PRESENT

Members
Professor Ned Pankhurst, Chairperson
Professor Parlo Singh, Acting Chairperson
Professor Andy Bennett, AEL
Professor Richard Bagnall, AEL
Associate Professor Michael Blumenstein, SEET
Professor Howard Wiseman, SEET
Professor Graham Cuskelly, Griffith Business School
Professor Andrew O’Neil, Griffith Business School
Professor David Shum, Griffith Health
Professor Lyn Griffiths, Griffith Health
Ms JoAnne Sparks, INS
Dr Vicki Sherburd (Secretary)

Rights of Audience and Debate
Dr Vicki Pattemore (Director, OR)
Mr Tony Sheil (Deputy Director Research Policy, OR)
Ms Daina Garklavs (Deputy Director Research Services, OR)
Dr Calvin Smith (Deputy Director, GHIE)

1.0 WELCOME
The Chair welcomed Professor Richard Bagnall and Ms JoAnne Sparks to the Research Committee.

2.0 APOLOGIES
Professor Lesley Chenoweth, Elected member of the Professoriate
Ms Julene Finnigan (Resource Manager, Corporate Resource Management PFS)

3.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES
2.1 The minutes of the 01/11 meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

4.0 CHAIR’S REPORT
4.1 Grants Update
4.1.1 The Chair noted that grant rounds have been delayed this year and that a report will be presented to the April meeting. NHMRC applications were again delayed by faults in the RGMS. Another issue that has arisen from this grant round is that the quality of some late submissions appears not as high as needed and that this may be because researchers may not be ready are circumventing the internal review processes.

4.1.2 The Committee discussed NHMRC project development and the preparation of applications at the Expression of Interest stage. In some Research Centres no EOI process is used and/or Centre Directors are reviewing applications very close to submission deadlines.
4.1.3 The Chair suggested that in future rounds, PVCs will be asked to ensure that projects and applications are sufficiently developed through Group internal review processes to ensure timely progress through to the next stage. It is acknowledged that this process is working well in some areas.

4.1.4 The Chair noted that the NHMRC Reference Committee will be convened shortly to review the NHMRC EoI process for next year.

Noted

4.2 Discovery Early Researcher Award

4.2.1 The Chair noted that the Discovery Early Researcher Award is a new opportunity for early researchers. Given that this is a new system which provides a significant section for institutional support, some applicants had assumed that this was cash support, rather than the intended infrastructure, intellectual and mentoring support.

Noted

4.3 Revised GU Postdoc and fellowship guidelines and selection criteria

4.3.1 The Chair explained that this item arose from the Selection Panel’s assessment of the postdoctoral and fellowship applications in 2010. From this assessment to Panel identified a need to discern the difference between postdoctoral and fellowship applicants in the guidelines and application form. Inclusion of additional criteria including research grant history and professional achievement of standing would assist this.

4.3.2 The Chair noted that it is up to the applicant to provide the Panel with any information that will assist in determining the merit of the application. The Panel, in determining the merit of each application, also noted the ranking provided by research centre or institute Directors. Detailed committee feedback is only given to ranked applicants considered by the Committee. Directors will need to be ready with feedback for unranked applicants.

4.3.3 The Committee discussed the number of research centres and the lack of them in AEL, particularly creative arts. In general the Committee was concerned that appropriate support and a research environment should exist for the researchers applying for these grants and that this was best focussed through approved University research centres and institutes.

4.3.4 On a question of whether there would be a quota for the two types of awards, the Chair indicated that the primary focus is on merit and this would not always fall out evenly across the two categories. Given the low ratio of available grants to applicants and the fact that these are highly competitive grants; a quota might not allow selection of the best candidates.

4.3.5 The Committee discussed the value of some of the information requested in the application form and its applicability to some Groups, they also sought clarification of the role of Research Centre Directors and the noted duplication of information was requested. OR will use this information to revise the guidelines and selection criteria.

Approved

4.4 Simon Fraser University
4.4.1 The Chair reported that a large delegation from Simon Fraser University (SFU) had recently visited. The purpose of this visit was to further develop a research and teaching engagement proposal and to foster collaboration that will allow people to move between institutions. This is being formalised through the SFU-Griffith collaborative research scheme to which Griffith and SFU will both contribute funds to support travel between each institution.

Noted

5.0 DEAN’S REPORT

5.1 Thesis Examinations Processing Business Review

5.1.1 The Dean reported that the thesis examinations processing business review had been prompted by a number of policy changes which had led to reductions in thesis completions.

5.1.2 The process review will map current practices and be compared to other universities to ensure there are no gaps, that it will achieve the best outcome and be timely. Once this is complete there will need to be a number of policies updated through the Board of Graduate Research prior to introducing online processes.

Noted

5.2 GGRS Confirmations Team Place – Supervisor Manual

5.2.1 The Dean reported that one of the interim measures put in place from the review is the GGRS Confirmations using Team Place. Vicky Kristofferson provided a presentation on how Team Place will work and functional aspects including workbenches, access restrictions and supporting software (Adobe) to up-load and down-load attachments.

