The University of Melbourne  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  

Research and Graduate Studies Committee Minutes  

Monday 15th October 2007  
3:15pm, Thomas Cherry Room

Present: Aleks Owczarek (Chair), Peter Taylor, Aihua Xia, Jan de Gier, Antoinette Tordesillas, Loretta Bartolini, Angela Balshaw (Minutes)

1. Minutes from previous meeting
• Iain did not provide documentation to Aihua, but they had a meeting to go over everything. Aleks suggested that Aihua put some notes together on the process. It will get complicated when it comes to scoring students.

2. RQF Update
• There was some feedback on the practical trial. One person was tough and knowledgeable and gave very detailed feedback. One person didn't seem to be qualified to comment on statistical mechanics.
• Peter advised that we take note of the first person’s feedback.
• The university wants everyone to get moving on this. Getting our publications list in order has been a good thing. Don’t want to do too much work on it prior to the election. We already have a lot of 100-word summaries.
• The journal ranking exercise is much more important. The 3 categories are Mathematics, Statistics and Others. DEST has asked us to rank them in tiers.
• The major difficulty is working out what’s applied, pure and stats.
• Would like AUSTMS to nominate some people to get together and work it all out. Peter suggested that they should fund it.
• Journals can be in more than one panel.
• There will be a lot of anomalies, we just need to look at the big picture.  
ACTION: Aleks to ask Peter Forrester to circulate the feedback.

ACTION: Angela to check with Danielle on how she’s going with the data entry.

ACTION: Everyone to have a think about their top 4 and start putting together 100-word summaries.

3. RSS Report
• For 2007, so far $15,600 has been granted, compared to $44,730 last year. There have been 10 applications this year and 9 have been funded.
• We need to make sure we monitor the overall budget of the RSS. There was an issue where an ARC grant was given just for a salary. We’re not close to reaching the budget limit at this stage.
• Loretta suggested that the reason application numbers are down is because the guidelines have changed and students need to speak at conferences. Aleks responded that supervisors have been giving students ample encouragement and opportunity.
• The point of the scheme is to give students exposure to conferences and to giving talks, and to enable them to do that.
• Loretta suggested that students should be given the opportunity to apply for funding to go to high profile conferences. Some supervisors don’t have grant money to allow their students go to conferences.
• Aleks feels that people aren’t reading the guidelines.
• Supervisors have a lot of responsibility to look after their students. Senior academics should be engaging in the grant process so they can assist their students.
• There are university traveling scholarships. The flyer is now in the induction pack for new students.

4. Grant successes
• Aleks circulated the list of grant outcomes that he has been maintaining. We received 8 Discovery grants, 7 of which are being administered by the department.
• We need to keep the momentum up.
• There was a push to participate in a Faculty scheme.
• Feeling is that most of the applications in Science are now well written. A lot of good applications don’t get up.
• How many do we aim for next year? Some of the misses can go back in again.
ACTION: Aleks to email everyone to get them to start thinking about their grant applications for next year.

