Assoc Prof Melissa Brown, Ms Eve Chow, Mr Nial Gursanscky (in the Chair from Item 3), Mr Pinus Jumaryatno, Prof Alastair McEwan (in the chair until Item 3), Mr Xiang Setoh, Ms Arti Singh, Mr Mark Starkey, Mr Peter Vella, Mr Daniel Westlake, Dr Peter Wilce.

Mr Karl Davy.

Ms Meity Sasube.

Head of School, Alastair McEwan welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the Committee and thanked them for volunteering. The School wished to give students the best opportunities it could, and in doing so to hear from students about ways in which the School could improve. Prof McEwan said that RHD and Honours students gave significant time and commitment to the School.

Members endorsed the terms of reference, mode of operation, and membership composition of the Committee, viewable on the School’s public website.

Melissa Brown that Meity Sasube had applied to transfer her candidature from SCMB. A replacement would be sought.

Alastair McEwan proposed that membership by the Head of School be altered to read ‘Head of School or nominee’, to provide for circumstances in which he was unable to attend a meeting. This was agreed.

In terms of the operation of the Committee, it was anticipated that discussions would be open and relatively informal.

Prof McEwan advised that the School would prefer that the Committee be chaired by a student member.

Following a call for nominations, foreshadowed in the agenda papers, Nial Gursanscky was the sole nominee and so was declared elected unopposed. Nial took the chair from this point of the meeting onwards.

Members were advised that there was currently a vacancy for a RHD student representative of the Molecular Biosciences Building on the School’s Occupational Health & Safety Committee. The Chemistry Building representative was Wei Zhong, who had been a member of the OH&S Committee prior to formation of the Student Consultative Committee.

Members noted the terms of reference and frequency of meetings of the OH&S Committee. Daniel Westlake advised that he was interested in the role. There being no other expressions of interest from the meeting, it was agreed that Daniel become the MBS Building RHD student representative. [Subsequent to the meeting, Mark Starkey advised the secretary of the OHSC of Daniel’s membership, so that Daniel could be advised of the dates of upcoming meetings, etc.]

Peter Vella reported that many scientific programs run on the UNIX platform, built in to Mac or Windows (eg, NMR Draw, NMR Pipe, CCPNMR). Science ICT Support does not officially support UNIX, meaning there is little help available to a student who does not have a programming background. It recently had taken him two days to find someone who could assist.
4. Support for UNIX-based computer programs: (cont’d)

Prior to the meeting, Mark Starkey had sought advice from the Manager of Science ICT Support, Mr Andrew Exley. Andrew had advised that the newly-formed Faculty was currently undertaking a review of ICT support. (Mark Starkey is a member of the Review Committee.) The Committee would soon be seeking input from the Faculty community as to their ICT requirements and would take all suggestions into account.

Until something was resolved from the review, Andrew had advised that UNIX support could not be offered by Science ICT Support, as the skill set required did not exist within the team.

Alastair McEwan said that there was a sizeable demand, including from some staff, for specialist UNIX support within the School. He anticipated that with the recent inclusion of the School of Maths & Physics in the Faculty, Faculty-wide UNIX use would have increased.

It was agreed that submissions should be made to the Science ICT Review for the provision of UNIX support. In the meantime, it was suggested that Peter and other students in his situation try for assistance from Dr Thomas Huber or from School contacts in the Centre for Magnetic Resonance, via their advisors.

5. Vector NTI licence:

Nial Gursanscky mentioned that he understood that the academic licence for Vector NTI software had expired. There were groups in SCMB interested in continuing to use the software, but costs were understood to be substantial. It was noted that software was sometimes available on a site licence basis with a capped number of ’seats’ (simultaneous users), as a more cost-effective option.

Alastair McEwan invited Nial to email Mark Starkey about the issue, for possible consideration by the School’s Research Committee, as provision of the software licence could be viewed as research support.

6. Chemistry Building Goods Lift:

Peter Vella reported that the Chemistry Building goods lift breaks down on a recurring basis and is rather slow.

Accordingly, reported Peter, people are using the main lifts to transport pathological waste and chemicals, which could be dangerous. Also, path waste bins in labs tend to become full due to the difficulty in transporting them to Level 1.

Prior to the meeting, Mark Starkey had sought advice from the School’s Building & Facilities Manager (also a Workplace Health & Safety Officer), Greg Browne, in the absence of Lyle Carrington, the School’s Safety Coordinator. Greg had advised that it is acceptable to transport path waste in passenger lifts. Many buildings in UQ, including the Molecular Biosciences Building (76), do not have goods lifts but transport path waste in passenger lifts.

Greg had advised that the goods lift is essential for the transport of gases where the volume is greater than one litre. This is due to the risk of asphyxiation in a passenger lift if volumes greater than one litre were to escape in the presence of people in the lift.

Experience had found that the goods lift is prone to malfunction, and that 90% of problems can be rectified by re-setting the mechanism from a control panel on Level 1. Workshop staff and Greg Rees had typically done this, but it is not a good use of their time.

The current strategy for dealing with the problem is to report every malfunction to the University’s Works Control Centre. This is because the more often a repair job is logged on the WCC database, the more likely attention will be given to a longer-term solution, such as replacement of the lift’s electrics. To this end, Greg Browne had placed a sticker next to the lift door on every level of the Chemistry Building that states, ‘Please report goods lifts faults to 52222’.
6. Chemistry Building Goods Lift: (cont’d)

Greg had advised that users are encouraged to report faults to this telephone number. If, however, the lift is genuinely needed before the fault can be rectified by University maintenance staff, Greg Browne, Greg Rees or Graham Rose (Workshop Level 1) can be contacted to attempt a re-set.