5.2.2 The Dean highlighted that the process used in Team Place creates greater transparency and speeds up processing.

Noted

5.3 HDR Student Liaison Committee

5.3.1 The Dean reported on the first meeting of HDR Student Liaison Committee.

Noted

5.4 Scholarships Strategy

5.4.1 The Dean reported that there will be 44 scholarships available in the mid-year scholarship round. GGRS will again be using Team Place to process the scholarship applications.

5.4.2 The timelines for the mid-year have been communicated to the Deans.

5.4.3 The Dean reported that once the scholarship round is completed the process will be documented and then circulated for information and comment.

Noted

5.5 Board of Graduate Research Action List
6.0 HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC) ANNUAL REPORT 2009

6.1 The Director OR provided a contextual introduction to the annual report and highlighted that while the report pertained to 2009 the timeframe for writing aligns with the reporting schedule for NHMRC (i.e. 1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010). For this reason some events and issues have been overtaken due to the time lag in tabling this report with the Research Committee. Several issues which were well recognised were already being addressed through changes to university administrative and information systems.

6.2 The Deputy Director Research Policy OR provided a summary of key points from the Annual Report. These included the time lines for ethics approvals and the improvements made to the approval process for expedited and negligible risk reviews. System improvements were delayed as a consequence of the move to a new research information system in 2012, however, the new system should address all of the HREC’s recommendations relating to information technology.

6.3 More training for HREC Committee members, research ethics advisers, early career researchers and graduate students has been undertaken in 2010-2011 however, there are no refresher courses for more senior researchers. While ethics oversight of most funded research is excellent it was considered that commercial research needs to be monitored with respect to ethics approvals. In 2010 four ethics audits of randomly chosen projects were undertaken and six audits are planned for 2011 with rolling audits thereafter.

6.4 The report recommended that a proposal for a formal review of the University’s human research ethics arrangements be formulated in 2011, however, it was noted that the review of Office for Research as a whole is proceeding and that this would influence and potentially delay the timing of a separate ethics review.

6.5 Overall, the report highlighted the continuing need for institutions and researchers at all levels to remain vigilant to ethics concerns in the conduct of their research.

Action OR to present a response to the report to the April meeting on the actions taken to address the recommendations in the HREC Annual Report 2009.

7.0 MERGER OF INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PEST FRUIT FLIES INTO THE ENVIRONMENT FUTURES CENTRE

7.1 The Chair noted that the former International Centre for the Management of Pest Fruit Flies was a small but high profile Group research centre.

7.2 The merger of these two centres does not strictly fall inside the Research Centres Policy as a centre merger but is presented here for information of committee members. The merger will allow maintenance of research identity for this group of researchers within the EFC.

Noted

8.0 ERA 2012 PROPOSED SUBMISSION PREPARATION SCHEDULE

8.1 The Deputy Director Research Policy OR discussed the proposed submission preparation schedule for ERA 2012 noting that no substantial changes from ERA 2010 were anticipated. The preliminary preparation for ERA 2012 has commenced through public consultations.
8.2 A consultation paper has been released seeking comment on ERA guidelines, discipline matrix, mix of peer review and citation analysis, cluster structures, low volume threshold, and thresholds for peer review. Any changes to the volume threshold will potentially impact the number of fields of research that the University is able to submit for assessment in ERA 2012. With respect to the consultation process an institutional response will be prepared and Research Committee members are invited to forward their input. However, there is also an opportunity for individuals to respond.

8.3 ERA submission planning will see OR contacting Deans (Research) to reinstitute Group-based Academic Advisory Committees. Groups can contribute to ERA 2012 immediately by ensuring that X publications for new appointments are captured in My Research Publications.

8.4 The Committee discussed the issues unique to the mathematics discipline and how it is dissipated into other areas in ERA. The University will monitor the maths field of research closely to determine whether it is feasible to submit for assessment in ERA 2012.

Action OR to circulate ERA 2012 Consultation Paper to Research Committee Members to provide input into a consolidated Griffith submission.

9.0 RESEARCH COMMITTEE VACANCY – EARLY CAREER REPRESENTATIVE

9.1 The Dean noted that the Research Committee currently has a vacancy for an early career representative. Groups are to identify a representative, willing and agreeable to participating on Research Committee for consideration and discussion at the next meeting.

Action Research Committee members are to provide names of an early career representative from their Group to the Secretary, Research Committee.

10.0 GU CODE FOR THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

10.1 The Secretary explained that the changes to the policy were minor in nature and were required as a result of the removal of Faculties from the organisational structure. The policy was amended to include the new academic and general staff enterprise agreements and removed Faculty Deans in Section 7.

Approved

11.0 SUBMITTING AGENDA ITEMS TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11.1 The Chair invited Research Committee members to submit agenda items for the committee’s consideration. The inclusion of any item will be determined by the Chair.

Noted

12.0 REPORTS FROM THE OFFICE FOR RESEARCH

The following reports were considered by the Committee:
Research Applications for 01/02/11 – 04/03/11
Grants Awarded for 01/02/11 – 04/03/11
Consultancies Awarded for 01/02/11 – 04/03/11
HREC Minutes 01/2011

Noted
13.0 2011 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS
   Next meeting 9.30am-11.30am, Tuesday 12 April, Mt Gravatt Social Sciences M10 Room 5.01

Noted

14.0 Other Business
   No other business to report.