MINUTES – Information Meeting
FAO Group
2.15pm, Monday 18 July 2005
Chancellor’s Room
(Notes by the Chair)

1. **Review of Sub-Deans**

Jan Stuart, Senior Consultant, Strategic Policy asked the group for feedback regarding the Review of a Sub-Deans role. Jan took lots of notes and a summary of the main points as noted by the Chair follows:

- Feedback would be used for non specific reporting only
- Since the University restructured, the traditional duties of a Sub-Dean (which included finance, teaching and acting for the Dean) have been given to other staff including Academic Student Advisors and Faculty Administrative Officers.
- Terminology is confusing for everyone including students, but could be explained in relevant publications
- Duties may include any of the following: Finance, Teaching, Research, Acting for Dean, Student Advising, staff supervision.
- There is no consistency in the way Faculties divide workloads/responsibilities and this flexibility should be allowed.
- Workloads for all staff are consistently excessive, to the point were innovation is impossible and staff are ‘just surviving’.
- The knowledge that a Sub-Dean needs cannot be taught and so Faculties are somewhat vulnerable as there is little back-up available (risk management issue).
- The administrative procedures that a Sub-Dean needs to understand have only recently been documented, as part of the Callista Project and are yet to be reviewed post Callista ‘go-live’.
- Within each Faculty, despite the different structures the staff responsible for Student Administration/Advise (Faculty Managers/Sub-Deans/Academic Student Advisors/FAO) always work as a team due to the volume and complexity of the work.

What should a Sub-Dean ‘look’ like/ what type of person would ‘fit the bill’:

- A good administrator with the appropriate academic knowledge and therefore have a sound understanding of the scope of their authority and the implications of decisions made
- Compassionate and able to use good judgement when applying rules and policies in an equitable way
- A person who is supported by the Faculty and the University
- A ‘professional’ available during business hours, rather than an academic who comes and goes

Should the Sub-Dean role be carried out by an academic or general staff member?

- There are more career opportunities for general staff
- Unless and academic continues with teaching/research, there is very little scope for sc
- Compassionate and able to use good judgement when applying rules and policies in an equitable way
- A person who is supported by the Faculty and the University

2. **Secretariat Planning and Review – by 15 August**

Members noted that at the Secretariat Planning Day (8 June 2005) some issues remained unresolved so another session will be held in late Aug/early Sept. Therefore the FAO Group has another opportunity to provide some input. Submissions will be accepted until 15 August.
Please refer to item 2 from the first meeting of the year: 

This item will be kept on the agenda until our meeting on 1 August 2005.

3. Award Ceremonies - Administration

The group discussed the work flow and problems associated with correspondence sent to donors and the invoicing process.

Most people agreed that the process was flawed and it was important to review and streamline the Awards Ceremonies Administration. The workload would not increase too much should Faculties take on additional duties such as requesting invoices, because Faculties are right to donors to invite them to ceremonies and are also already spending significant time ‘fixing errors’.

The Chair agreed to approach Harvey with regard to his willingness to review the process.

4. Documentation Fraud

Concerning the acceptance of certified copies of academic transcripts (and other docs), given the ever-present risk of fraud, as evidenced by the attached article (Attachment A) – FAO’s where asked if it was an issue?

- ECM had raised this issue because currently only certified copies were required and there was some concern about security.
- LPS, AHSS and M&D already require students to present original documents, for sighting, at the Faculty Office and this was specified in the letter of offer.
- Certified copies signed and stamped with a recognised JP stamp were also accepted.

5. New Chair required October 2005

The Chair advised members that she was taking 6 months leave commencing October 2005 and to ensure a smooth transition requested that everyone consider nominating for the position. Please call Robyn King x7886 if you wish to discuss.
The Federal Government may act to stop the exploitation of foreign students by regulating Australia's 3000 education agents for the first time.

After a Herald investigation revealing rip-offs by unscrupulous education agents and a review by independent consultants, the Education Services for Overseas Students Act would be tightened, a Government source said.

Len Holt, the president of the Migration Institute of Australia, which represents 1200 registered migration agents, said ending the current "haphazard system" would be a step forward, but he warned that education institutions, including universities, could resist the move.

Education agents, who are often paid commissions of 10 to 25 per cent of semester fees for each student they recruit, are not regulated when they deal in immigration and visa matters. Even a national code of practice prohibiting education providers from accepting overseas students through an agent they suspect is engaged in dishonest practices has never led to any sanctions, the Herald has learnt.

Education institutions can have their registration restricted, suspended or cancelled if they deal with an agent who they even suspect uses deceptive conduct, inaccurate marketing or encourages bogus students to enrol. But these sanctions have never been imposed, according to the federal Education Department.

Overseas students would remain vulnerable to exploitation if the Government failed to regulate agents facilitating their entry into Australia, Mr Holt said.

The nation's 3150 migration agents were "different beasts" who self-regulated through the Migration Agents Registration Authority and faced tough sanctions if they acted unscrupulously, but they were unsupervised, he said. "And, of course, offshore education agents cannot be sanctioned at all."

However, Tim Smith, the chief executive of the 750-member Australian Council for Private Education and Training, said new legislation was unnecessary because the education industry was already highly regulated and compliance costs were excessive.

Because so much international education business was generated by agents, changing the system could be disastrous for the multibillion-dollar education export industry, he said.

But Gregory Bondar, executive chairman of the Australian International Education Agents Network, formed by 17 of the nation's biggest education agents, said his body supported industry regulation.

The nation's recruitment reputation needed protection from unscrupulous operators, who took advantage of the apathy of education institutions, he said. "The attitude is if you can fill up your classrooms and tutorials and lecture theatres you don't have to worry about where you get them from," he said.

Mr Holt criticised a method for regulating overseas education agents now being trialled by the Immigration Department under which agents in China, India and Thailand can sign an agreement on service standards and a code of conduct. They are then given a seven-digit identity number to lodge student visa applications on the internet.

"The only [solution] is to introduce a transparent regulatory system universally applied onshore and offshore and that subjects all agents to the same standards and monitoring process," Mr Holt said.

However, Mr Smith said the trial was working well and showed heavier regulation was not needed.