PRIZES FOR THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONOURS)

TRIM FILE REFERENCE: F3347 & F28852

FILE PATH ON SERVER: C:\Documents AND SETTINGS\KKRISHNA\DESKTOP\PRIZES FOR B.PHIL (HONS).DOC

DOCUMENT STATUS

☐ Draft  ☐ Ready for Review  ☒ Final

DOCUMENT MODIFICATION HISTORY

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<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Primary Author(s) (name and position)</th>
<th>Description of Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>V0.1</td>
<td>Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy, Education Policy Officer, APS</td>
<td>Draft based on information provided by Office of Development and Alumni Relations for request for establishment of a new prize in the BPhil (Hons).</td>
<td>15.03.2012</td>
<td>Ms Sue Smurthwaite, Associate Director, APS</td>
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<td>V0.2</td>
<td>W/Prof Krishna Sen Chair, BoS – BPhil (Hons)</td>
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<td>16.03.2012</td>
<td>W/Prof Krishna Sen Chair, BoS – BPhil (Hons)</td>
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<td>Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)</td>
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<td>23.03.2012</td>
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DOCUMENT APPROVAL

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1. Background:

During the course of 2011, the Frameworks and Definitions Working Party conducted extensive consultations with faculty representatives to gather information and opinion about the most appropriate form that administrative changes should take place for New Courses. Further to this consultation, a consensus had emerged on the new arrangements for a number of issues, including the future administration of prizes.

Academic Council by R81/11 endorsed a report entitled 'Undergraduate Course Administration' for New Courses which notes that Faculty Boards are integral to the awarding of most prizes including those that are linked to units. This is in accordance with clause 5 of Statute 31 which states that:

“If students from only one faculty are to be eligible for the grant of a scholarship or prize, the faculty may resolve upon the establishment thereof, and may from time to time by resolution alter the name or amount of the scholarship or prize or the conditions governing its grant, or resolve that it cease to be granted”.

However, the establishment of prizes linked to the new undergraduate degrees will need to rest with the relevant Boards of Studies for the following reasons:

First, the recommendations of the Review of Course Structures, which were approved by Senate in 2008, see undergraduate degrees as belonging to the University rather than being the preserve of faculties, though faculties will continue to serve an important role in delivering and teaching the majors and associated units within the relevant degrees.

Second, Clause 6 of Statute 31 states that:

“If students from two or more faculties are to be eligible for the grant of a scholarship or prize, the Academic Board may resolve upon the establishment thereof, and may from time to time by resolution alter the amount of the scholarship or prize or the conditions governing its grant, or resolve that it cease to be granted”.

Therefore, since more than one faculty will teach in any of the new undergraduate degrees the establishment of prize(s) at the degree level will need to be administered by the relevant Boards of Studies in accordance with the governance and, Academic Council approved (R81/11), administrative arrangements for New Courses.

It is in this context that this paper aims to present a recent request for the establishment of a prize in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) for consideration. The proposed prize in the BPhil (Hons) will be the current most prestigious undergraduate prize in perpetuity under the new course structure, but it is anticipated that many other donors and companies may also be interested in establishing such a prize in the BPhil (Hons) and also in the other new undergraduate degrees. The BPhil (Hons) will set the precedent for the establishment of prizes at the degree level. This in turn could provide the basis for formulating key principles that should guide the establishment and administration of prizes in one of the new three-year undergraduate pass degrees.

1 See web at: http://calendar.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/partc/stat31
2 Ibid.
2. Request from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations: ‘Dr Vincent Harry Cooper Memorial Prize’ for the outstanding graduand completing the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)

The following request (original as attached – see Appendix A) for the establishment of a prize for the BPhil and associated issues has been received from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations (14th March 2012):

Mr Roderick Cooper, [who is a Senate member representing Convocation], would like to establish an endowed prize in honour of his father, Dr Vincent Harry Cooper, a foundation Board Member and Chairman of the Western Australian Faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners and pioneering General Practitioner Obstetrician in Western Australia.