5. Review of student progress

The following students are to be doing fine:
• Alex Cave
• Olivia Madill
• Tung Pham
• Sandy Clarke
• Geoffrey Decrouez
• Paul Keeler
• Michael Wheeler
• Ellie Button is engaging well. She’s on the Honours Committee.
• Heather Lonsdale – should have a paper submitted by the end of the year.
• Kim Levy – Felisa’s student. She came to see Peter and said her relationship with Felisa had broken down earlier this year. She now has 2 extra co-supervisors. Not sure if Felisa knows this. Kim’s got lots of ideas. She got through her 2 year meeting and seems to be doing well.
• Abbey Trewenack – she’s on academic leave at the moment.
• Maya Muthuswamy
• Thomas Handscomb – a good student, but having Paul away for such a long period of time has been problematic. Iain sort of looks after him but doesn’t have the specific expertise required. May need to replace Iain on the panel.
• Daniel Grixti-Cheng – getting ready to submit.
• Alana Moore – going okay, but has a chronic lack of confidence. She’ll get there, but may need an extension.
• Paul Fijn – Paul and Richard are preparing a paper together which should be close to being submitted. Aleks thinks he should finish next year.
• Alison Thomson – we think she has publications, if not appeared, in the pipeline.
• Carolyn Nickson
• Loretta – was on track to finish on time but found a mistake. 2nd paper should be ready for submission soon. Hope to finish by the end of January, have funding until then. If not, won’t be far off it.
• Timothy Robinson
• Alegra Dajic – she has a few publications now.
• Norman Do – won a prize for a talk recently. He’s reached the end of his funding at 3½ years. He thinks he needs a few more months. Peter said the department would pay him for another 6 months, though he thinks he’ll be finished before then. His supervisors haven’t been giving him any guidance on what he should do after he finishes.
• Dimetre Triadis – submitted? Angela to check, update database.
• Sen Tan – he started with a credit risk analysis exercise. He is now reading to get up to speed and is doing very well. Aihua meets with him every week to have a 2 hour discussion. He’s on track for confirmation in March next year.
• Maurice Chiodo is doing Part 3 Honours at Cambridge at the moment.

Angela to follow up on status of the following students:
• Anthony Mays
• Shanil Ramanayake
• Stephen Worcester
• Robin Langer
• Michael Lachut
• Alonso Matta
• Ashish Gupta – he has transferred from Masters to PhD, so there must have been a meeting. Dave Coulson needs to be replaced on his CSP.
• Kevin Lin
• Wendy Ensink
• Sze-Yu Chen
• Emily Duane
• Chris Goddard
• Andrew Downes
• Matthew Zuparic
• Alex Caradoc
• Cayt Harding
• Raymond Lubansky

Status of Other Students:
• Rohan Claffey – he’s on leave until the end of this year. Not sure if he will return.
• Khurram Kamran – Steve Carnie has only recently been put on as his supervisor. His confirmation period has been extended. Need to change his panel members. Will check with Khurram and his supervisor.
• Ruth Luscombe – don’t expect she will come back.
• Allan Motyer – he’s close enough to finishing that he could, but he’s working now. He’s only 2 months good work away from finishing.
• Chris Alford – he’s a mining consultant. He’s involved in Hyam’s linkage grant. There’s a conflict of interest here. He’s a good student, but he hasn’t produced anything of sufficient quality yet. Don’t think he has sufficient motivation to finish. If he’s going to stay, he should commit to it, but don’t think he will.
• Peter Fox will drop off the books at the end of the year.
• Eugene Duff – is he a Medicine student? Should be a fraction for this department. Angela to check and update database.
• Bell Foozwell may complete.
• Geordie Zhang – has dropped out.
Other Student Issues:

- What happens with students when their supervisor goes on leave? It depends on the circumstances. Supervisors need to detail how their students will be looked after while they’re away and Peter looks at this carefully. Sometimes, email contact is sufficient. The panel should be sufficiently close to the student to be able to help out.
- Jerry's students only have group meetings, no one-on-one. We need to rely on the supervisor's judgement to a large extent. They are quite a supportive group.
- Students who are reaching the end of their funding, Peter wants to talk to them about directions.

ACTIONS:

Angela to audit all completion dates.
Angela to email students and supervisors about outstanding issues re CSP members and confirmation meetings.

6. SSP (long)

- Management Committee has asked for suggestions on how this Department should handle applications for special study leave. We had a number of applications from the one area and we couldn't allow them all to take leave at the same time.
- Level A people are now eligible to take SSP.
- If we have 10 absences next year we might be struggling.
- Peter and Aleks have asked people to give advanced warning so that a plan can be put in place.
- What happens when we say no?
- Need to think about it in a way that will be fair.
- It shouldn't be that everyone has a right to it at the same frequency. There are some people who do more research than others.

The meeting closed at 5:15pm.