VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

A copy of the Vice Chancellor's Report to Council can be accessed from the following web site:


RETIREMENT OF PROFESSOR LESLEY JOHNSON

Council was advised that Professor Lesley Johnson, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), would be retiring from the University with effect from mid April 2009. The Vice Chancellor praised Professor Johnson for the significant leadership role she had played in focusing Griffith’s research profile. During her term as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), the University had experienced substantial increases in research income and great success in Smart State funding schemes. In particular, Professor Johnson had guided the successful bids for two national research centres – the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility. On behalf of Council, the Chancellor thanked Professor Johnson for her outstanding contributions to the development of the University over the last four years. Members noted that a formal minute of appreciation would be brought forward for Council’s adoption at a meeting in early 2009.

PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION RESEARCH FACILITY

Professor Jan MacDonald, Interim Director, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, made a presentation to the meeting.

Council was advised that the University had won the right to host the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, with $10 million funding over five years from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change. The Facility is one of only a handful of research institutions around the world focusing specifically on how we adapt to the physical impacts of climate change and climate variability. The Facility will provide national leadership in the development and implementation of adaptation research plans in key priority sectors such as primary industries, built environment, human health and biodiversity conservation. These plans will identify critical gaps in the information needed by sectoral decision-makers and set research priorities based on these gaps. The Facility will also undertake its own synthesis and integrative research projects on a range of priority topics, and will support the work of a range of adaptation research networks, with grants totalling $10 million additional to the Facility’s own funding.

PRESENTATION ON DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI STRATEGY

Ms Patricia Wrathall, Director – Development and Alumni Office, made a presentation to the meeting. Council also noted the document “Griffith University Development and Alumni Office Structure & Strategy 2008-2011”.

Council was advised of two key strategies to facilitate the University’s long term goal of self funding:

- development of a focused fundraising strategy which includes the Griffith Foundation, the Griffith Scholarship Fund, an Annual Appeal and a major gift strategy.
- implementation of an alumni relations strategy.

PRESENTATION ON NATHAN CAMPUS TASKFORCE REPORT

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) made a presentation to the meeting on the Nathan Campus Taskforce report.

Council was advised that the Nathan Campus Taskforce had examined the current operations and activity at the campus, through analysis of statistical information, consultation with staff and students, interaction with representatives of each of the four Academic Groups and Administrative Divisions, and consideration of wider campus issues in the context of State developments (‘Smart State’ initiatives). Council noted that the Taskforce report had made recommendations concerning campus vision and identity, the academic profile, the physical environment, community engagement, and life on campus. In approaching its terms of reference, the Taskforce sought to make recommendations that will provide the foundations for academic decision-making, the creation of a campus with cultural vibrancy and community connections, and an enduring legacy of livability for future generations.

Council noted that the Taskforce report had been endorsed by Executive Group and that action was being taken to address key recommendations identified in the report.

UPDATE ON EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA (ERA)

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) provided an update to Council on ERA.

Council noted that the Australian Research Council (ARC) had released a Consultation Paper on the proposed ERA framework in mid-June. ERA replaces RQF and will assess the quality of research in Australian universities, as well as research activity and intensity. It also seeks to develop measures for applied research and the translation of research. Griffith submitted its response to this paper on 30 June.

Council noted that ERA will evaluate research quality and activity in eight disciplinary clusters. Two disciplinary clusters (cluster 1 – chemistry, physics and earth sciences; cluster 2 – humanities and creative arts) will be reviewed in 2009. Universities will be required to submit published research outputs for specified disciplines, along with information on research income and RHD statistics, initially for the period 2002-2007. The review period will change for other disciplinary clusters, as based on the year in which the relevant review takes place. Research outputs will be allocated to a disciplinary cluster based on the journal in which it has been published. The ARC will allocate all journals to one or more disciplines.

PROGRESS REPORT ON ACADEMIC PLAN 3

At its October 2007 meeting, Council adopted the document Academic Plan 3 Learning for Success: A Plan for Student Learning and Success at Griffith, 2008-10.
At its July 2008 meeting, Academic Committee endorsed the document “Academic Plan 3: Learning for Success Implementation Plan 2008-10, Progress Report for Whole University, May 2008” (2008/0016286). Council noted that the Report informs the University community of the work being done across the whole institution. It supports the sharing of ideas and good practice between different elements of the University and enables identification of what is working well, how to support wider use of effective strategies, and support areas in which the University needs to improve.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007-2011


Council was advised that the Disability Action Plan outlined areas in which strategies should be developed and implemented to improve access to and participation in education and employment for people with disabilities. The development of the framework for the new Plan took into account two significant initiatives that relate to students. The first of these is the recently ratified Disability Standards for Education 2005. The second consideration was to map the areas covered by the Standards against those outlined in the concept of Student Lifecycle Management, which has been adopted by the University as a way to direct the University’s engagement with students towards a common goal.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE GROUP TASKFORCE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

At its March 2008 meeting, Council noted that concern had been expressed by the Audit Committee over a number of findings in the audit of workplace health and safety in laboratories. In view of the University’s potential exposure to risk in this area, a member requested that the report to be prepared for the Executive Group also be provided to Council.

Council noted the document “Report to Executive Group Health and Safety Taskforce – June 2008”. Council was advised that Executive Group had accepted all of the recommendations made by the Taskforce and requested that they be implemented as soon as possible and no later than the end of 2008.

APPOINTMENT OF HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

Council offered Professor Christine Smith appointment as Head, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics for the period 4 August 2008 to 3 February 2009.

AUGUST 2008