Minutes

School Meeting

12.00noon, Friday, 9 October 2015, Blakers Lecture Theatre


1. Apologies

Ed Cripps, Nev Fowkes, Michael Giudici, John Lau, Miccal Matthews, Tony Pakes, Cheryl Praeger, Phil Schultz, Berwin Turlach

2. Confirmation of Minutes from 17 July 2015 and Business Arising from the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2015 were accepted as a correct record.

Business Arising

Andrew Bassom will be departing at the end of the year for a new role at the University of Tasmania. Andrew and Gillian have invited members of the School to a Farewell Devonshire Cream Tea on Saturday, 24 October 2015. We will also be holding a farewell morning tea for Andrew at the School on 2 November 2015.

The Level E position which will replace Andrew’s role has been advertised. This position will have a level B/C tied to it. It is being fast-tracked but it is optimistic to think it will be filled before semester 2 2016.

Congratulations to Michael Small who has been appointed to an ERO Chair in Complex Systems. This is terrific news not just for Michael but for the whole School.

Congratulations to Cheryl Praeger who was inducted into the WA Science Hall of Fame.

Professor Paul Baird is visiting from Laboratoire de Mathematiques, De Bretagne Atlantique. Paul is a very distinguished geometer. Paul will be working with Lyle as well as postgraduate students and contributing to complex systems workshops. Paul has interests in combinatorics and mathematical physics.

The School was invited to put forward proposals for new appointments. A proposal was put forward but it was knocked back. Proposals are only going to be successful if there is a business plan that shows how these positions will be financially viable.

The enrichment classes are coming to an end. Thank you to everyone who contributed to these classes. As part of the workload model staff are expected to perform a certain amount
of service and for those staff who contributed to these classes – Lucho, Nazim, Miccal, Michael Small, Tony, Jenny and CJ – this service was appreciated.

There have been no further updates on when works will commence on the building.

Thank you to John Bamberg for organising Open Day. John has also put together a list of staff members going back to the start of mathematics at UWA. It is a very interesting document and shows the change in staffing numbers of the years. This will be made available on the web when complete.

Thank you to Nazim Khan for acting as Program Chair during Des’s leave.

3. **Head of School Report (Lyle Noakes)**

Staffing – we currently have imbalances and weaknesses in some areas of our staffing however positive news is the new appointment in Applied, Michael Small’s ERO Chair which brings with it 3 postdoctoral positions, and we have also received approval for a Level C position to replace Michael Small for the 5 years of his appointment.

Ed Cripps was successful in winning a grant with other staff within the Faculty and as a result of this will be bought out of 60% of his teaching workload next year.

Research – it had been reported that the Faculty would be providing seed money of $30,000 each to the critical mass research groups, however Gordon indicated that there is now some uncertainty around this as the University may reclaim this money. If provided each research group will have to provide a spending plan by the end of the year and next year will have to provide a report on how the money was spent. These reports will impact on how much funding is available in the future.

Equipment – The Faculty has called for expressions of interest regarding the purchase of equipment. The aim is to improve the student experience. Suggestions put forward included:

- Software
- New desks in lecture venues
- Improvements to the wifi on the ground floor of the Mathematics building
- Air-conditioning on the ground floor
- Rooms for third year students, honours students and postgraduate students to congregate
- A card-based system for first year test sign-in
- Decoupling double projectors
- Facilities for making short 10-15 minute video presentations for in-class or webpage use.
- Facilities to pre-record lectures including boards etc that can be incorporated into the recordings.

Lyle asked for any further suggestions to be sent to him by Monday.
Review of Courses – the University is conducting a review of courses. One of the problems we currently face is it’s very difficult for engineers to do more Mathematics because of the structure for broadening units. We will be putting forward a case that Mathematics is a universal language and therefore it would be beneficial for Maths to have a special status so that our broadening units are available to students within as well as outside our Faculty.

4. Undergraduate Matters (Nazim Khan)

The latest teaching allocations for 2016 were circulated this week. Due to changes in our staffing we now show as overworked on the workload model so we will not be required to provide teaching to other Schools next year. There are still some gaps in the allocation. We are hoping to receive funding from the Faculty to fill these gaps with casual staff.

There may be changes to the allocation of casual tutors and markers next year. Currently Des has a list of available tutors which he works from to allocate tutors and markers. This is quite a lot of work for one person and it means UC’s don’t have a lot of input into who their tutors are. Nazim will be suggesting to Des that we maintain the pool of tutors but then UC’s select and manage their own tutors/markers.

CS marks – all tutors will be given access to appropriate units and Unit Co-ordinators will then need to give the tutors access to individual projects.

Workload – Nazim has been looking at ways in which we can reduce our workload but still remain within Faculty guidelines. The Engineering staff don’t teach as much, however their course structure is quite different so it may mean that we require a different status for teaching and learning. Nazim has also been investigating other possibilities such as flipped-mode teaching which is also receiving support from the University. John Bamberg commented that his preference is for recorded lectures to be supplemental to regular classes as it is important for students to meet and engage with each other.

As part of the workload Nazim is also investigating how much of unit co-ordination counts as service and exactly what unit co-ordination should involve.

Review of courses – as Program Chair Nazim made a submission on behalf of the School to the Review of Courses. Nazim and Lyle have also been invited for an interview. The review is now open for feedback to the University.

Unit budgets – UC’s will receive a budget template which they will need to complete for their units next year. This information will be input into a worksheet which will cover spending for all units and will be monitored to ensure that spending matches the budgets. Please ensure that unit budgets are correct and all information is provided because the Finance and Staff Resources Team will query any overspends.

Assessment – The University is currently looking at an assessment policy which in the main is to be implemented in 2017 but with some parts possibly implemented in 2016. It will be
criteria-based assessment. The criteria will need to be made available to students beforehand and the criteria will be linked to the learning outcomes. Melissa Lee commented as a student that an overarching assessment policy will be beneficial for students. Currently each Faculty has its own assessment policy and criteria for granting special considerations which has caused problems for students doing double majors.

DUGS – to reduce the load on one person the position of Director of Undergraduate Studies will be split into several components next year.

Part-time tutors room – we requested a room for our part-time tutors from the Faculty however this is still pending.

Lyle urged all staff to read the meeting minutes when they are released and consider the suggestions Nazim has made. Some of these suggestions would mean significant changes but they would also spread the workload more evenly. These suggestions are a starting point for further conversation.

5. Postgraduate Matters (Thomas Stemler)

Gordon was acting Postgraduate Co-ordinator during Thomas’s absence.

No further news to report.

6. Outreach Committee report (John Bamberg)

Thank you to everyone who helped out on Open Day and thanks to Tania for her assistance. Michael Small mentioned that he is currently working on a new project which could possibly be used for an Open Day display next year.

A large event for students will be held in the break after exams. Approximately 200 students are expected so the Outreach Committee may ask for assistance.

There will be a School visit during the study break.

WAJO will be held on Saturday, 31 October 2015. Assistance will be required for this event so an email has been circulated requesting volunteers.

7. Any Other Business

Alice reported that 8 honours students will be submitting their dissertations this semester. Sixteen markers will be required so please be generous with your time and volunteer.

Meeting closed 12.40pm.