for Cultural and Activity Research Conference in San Diego. One student, Corrine Rivelland, also presented a paper at the conference, which received a positive response. On their return the students presented information about the conference and the presentations they viewed to other members of the MERC.

Hilary also advised that MERC Peninsula representatives are speaking with Vicki White about finding additional space. Hilary explained that Vicki White attended the meeting to discuss resources and office space for 2009 as well as updating the group on the Resource and Support Working Party report.

The November meeting will be a combined Clayton/Peninsula meeting at Peninsula. Assoc Prof Ilana Snyder has been invited to speak. There will be a hand-over to the 2009 MERC Peninsula Convenors at this meeting.

5.2 Assoc Dean (Research Degrees and Induction)

Chair's report on RGSC matters

Assoc Prof Ilana Snyder reported that at the recent meeting with MRGS, there had been more discussion about the e-thesis, which has become far more controversial and complex than initially thought. She reported that there have been deep concerns from students, and that the likely outcome will be for students to be able to opt out of the e-thesis requirement and/or place an embargo on access. She will report on the new Monash policy at the final RIDC meeting in November.

Assoc Prof Snyder reported that the number of Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) on offer is to increase over the next five years, however, it will only be around 20% more in the first year. She explained that the scholarship application process is now solely online. Hilary Monk reported that some students had found that the system is problematic (especially in the time it takes to upload documents and



complete the application) and other committee members confirmed that they had been made aware of similar issues.

HDR Orientation September

The chair and Mr Mayur Katariya reported that the orientation was attended by around 40 students, which was more than in previous years. The sessions ran smoothly and the event was considered a great success.

MEd Confirmation

The Master of Education confirmation has been introduced, and the first confirmations will be held later this year. As confirmations for Master degrees are not universal across the University there are no standard agreements for non-confirmation. The chair reported that she and Assoc Prof Helen Forgasz are currently working on the development of a faculty policy.

The chair tabled a document which includes the guidelines for the MEd confirmation and asked for comments regarding the draft report. Dr Amanda Berry and Dr Helen Watt expressed concern that the first milestone will occur six months into the research project, however, the Chair advised that as little as 1000 words can be written for the milestone and that coursework will be taken into consideration. Mr Mayur Katariya advised that Supervision Load is given to supervisors whose students are in the coursework phase of their course, as concern was raised by Dr Southcott over the additional work required by supervisors and students in preparing for the confirmation even during the coursework phase.

The document was accepted by the Committee and will now be sent to the students and supervisors who have milestones due this year.

MEd Annual Progress Reporting

The chair reported that the Annual Progress Report for Master of Education students is to be replaced by three candidature milestones from 2009. The first is already in place (confirmation) and is held after one year full-time or equivalent. The mid-candidature milestone will take place after approximately two years of candidature, with the third to be a review of thesis just before submission. As far as possible, the same panel will be convened for each milestone. The chair asked for open discussion about this new idea and suggestions for alternative ideas.

Dr Jane Southcott suggested that an alternative arrangement needs to be made available for external students, and it was agreed that conference presentations and journal publications would be looked at in lieu of the milestones, especially for the second and third milestone. Concern was also raised by Dr Southcott and Dr Helen Watt regarding the additional workload the final milestone would have on the student and the supervisor, and suggested that deciding if the thesis is ready for examination is the responsibility of the supervisor. The Chair said that a presentation by the student before examination provides an invaluable opportunity to try out the findings. It also represents an important research training experience. The rationale for these milestones is not to increase everyone's work unnecessarily but to support and scaffold students throughout their candidature so that they complete with a range of useful attributes. The University is moving towards a formal policy on these milestones, however, they are already used in many departments at Monash.

PhD program for Monash South Africa staff in the Faculty of Education



The chair reported that she and Assoc Prof Forgasz spoke with the Pro-Vice Chancellor Research, Professor Dina Burger, about recruiting Faculty of Education staff in the South African campus to undertake the PhD program. A/P Snyder reported that the students will be funded under a special University fund and would therefore not need to pay the usual fees as international students.

HDR central scholarships 2009

The chair advised that scholarship applications are now open and are solely on an online system. Hilary Monk advised of some difficulties that applicants have had in accessing the system.

RDIC Budget and Faculty Scholarships

Mr Mayur Katariya reported that there is around \$25,000 left in the RDIC budget for this year and that it could be spent to fund a one year scholarship, several top-up scholarships or two half scholarships. The chair further commented that some of the money will be used for a print advertising campaign, as 70 additional HDR students are required by 31st March 2009 to meet the load the Faculty has agreed to take. Assoc Prof Forgasz advised that the advertising campaign will be targeting 'curriculum leadership' in its broadest sense, and that there is the capacity for many groups to fulfil this supervision. A/P Forgasz and the Chair also acknowledged that curriculum areas in the Faculty such as Music are almost full and may not have the capacity to take in these new students.

