

**The University of Melbourne
School of Behavioural Science**

**Academic Programs Committee
Postgraduate Sub-Committee**

Thursday 13th April, 2006

1:00pm

MINUTES

Present:

Richard Bell (Professional Programs Convenor) Chair
Henry Jackson (HOD)
Carol Hulbert (Clinical Convenor)
Lis Northam (Child Clinical Convenor)
Jeannette Milgrom (Health Convenor)
Michael Saling (Neuropsychology Convenor)
Alex Wearing (Organisational Convenor)
Wayne Murdoch (Professional Programs Officer)
Ann Dawson (Research Officer)
Patricia Murray (School Manager)

1. Apologies

Virginia Holmes (Research Convenor)

2. Minutes

Minutes of the February meeting were accepted.

3. Report from the Chair

Richard Bell reported that there had not yet been a response from the applicant to whom the position of convenor of the organisational/industrial stream had been offered. In addition, Debbie Bonici, Organisational Placement Coordinator had resigned. Prasuna Reddy will act as interim placement coordinator and a recent graduate, or student who have almost completed their course, will be appointed to provide administrative support.

4. Report from the Head

Henry Jackson reported that he would take on the role of Chair of HODSPA in May. He had already circulated to the group the DEST document by Julie Bishop

which mirrors the structure of professional training outlined in the University of Melbourne's "Growing Esteem" document. International demand will mean that the Bologna model will be seen as the way to go. In addition, the Prime Minister has announced more clinical psychology training places will be created, but Henry said that how this would happen without increased funding remains to be seen.

Henry also reported that he and Pip Pattison had met that morning with Lyn Littleford of the APS and they are giving thought to structural changes in the provision of professional training, including the accreditation of diploma programs. The APS's preference is for a 3+3 structure (ie. 3 years undergraduate study followed by 3 years of postgraduate study). The APS has questioned the value of students doing an Honours Thesis and a Masters Thesis, given that these are both pieces of work of 10,000 words.

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As the situation stands, there is a great deal of confusion and lack of agreement between the University, the APS and DEST as to which structure is the most effective and appropriate.

5. Student Representatives

There had been no nominations for student representatives received. Richard Bell suggested that perhaps student representatives on committees such as this were not the most effective way of representing students.

6. Changes to the structure of Professional Programs

6.1. Report from the Working Group on Professional Programs restructuring

6.2. Proposal to abandon DPsych degree

These two items were discussed together.

Notes of a meeting of the Working Group on restructuring professional programs held on 3rd April had been circulated, together with a report by Richard Bell of cost implications of shifting from a Doctoral to a Masters/Phd structure.

Richard reported that there were a number of cost implications facing the Department;

- The Department had fewer PhD students than in the past; a number of PhD candidates had recently graduated, but numbers of new candidates were down.
- Providing placement for students was expensive, with the Department was faced with covering costs for placements in some streams, eg. for country placements in neuropsychology and there was also competition for placement spots between the various streams. In addition, the fact that the DPsych requires an additional year of placement placed a greater demand on placement positions were.

Richard said that he wished to place the DPsych “on hold” for a period of time, to allow the Department an opportunity to find additional placements and build numbers of students in the MPsych and the combined MPsych/PhD.

It was possible that the MPsych/PhD could be a means of increasing the number of PhD students in the Department. It was professional areas (clinical, neuropsychology, child psychology, health psychology, organisational psychology) where the bulk of PhD candidates were focussing their research, not the pure research areas of the Department.

Richard proposed that the DPsych be suspended for the foreseeable future, allowing the Department to offer the MPsych and the MPsych/PhD in all current streams.

There was a great deal of discussion about the proposal.

It was felt by most at the meeting that the DPsych offered the best clinical training, with additional coursework subjects and an additional year of placement. Carol Hulbert and Michael Saling were of the opinion that the profession and potential applicants might not approve of the move away from the DPsych towards the MPsych, which could be perceived as a “lesser” course. Carol raised the issue that there had been no consultation as yet with the profession regarding this proposed change.

Patricia Murray commented that suspending the DPsych for any length of time might mean that the Department might have to put up a major course change proposal when the time came to reintroduce the program, because of recent changes in the University’s structural definition of a doctoral program (ie. a doctoral program must now have at least a 50% research component, whereas our DPsych has a third each of research, coursework and placement).

Lis Northam stated that it suited the Child program to move to the MPsych as it allowed the option of the combined MPsych/PhD, which would be popular with child psychology students. She felt, however, that students needed more training than the MPsych could currently provide and said that the Department needed to think carefully about its responsibility to the students and to the profession.

Carol Hulbert, Michael Saling and Jeannette Milgrom all raised issues regarding the lesser amount of placement available in the MPsych, and it was agreed that the placement component of the MPsych might need to be restructured in order to provide the maximum possible placement exposure for students.

Wayne Murdoch and Patricia Murray expressed concern regarding the timelines for introducing changes to the course offerings for 2007. Any changes would need to appear in promotional publications which are usually produced as early as June/July.

Richard asked that the Working Group on restructuring professional programs continue to meet either weekly or fortnightly to discuss structural changes in the event of the suspension of the DPsych and report back soon.

6.3. Proposal to make Organisational program a dual stream Organisational/Health program

Given the pressures of time, this item will remain on the agenda for consideration and future discussion.

7. Announcement regarding increase psychology training places

This item had been largely covered in item 4.

8. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting finished at 2:05pm

The next meeting of this sub-committee will be held on 8th June at 1:00pm