The prize is to be called: ‘Dr Vincent Harry Cooper Memorial Prize’

The capital sum of not less than $50,000 is to be endowed in perpetuity and the annual value of the prize is to be determined based on the distribution rate set by Senate policy after capitalisation. A copy of a booklet with a short biography of the late Dr Cooper will also form part of the prize and be provided by Mr Roderick Cooper.

The donor wishes the prize to be awarded:

- “to the overall most outstanding graduand of the year of those completing the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours). As to determining “outstanding”, Mr Cooper would be prepared to listen to the University, though he tends to agree with the suggestion that it ought to mean “highest weighted average” of all the 4 years of study;
- for the first time when the first BPhil cohort has completed the 4 years of study;
- at the annual graduation ceremony (Mr Cooper is anxious to ‘future proof’ the prize and, whilst there might not always be faculty prize giving events, surely there will always be graduation ceremonies)”.

The prize is to be governed under the current general conditions (which are under review) for prizes as follows:

1. Notwithstanding that a candidate meets the criteria for a grant, a prize is awarded only if, in the opinion of the person or persons responsible for the selection of the grantee, there is a candidate of sufficient merit.

2. Unless a testator or donor of the bequest or donation from which the prize is funded has expressly directed otherwise—

(a) a prize is granted annually;
(b) a prize is not granted to the same person twice; and
(c) where a prize lapses or is not granted for any reason, the unused grant money is returned to the capital sum.

3. A prize lapses if it is not claimed by the grantee within 12 months of the grant being declared.

4. Where two or more candidates tie for a monetary prize the prize is shared.

Mr Cooper has already donated the $50,000 over the past few years and there have been several discussions on the types of scholarships or prizes that he wants to support. Mr Cooper intends to also establish an endowed scholarship after this prize has been set up to his satisfaction.
Naming is to be in perpetuity and the donor has requested that the overall most outstanding BPhil prize be solely reserved for this prize.

3. Issues for discussion:

Two categories of issues are presented here for discussion. The first relates to principles which may be applicable, where relevant, across the five undergraduate degrees. The second category of issues is operational.

3.1 Principle-based issues

3.1.1 Criteria for selecting an outstanding graduand for the award of a prize in one of the new undergraduate degrees

It needs to be clear as to how the level of achievement of an outstanding student is assessed.

In the case of the BPhil, there is a proposition that the highest weighted average mark (WAM)\(^4\) achieved over the four years of study in the BPhil be used as the only indicator in selecting the ‘overall’ outstanding BPhil (Hons) graduand. Is this a sufficient tool for selecting the outstanding BPhil graduand for one of the most prestigious prize awards? Further, the words “overall outstanding BPhil (Hons) graduand” will need to be qualified.

Since the BPhil (Hons) is a research-focussed and a flagship degree some level of significance and importance should also be attached to the research component of the degree and its relevance in selecting an outstanding graduand for such a prestigious prize in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons).

Therefore, it is proposed that the highest WAM over four years of study and the final mark obtained for the dissertation in the fourth year be used as minimum indicators in selecting an outstanding graduand completing the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons).

The question arises as to whether the dissertation mark be used as a second differentiator or be used to combine with the WAM to arrive at a final score? Consider the following options:

<table>
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<th>Student</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Option 2</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. WAM</td>
<td>2. Final Dissertation Mark</td>
<td>1 and 2 Combined Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. WAM</td>
<td>2. Final Dissertation Mark</td>
<td>Final Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final ranks in scenario 1 are based on the combined total score of WAM and the final dissertation mark.

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\(^4\) A WAM is the average mark in the units of study completed by a student, weighted according to the credit point value and academic level of the particular unit. The formula for calculating WAM is: \(\frac{\sum (CP \times UM)}{\sum CP}\) where CP is the weighted credit point value of the unit and UM is the mark out of 100 for that unit of study.
Option 2 could be best described as follows: The prize is awarded to the student, who among those completing the requirements of the BPhil (Hons) course with a weighted average mark of at least 85, has the highest mark for the honours dissertation. In effect, the prize is awarded to an outstanding student with the best dissertation.