Co-joined Honours/PhD Scholarships

The Chair advised that one Honours/PhD scholarship is to be offered to each faculty, with each awardee having to meet certain entry requirements and maintain a distinction average.

Increase in number of non-confirmation of candidature recommendations across the university

The Chair reported that MRGS has noted an increase in the number of PhD students who have not had their confirmation of candidature approved. This is not an issue in the Faculty of Education.

Importance of supervisors keeping written records for their research students

The Chair advised that it is important for supervisors to keep a written record of their meetings and interactions with their students and any they might be having. She cited the example of a successful appeal in another faculty by a student who had not been confirmed.. The supervisors had failed to keep full records of their concerns about the student's progress.

Best practice supervision example (Research community)

The Chair invited Dr Zane Ma Rhea to present to the committee information on her presentation day with her research students.

Dr Ma Rhea reported that she has a large group (22) of students that she supervises, in a number of courses and locations around the world, and that each year she gets them all together for a weekend. Over this weekend, she advised that the students present their research to the group. The time they speak and in how much detail depend on which course they are undertaking and how far they are into the project. She advised that this has generated stronger student relationships which has helped with their research projects.



The Chair advised that in March 2009, Dr Ma Rhea and some other supervisors would be invited to speak to a meeting of all supervisors about their practices which supervisors would be encouraged to adapt to their students.

5.3 Director of Research Degrees

Annual Publication Award

Assoc Prof Helen Forgasz reported that she sits on a panel which decides on University wide awards such as Postgraduate Publications Awards and mid-year scholarships. She has noticed that Faculty of Education students are not publishing as often as students from other faculties, and has initiated a Faculty publication award. The paper was tabled and approved by all committee members.

Dr Amanda Berry advised that she is currently working on arranging a better online calendar page for staff that will list the application dates of all awards and scholarships, as some committee members advised that they were not aware of the Publication Award nomination closing date.

MEd Upgrade Guidelines

Assoc Prof Forgasz advised that the Master of Education upgrade will be linked to the new Master of Education confirmation of candidature requirement.

Faculty Research Students' Funding applications

Assoc Prof Forgasz tabled two funding applications that required committee approval, these were:

Dorothy Jacka – Although the funding request was retrospective it was approved by the committee.

Jung-Ae Yoon – Assoc Prof Forgasz advised that this application was unusual as the student was requesting funding to purchase a large volume of mini-DVD discs. The request was not approved. The student has been advised to look into alternative forms of record maintaining (such as mini-drive or external hard drives) However, the Committee approved \$276 to cover the cost of PECS book, laminating sheets and Velcro dots.

5.4 Co-ordinator of Honours Degrees

Dr Amanda Berry advised on the University wide push for more students to undertake Honours and spoke of the need to collect non-Monash email addresses from students so that they can be contacted after finishing their studies to recruit to the honours program. Dr Jane Southcott informed that students have advised her that postal mail is their preferred mode of contact and that this should be used for correspondence. The Chair advised that some Faculties send SMS updates to students and that this Faculty should look at this method also.

Dr Berry thanked Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith for her work on the Honours program at the Gippsland campus. She advised that from 2009 Claire Charles will take over this responsibility.



5.5 Education Committee

Dr Jane Southcott advised that Assoc Prof Forgasz, Dr Berry and herself were reviewing the minor thesis and will meet with Assoc Prof Geoff Romeo to look at setting up a four unit Master of Education. She advised that this will have an impact on the Honours course however the discussions are in their infancy.

6. Other Business

Nothing to report

7. Next Meeting

Meeting 7 Wednesday, 19 November 9:30 to 11:00 AM G08, Clayton

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Associate Professor Ilana Snyder, Chair
Assoc Prof Helen Forgasz
Dr Amanda Berry
Dr Jane Southcott
Dr Mindi Blaise
Dr Helen Watt
Dr Anna Hickey-Moody
Ms Hilary Monk
Mr Calvin Taylor
Ms Ros Winter
Mr Mayur Katariya

FOR INFORMATION

Professor Peter Sullivan
Dr Janette Simmonds
Dr John Roodenburg
Professor Margaret Somerville
Dr Robyn Zink
Dr Evan Kritikakos
Ms Sue Plowright
Ms Trudi Brunton
Assoc Prof Laura Brearley
Mr Paul Davies
Ms Bronwyn Dethick
Exec Officer: Mr Michael Enticott



Action Items:

1. The chair suggested that MRGS and the wider University community be made aware of Koori Research cohort and will arrange for Assoc Prof Brearley to speak to at a relevant meeting.
2. Research Degrees Office to send letters to the MEd students and supervisors who have milestones due this year.
3. Mayur Katariya to liaise with Annie Yoon and Dorothy Jacka regarding their funding requests.