Meeting 1/12
10 May 2012
For general publication

Present: Miss Kylie Agnew-Francis, Mr Mohammed Alaidarous, Mr Nabil Alikhan (in the chair from Item 4), Mr Jed Burns, Ms Lena Daumann, Mr Jacob Dulley, Mrs Chandhi Goonasekera, Dr Lisbeth Grondahl (in the chair up to and including Item 3), Ms Rhiannon Mondav, Ms Katie Nichols, Ms Sohinee Sarkar, Mr Mark Starkey (minutes), Mr Liam Tille.

Apology: Prof Melissa Brown.

Welcome: Lisbeth Grondahl welcomed members to the first meeting of 2012, noting that all but one of the student members was new to the Committee. Members introduced themselves.

1. Terms of reference and membership composition:

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

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

2. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 30 November 2011:

Those who had been present at the meeting agreed that the minutes were a true reflection of the business conducted, and so the minutes were confirmed.

3. Election of Chairperson and appointment of Secretary:

Following a call for nominations, two candidates spoke to the meeting. Following a secret ballot of the student members of the Committee, Nabil Alikhan was elected to the chair.

Mark Starkey would provide secretarial support to the Committee.

4. Business arising out of the minutes (not elsewhere listed in the agenda):

Lab Photographs

Mark Starkey reported that captioned versions of the 2011 lab group photos had been placed on the School’s Facebook page. The last of the Honours group photos from second semester 2011 were being captioned and would be made available to students shortly.

Photos of the first semester 2012 Honours intake and lab groups who wanted photos had been taken in March 2012 and had been distributed/published.

Financial Surplus, Research Students Symposium 2011

At Meeting 7-11, it had been reported that somewhere between $4,000 and $5,000 of funding remained unspent from the event. Members had agreed that this be put towards the 2012 event.

Mark Starkey explained that the funds, having been held in a School operating budget account, were not able to be carried forward from 2011 to 2012. UQ policy was that unspent operating funds from one year are not routinely available in the following year. However, the School could choose to commit funds in its 2012 budget as a subsidy towards the symposium. In 2011, $6,250 had been allocated by the School in this way, and could be regarded as ‘underwriting’ funds.

Thus, the excess 2011 funds could be regarded as part of the 2012 School underwriting commitment, which had been determined by the School Executive Committee to be $6,250 again.
5. Honours and RHD applications and enrolments 2012:

Members noted that, at 31 March 2012 (first semester census date) there were 31 BSc Honours students enrolled (8 Chemistry, 8 Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, 15 Microbiology & Parasitology). This included students who had commenced in second semester 2011. This compared with 65 students at 31 March 2011 (13 CHEM, 15 BMB, 37 MICR/PARA).

At 31 March 2012 there were 171 RHD students enrolled in SCMB, compared to 204 at the same date in 2011.

Members noted that enrolments had dropped despite undergraduate enrolments holding relatively steady and asked what the longer term trend was. Mark Starkey replied that Honours numbers tended to vary up and down from year to year, whereas RHD enrolments had seen small declines over recent years. He suggested that over the long term, enrolments tended to increase in times of higher unemployment and decrease when the employment market was stronger. The School was taking a number of measures to grow its Honours and RHD enrolments.

6. RHD Forums:

Lisbeth Grondahl invited members to consider whether they would like to see RHD student forums held in the School, as had been the case in some recent years. Past topics had included:
- How to apply for jobs/grants.
- Where to from here – speakers from industry, academia, government sectors.
- Experiences of SCMB RHD students as a postdoc and as a student visiting overseas laboratories.

Possible topics were seminars run specifically for RHD students by the Careers Unit in UQ Student Services, which can be delivered solely to SCMB students at an agreed date:

1. How to Write a Winning Resume & Cover Letter for RHD students
   “Your resume is an important marketing tool. Learn how to market yourself appropriately and stand out from the crowd. This workshop will help you to prepare your academic resume that reflects your skills, knowledge, education and academic achievement.”

2. Career Development for RHD Students.
   “This workshop aims to increase your self-awareness, knowledge of the labour market and career options relevant to your postgraduate study. This includes self-reflection on your skills and attributes gained from RHD and beyond. Additionally you will learn how to articulate those skills and we have tips from employers that are seeking postgraduate students. It is all about finding the right work that suits your needs, skills, preferences and ambitions.”

Members noted that the Graduate School offered topics similar in style to those on offer from Student Services, but some members had found them too generic. Members said that they would be interested in the Student Services seminars if they were to be science-specific.

Members felt that the second of the Student Services seminars might be somewhat nebulous and that the first seminar was more likely to be useful. Jacob Dulley suggested that value could be added to the seminar by including advice on how to perform in a selection interview.

