MINUTES

SCHOOL MEETING

2.00pm, FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2011, MLR3

Present: Andrew Bassom (Chair), Wally Andrioni, John Bamberg, Alice Devillers, Nev Fowkes, Michael Giudici, Des Hill, Jenny Hopwood, Les Jennings, Kevin Judd, Nazim Khan, Cai Heng Li, Kevin Murray, Lyle Noakes, Tony Pakes, Cheryl Praeger, Gordon Royle, Thomas Stemler, Lucho Stoyanov, Steve Su, Berwin Turlach, Song Wang,

1. Apologies

Kathleen Chindarsi, Ed Cripps, CJ Goh, John Lau, Robin Milne, Melanie Roberts, Phill Schultz, James Springham

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 September 2011 were accepted as a true and correct record.

3. HOS Report

Research Grants - Thank you to all staff who put in applications for Future Fellowships and DECRAs. The Faculty as a whole did poorly with only 4 DECRAs and 1 Future Fellowship. The Future Fellowship is in Maths for Michael Small. Michael was a PhD student in the late 90’s with Kevin Judd. We hope that Michael will come next year but there are one or two details to be sorted out first. The Fellowship is for 4 years and then Michael becomes a permanent member of staff.

HOS Funds - The second transfer of funds from the HOS PG to personal staff PG’s has been put on hold for the moment. The Dean has stopped this as he feels that HOS funds should be used by the HOS. Andrew will discuss this further with the Dean and request that the transfers go ahead.

ERA – There has been a call for peer reviews of the submitted work in 0101 for 2012. For some groups in the ERA, including Pure Mathematics, 30% of the work submitted is selected for peer-review where the quality of that work is assessed. Andrew requested that the Pure Section meet informally between now and Christmas to get a rough idea of
what has been submitted for ERA2012 (data available from Les Jennings) and select 30% of that for peer-review. This will just be a starting point, it can be changed later on.

Andrew also received a phone call from Lorna Robertson. For 2010 each School had an ERA steward appointed and the steward had responsibility for checking data and preparing the explanatory statement. They are looking for a steward for this ERA exercise. If you would like to volunteer please let the HOS know.

PDR’s – The Faculty would like to have all PDR’s done by Christmas. The system we used last year worked fairly well and Andrew suggested using the same system this year. Each section will need to put forward one assessor. Each member of staff will then put forward their preferred 1st, 2nd and 3rd assessor. We will try to give staff their 1st or 2nd preference as well as keeping the workload even between the assessors.

The Faculty has been redesigning the PDR form on ESS but this is not available yet. Further information will be circulated when it is available.

Industry Advisory Group – Each School has an Industry Advisory Panel (IAP). Our School’s IAP meets quarterly and the aim is to let people in industry know what is happening here. Andrew received 2 letters this week, one from DAA and one from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Both letters are quite critical of the new structure of our degree, particularly mathematics and quantitative methods. Andrew has acknowledged receipt of these letters and passed them on to the Dean and Cara MacNish. They are available if staff would like to read them. Most of the comments are addressing matters we already know about, in particular that there is not enough mathematics or statistics in the degrees to turn out good quality mathematicians and statisticians. We have designed the first 3 years of the 3+2 the best that we could though given the constraints of the University. It is possible that in the future we may be able to modify the structure of the degree.

Last week the Engineering degrees underwent accreditation by Engineers Australia. This was combined with the Australian Computer Society assessing the Computer Science major. The Australian Computer Society was not happy with the major because they felt there was not enough maths in it so we may be asked to assist with this. In the long term the Computer Science major will not be accredited as the Society felt it didn’t contain enough detailed knowledge. This has been communicated to the University and they have indicated that the structure could be changed so accreditation can be granted. This seems to indicate that there may be some flexibility in the structure so we may be able to get some changes in the future.

AMSI Summer School – Each year AMSI runs a 4 week summer school principally for Honours students. This is run at a different University each year. The host institution
puts on a sequence of courses of approximately 6-8 units and students typically sign up for 2 courses. The content of these courses will be similar to Honours units at a University. Some Universities will give full credit for these units but some have reservations about quality control. Geoff Prince, the Director of AMSI, has asked if we would be prepared to host it at UWA in January 2014.