Arti Singh reported that a student friend of hers had been told by the School’s Safety Coordinator not to transport gases of any volume in the passenger lifts, and she had heard a report of a student being told not to take dry ice into the lift.

Members agreed that advice needed to be consistent and well-published. Mark Starkey undertook to raise the matter with the School’s OH&S Committee and to investigate whether signs could be put in the Chemistry passenger lifts about what was allowable, and that these signs be consistent across both of the School’s buildings.

It was also noted that the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science had advised that a substantial budget provision had been made for OH&S. It could be that the School’s OH&S Committee could seek funding from this source to upgrade the goods lift.

[Subsequent to the meeting, Mark Starkey raised the above matters at the OHSC meeting of 1 April. It was agreed there that no gases should be transported in the passenger lifts at the same time as passengers. It was further agreed that guidelines on the transport of gases, chemicals and pathological waste in School lifts be written for publication on the School’s OH&S intranet page, and that consistent signs be place in all of the School’s lifts. Regarding the goods lift, it was agreed that a hazard report be prepared, with a view to seeking, via the Faculty, OH&S Minor Works funding to upgrade the lift.]

7. Swipecard access in the Molecular Biosciences Building:

Following on from the preceding item, Xiang Setoh suggested that controlling access to whole research floors in the MBS Building could enhance safety with respect to easier control of access to PC2 and PC3 laboratories.

Alastair McEwan replied that floor-based swipecard access in the MBS Building had been under consideration by the School for some time and had not been implemented primarily due to a shortage of funds. However advice had been received recently from Greg Browne that because PC2 and PC3 labs were mixed in with other-use spaces on each floor, self-closing and self-locking doors to the labs would be required regardless of floor-wide swipe access, in order to meet safety requirements.

If there were sound arguments for floor-wide swipe access, Alastair thought that Levels 5 and 4 should be the first floors to be done.

8. RHD Student Symposium:

Members noted a request from the Deputy Head of School, Prof Mary Garson, that RHD students give some thought to persons who would be suitable as a plenary speaker for the 2009 RHD Student Symposium, expected to be held in November.

Arti Singh reported that, for the 2008 Symposium, she had emailed a number of School staff for suggestions. The Chair of the organising committee then followed up leads.

Peter Vella suggested that this year’s speaker be someone from industry. Mark Starkey mentioned that the School had just formed an Industry Advisory Board, with six industry representatives as members. He undertook to email the names to RSCC student members as possible leads.

Al McEwan asked members of their views of the format of the event. During discussion, the following points were made:

- Feedback from students was that the Chemistry and MBS talks could be separated, as not everyone understands the topics. However, several members saw that this as inconsistent with the School’s attempts to unify the disciplines.
8. RHD Student Symposium: (cont’d)

- Some candidature final review seminars were incorporated into the student talks, because they could not be fitted in to the School’s regular seminar program. As the talk length at the symposium was only 15 minutes, this was seen by some to be inequitable.
- Some talks ran overtime, and it was felt to be difficult for a chairperson to wind up speakers, particularly if candidature review was involved.
- First and second year students could give shorter talks.
- To overcome the problem of the audience as a whole understanding particular topics and the problem of conciseness in delivery, student speakers could be briefed ahead of the event on delivery techniques. Melissa Brown suggested that this could be a topic for one of the RHD student forums.
- Instead of talks by all students, some of the talks could be a overview of a research group’s activities – a kind of ‘research showcase’ for a couple of laboratories.
- There was a lack of time to view posters. It was suggested that poster-viewing could be a dedicated session, separate from the talks.
- To create more time in the day, perhaps there was no need for a plenary speaker. A separate lecture, arranged by the RHD students (as occurs in other Schools such as BIOL and SBMS) could be added to the School’s public lecture series.

The student organisers of the symposium would consider the above points and liaise with Mary Garson.

9. Formation of a Social Committee and the holding of regular social events:

Nial Gursanscky suggested that a regular informal event where members of the School could meet and socialise would be beneficial. The postgraduate committee could organise and manage such events.

Mark Starkey advised by way of background that School-wide staff social events (other than hospitality provided in association with official School events such as some staff meetings) tended to be arranged on an ad-hoc basis and in 2008 consisted of a Melbourne Cup lunch and a Christmas lunch. Committees of volunteers were formed specifically for these events. Funding is provided from a social club account, which is separate from UQ accounts, and by cash contributions by staff.

The School is permitted under UQ rules to only provide catering to events where it largely incidental to a business meeting – that is, where the primary purpose of a gathering is to transact official university business, but the duration and timing of the meeting is such that refreshments or a meal can reasonably be provided, then catering paid for from UQ funds is permitted. Student groups are expected to be self-funding. The postgraduate committee had recently held a BBQ at which it called for donations. It received about one-third of the cost of the event, but had taken a softly-softly approach.

Nial pointed to the School of Biological Sciences which held weekly Friday afternoon drinks atop the Goddard Building. This was funded by donations. Although alcohol was consumed, it was not sold, obviating the need for a liquor licence. [However, a UQ Permit to Consume Liquor would be required.]

Members asked if permission would be required to use venues in the SCMB precinct, such as the ‘secret garden’ outside the MBS Building and the Chemistry Podium. Mark Starkey replied that external spaces were generally controlled by UQ Property & Facilities Division, whereas the Podium was booked by the School. Use of the external spaces was normally permitted if the occupants of adjacent buildings did not object.

10. Next meeting:

Mark Starkey would arrange the next meeting for later in the semester and issue a call for agenda items. Agenda items foreshadowed by members so far were:

- Content of RHD Student Forums – Melissa Brown.
- Attendance at School seminars – Nial Gursanscky and Melissa Brown.
- UniFi (the University’s financial system) – Peter Vella.

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