Members suggested that a workshop on how to write abstracts for papers and conferences would be useful, as would a workshop on how to write grant applications (similar to workshops offered by the School to early-career research staff).

Lisbeth Grondahl undertook to take account of members’ feedback and follow up the options.

7. Making Turnitin or Writecheck available to RHD and Honours students:

Lena Daumann reported that a couple of students had suggested to her that it would be useful in writing a document as large as a thesis if the student could check if they had inadvertently plagiarised any material.
7. Making *Turnitin* or *Writecheck* available to RHD and Honours students: (cont’d)

Lisbeth Grondahl said that she had been investigating how plagiarism detection software might be used by RHD students and had spoken with the UQ Integrity Officer and with an officer in the Graduate School. The advice she had received was that it would be appropriate to make submission of the confirmation report to *Turnitin* compulsory, to be used as a learning tool for students and in order for candidates to be given advice. Otherwise, it had been suggested that *Turnitin* be available to students to submit work for scanning as they saw fit. Notwithstanding, the University reserved the right to use whatever tools were available to it to detect plagiarism in work submitted for assessment.

It was understood that *Turnitin* could be set up such that drafts could be submitted to it without it being added to the *Turnitin* database (to protect intellectual property and to avoid subsequent reports of matching work), such that the report was returned only to the submitter. Lisbeth was consulting with School administrative staff on the establishment of an RHD student community in *Blackboard*, which would facilitate this approach. She hoped that the service would be available to students by June.

8. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:

Members were advised that the tentative date set by the School for the 2012 symposium was Thursday 22 November, noting that the School’s examiner’s meetings would be held Wednesday 21 November. This date was equivalent to the same date in the academic year as symposia of recent years – ie, after exam marking but before staff start to depart for conferences and leave.

Lisbeth Grondahl and Mark Starkey recommended that an organising committee be formed as soon as possible to commence planning for the event. In recent years, the student members of the RSCC had formed the core organising committee. They had been assisted by other RHD students and had been able to call on staff members of the RSCC and Jill Sheridan, the School’s Research &Research Training Administrative Coordinator, for advice.

It was suggested that the 2012 committee refer to the minutes of meetings of the RSCC in 2011 (on the School web page) for organising hints. Resources, in the form of documents from student organisers of previous years’ symposia, were available on a School file share directory, to which all members had been given access. Members who experienced any difficulty accessing the directory were invited to let Mark Starkey know. Nabil Alikhan invited members to consult the documents ahead of the next meeting.

Members noted a preparations list used by the 2011 Committee for overview planning. It had been developed and updated for each meeting by the Chairperson. Mark Starkey suggested that members may wish to use an equivalent tool in 2012, and Nabil Alikhan volunteered to maintain the document.

Members began discussing aspects of the symposium.

**Format**

Members noted feedback collected by the 2011 committee on the pros and cons of parallel sessions and acknowledged that parallel sessions allowed a greater number of students with conference-standard work to make presentations. It was suggested that parallel sessions could be dedicated to particular disciplines, with a single session for more interdisciplinary work.

**Venue**

Members discussed a number of venue options. The Parnell theatres, used in 2011 and 2010, were seen to be suitable, as were the Hawken theatres, if the atrium space could be used for posters and lunch. The Llew Edwards building had good theatres and foyer space, but a hiring fee would apply.

Nabil Alikhan invited members to think of suitable venues ahead of the next meeting and to send suggestions to Mark Starkey to include in the agenda papers. Mark pointed out that lecture theatre attributes could be viewed online at [http://www.uq.edu.au/teachingspace/index.html?page=5106&pid=5102](http://www.uq.edu.au/teachingspace/index.html?page=5106&pid=5102).
8. **Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:** (cont’d)

**Catering**

Lena Daumann volunteered to help with catering. She asked members for their views on the standard of the 2011 catering, and the consensus was that it had been suitable.

**Sponsorship**

In response to a question from a member, Mark Starkey advised that information on the amount of money raised by the 2011 committee in sponsorship, and which organisations had been approached, was available in the afore-mentioned share directory of documentation.

He suggested that many sponsoring organisations run financial year budgets and would be formulating their budgets now for the new financial year, including allocations for sponsorship. Members agreed that it was timely to be making approaches to sponsors. Accordingly, it was agreed that a subcommittee, consisting of Nabil Alikhan, Jed Burns, Lena Daumann and Sohinee Sarkar meet informally at 1.00pm on 25 May on the Chemistry Podium to finalise letters to sponsors.

9. **Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on 8 June.

Jacob Dulley indicated that, as he would be graduating mid-year, the June meeting may be his last.

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