The drawbacks for hosting it include:

it’s a lot of work for the host;

it cuts into the summer break;

it’s hard work for those who are lecturing units, although we can invite outside lecturers;

The host institution usually has to contribute $20,000, being in WA Geoff Prince would like us to contribute an extra $20,000 towards airfares. In total we would need to contribute $40,000.

The positives are:

We get a month to advertise ourselves to some of the best PhD students in the country and an opportunity to attract them;

AMSI has an organising committee who organise the administrative side;

Our Masters programme will be coming in and we will have funding for that so we could attract students to that also;

We could liaise with Curtin or Murdoch and have them teach 1-2 courses.

It was agreed unanimously that the School should agree to host the 2014 Summer School. As we have plenty of time to plan ahead we can think about giving a couple of courses which give a taste of what’s going on here as well as attract international visitors to participate as well. As well as the academic side we will also have to provide a social programme for the weekends. Andrew will communicate the decision to Geoff Prince, AMSI.

HOS leave – Andrew will be on leave from Wednesday, 23 November to Friday, 2 December (inclusive). Lyle Noakes will be Acting HOS during this period.

4. Outreach Committee report

The minutes of the Outreach Committee meeting held on 11 November 2011 were circulated with the agenda.

The Faculty of Education recently held the ‘Teaching and Learning Mathematics in the Australian Curriculum’ forum. This was very good but it costs a lot of money. It was
suggested that the HOS approach the Dean to discuss the Faculty contributing funds to running this event in the future.

5. Update on New Units (Kevin Judd)

Kevin Judd advised that during the week he stood down as co-ordinator for New Units and he also provided a report on what has been done so far. Kevin had been keen to co-ordinate New Units for the School as he saw it as an opportunity to correct some of the problems with teaching within the School. However, due to a variety of different reasons development hasn’t progressed as far as he had hoped so he had decided to stand down and focus on preparing the computer materials through Calmaeth.

Based on a meeting held during the week between Des and several other staff members Des then reported on how things will proceed. Des put forward a draft 2012 lecture allocation which will also be circulated by email. At this stage service units and units that are being phased out will be staffed by lecturers who have taught them before. Our Category A broadening unit ‘Maths, Culture and Everyday Life’ will be taught by Kevin, Berwin and preferably a Pure section lecturer as well. This unit is a showcase of what mathematics contributes to in Society. At this stage we aren’t sure how many students to expect for this unit.

MM1 and MM2 are two of our new units next year. MM1 will be running in both semesters and is a pre-requisite for MM2 which is running in semester 2. We expect 1000 students in semester 1. There will be a development team and lecture team for each of the new units. At this stage we would like to get a set of course notes for each unit which makes it clear what we are trying to do. The lecturer can then run the unit off these notes but present it in their own style. Lucho, Gordon and Des have volunteered to write course notes. The notes won’t include tutorials, workshops or Calmaeth. Staff will be expected to help when asked. Due to the large numbers these units will have 5 streams with 4 streams running in AV linked lecture theatres. The 30 tutorials are booked in our lecture theatres. They will be two hour tutorials with one per week per student. There will also be a lab/workshop hour in the MCL. These units will have three lectures a week rather than four.

Adrian Dudek is available for teaching in Semester 1 prior to starting his PhD in the northern hemisphere so we are organising for him to lecture in MM1. There is funding available from the Faculty for peer tutors and this is what we hope to use for these units. We currently use peer tutors for EBS and M1050. Our only concern is whether we can employ enough quality tutors. In this case we may need to use staff but we would like to keep this to 1 tutorial per week for staff.

Jenny Hopwood has been asked to oversee the development of these two units. Jenny will be running a session next week on assessment and workshop/tutorials for these units. There is still a lot of work to be done. Clearly the focus initially will be on MM1 as
this will be running in first semester. There is also development going on with EBS which
the statisticians are working on.

At this stage we don’t have a workload model from the Faculty but in order to balance
out workloads agreement needs to be reached on what being part of the development
team is worth. After discussion the meeting agreed that development would consist of
TeXed preparation of course notes (not including tutorials/workshops) which lectures
could be based on and this would be worth 3 x delivery of a unit.

5. Any Other Business

None.

Meeting closed 3.15pm.