8. ITEM FROM THE BOARD OF COURSEWORK STUDIES

(c) Admissions. Quota and Resourcing Issues for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) Degree Course – Ref F28852

Members were reminded that at its meeting of 7 April 2010, Academic Council had considered a paper entitled “Admissions, Quota and Resourcing Issues for Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)” which had been submitted by the Bachelor of Philosophy Interim Board of Studies via the Board of Coursework Studies, and resolved, by R16/10, to approve the following recommendations of the Board of Coursework Studies:

- that the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) be made available as a full-time or part-time degree course;
- that the cohort for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course be made up of diverse and academically outstanding students;
- that the selection process for entry into the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) course be reviewed after two intakes;
- that the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) Level 1 intake be set, subject to availability of resources and in consultation with the Working Party on the University’s Admissions and Quota Policy, at a target of approximately 30 students for the first two years of operation;
- that up to three additional places be reserved for Indigenous students in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course;
- that a full-time academic position be created within the Registrar’s Office to coordinate the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course;
- that the residential affiliation component of the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course be resourced at the appropriate level to make it a highly valuable experience for students; and
- that the Scholarships Office and the Office of Development be requested to draw up a plan for provision of scholarships for students in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) course.

Members were reminded that at the same meeting Council had requested that other recommendations of the Board be referred back to the Interim Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) for further consideration.

Members noted that a response paper prepared by Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy, Executive Officer of the Interim Board of Studies had since been considered by the Board of Coursework Studies, who had recommended to Council, by R17/10, that the paper, including a number of specific recommendations, be adopted.

Members had before them:
- extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Coursework Studies held on 19 July 2010
- response paper from the Interim Board of Studies dated 19 July 2010
- addendum to the item, which had been tabled.

Introducing the item, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor stressed the importance of getting the details of the BPhil(Hons) right. He reminded Council that a sub-committee was considering the ranking criteria and other aspects of the process for admission to the course and that the matter would come forward for Council’s consideration in October.

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised Council that the sub-quota for students entering the BPhil(Hons) course having completed a year of study in another course would serve to increase the diversity of the BPhil(Hons) cohort. He advised that ten places would be provided for such students and that additional places may be available for this group as the result of attrition.
The following were amongst the matters raised in the discussion that followed:

- A member sought clarification on whether the minimum ATAR would apply to students in the sub-quotas for rural and remote, low-socio economic background and Indigenous applicants. It was clarified that applicants in these sub-quotas would not be required to have an ATAR of 98. It was further clarified that very high achieving rural and remote, low socio-economic background and Indigenous applicants who were ranked in the main quota and offered a place in the course as a result of that process would not be considered as filling sub-quota places.

- It was agreed that the process to identify and invite top Indigenous students and students from rural and remote and low socio-economic backgrounds to apply for admission to Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course be developed with the School of Indigenous Studies.

- It was pointed out that the current selection process for applicants wishing to enter medicine assessed each component of the process separately and produced a composite: it did not consider the inter-relationship of these assessments and this may be an aspect to consider in relation to developing the BPhil(Hons) selection process.

- In response to a query concerning demand for the course, it was stated that indications were that UWA could expect strong demand.

- A member queried whether there was scope to guarantee places for the top ten students.

Noting that the fine details of the selection process would be submitted to Council in October,

RESOLVED – 89

(i) That an applicant must achieve a minimum ATAR of 98 or equivalent to be considered eligible for admission to the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course, but with the possibility of specific additional prerequisites depending upon the desired major and subject to the provisions in 4.

(ii) That from 2013 students be permitted to apply to transfer into the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) course upon achieving a Level 1 weighted average mark (WAM) of 80 or above.

(iii) That up to 10 places be set as a quota for first year students who may apply based on achieving a Level 1 weighted average mark of 80 or above and that places that become available as the result of attrition also be accessible by this cohort.

(iv) That in addition to the 30 ranked places for Level 1 intake drawn from group 1 and group 2 applicants, a sub-quota of up to 3 places be set for Indigenous students (as approved by Council by R16/10) and an additional sub-quota of up to 3 places be set for students from rural and low socio-economic backgrounds and that there be some flexibility in relation to the ATAR to be achieved by such applicants.

(v) That Indigenous applicants and applicants from rural and low socio-economic backgrounds who are ranked and offered a place in the main quota not be considered as filling one of the sub-quota places referred to in 4.

(vi) That the proposed sub-quota and entry requirements for Indigenous students and for students from rural and low socio-economic backgrounds for entry into the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) course be reviewed after two years.

(vii) That a process be developed with the School of Indigenous Studies to identify and invite top Indigenous students and students from rural and low socio-economic backgrounds to apply for admission to Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course.

(viii) That in addition to the 30 ranked places for Level 1 intake drawn from group 1 and group 2 applicants, a sub-quota of 4 places be set for international students and that this sub-quota be reassessed in subsequent years once demand for the course has been ascertained.

(ix) That the selection panel for ranking applicants for admission to the Bachelor of
Philosophy (Hons) degree course comprise the following:

- Two members drawn from the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) Interim Board of Studies (one of whom will be the convener)
- Academic coordinator for Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)
- Manager, Admissions Centre
- Representative from the School of Indigenous Studies

(x) That the final rank order be verified by the Chair, Bachelor of Philosophy Interim Board of Studies.