This may allow the Board to set a limit on the WAM (i.e. to be eligible for consideration of a prize a graduand’s WAM cannot be below 85 (or whatever mark the Board may decide) but give appropriate weight to the dissertation.

If two or more students are ranked equal in any of the above options, then the same prize be shared, as is stated in current general conditions for prizes.

For consideration by other Boards of Studies:
In the case of the three-year pass degrees, it is suggested that the highest WAM achieved over the three years of study and a WAM at Level 3 be used to select an outstanding student who may be eligible for a prize, if available, in the other relevant undergraduate degrees namely the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Design and Bachelor of Science. Where there are two or more candidates with the same WAM, the prize is shared.

[Note: Recommendations relating to the establishment of selection criteria in any of the five undergraduate degrees will need to be referred to the Board of Coursework Studies for further consideration].

3.1.2 Eligibility of Students who transfer into the BPhil (Hons)

Academic Council by R89/10 resolved that “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”.

Though such students seeking to transfer into the BPhil (Hons) may not have completed the following additional components at Level 1:

- GCRL1000: Global Challenges, Research and Leadership Unit;
- The Residential Program “That at Level 1, all B.Phil (Hons) students normally be expected to undertake a residential program (e.g. 12 nights before commencement of semester 1)”

It should be clarified, based on R89/10, that a transfer student who may have satisfied the relevant criteria as an outstanding BPhil student should be eligible for consideration for the award of a prize in the B.Phil.

3.1.3 Prizes in Perpetuity

It is proposed that naming of the ‘Dr Vincent Harry Cooper Memorial Prize’ is to be in perpetuity and the overall most outstanding BPhil prize solely reserved for this prize. This is on an understanding and practice that donors cannot establish a prize for identical unit or units.

However, the question arises as to whether donors can have such exclusive rights in regard to the establishment of a prize at the Course level? Such exclusiveness at the unit level may be appropriate, but this may bloc opportunities to attract similar donors at the course level.

The Board may wish to consider the establishment of a range of prizes for outstanding BPhil students/ graduands. The following types of prizes may be established:
• Course level prize
If more than one type of prize is available at the course level, then appropriate criteria, in addition to the minimum criteria described in 3.11, will need to be formulated for each prize offered at the course level. Consider the following example:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
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<th>Additional criteria/criterion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Vincent Harry Cooper Memorial Prize</td>
<td>WAM of at least 85 over 4 years and the highest dissertation mark</td>
<td>Nil, as it is the pioneering prize in the BPhil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXX Prize</td>
<td>WAM of at least 85 over 4 years and the highest dissertation mark</td>
<td>Highest score in GCRL1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YYYY Prize</td>
<td>WAM of at least 85 over 4 years and the highest dissertation mark</td>
<td>Highest WAM at Level 3</td>
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• Prizes at Levels 1 – 3
Prizes may also be established for outstanding students at Levels 1, 2 and 3 during their course of study.

• Prize in GCRL1000 Global Challenges, Research and Leadership
A prize may also be established for the first year unit in the BPhil.

3.2. Operational Issues
3.2.1 Appropriate platform for awarding non-faculty specific prizes
A comparable event to the Faculty prize giving ceremony will need to be considered for awarding non-faculty specific prizes. At present there are two prizes for the PhD graduates and one prize at undergraduate level (J.A. Wood Memorial Prize), awarded at Graduation Ceremonies.

In the case of the BPhil (Hons) there is a proposition that the graduation ceremony be used as a platform to award the prize. At present only a couple of prizes are acknowledged at Graduation Ceremonies and tend to be at PhD level.

However, conflating prizes with graduation is not a desired way forward and therefore may not be an acceptable condition of prizes. This principle is being further investigated. With the centenary campaign likely to bring in more prizes it is likely that this stance will remain in order to avoid a proliferation of prizes and a lengthening of Ceremonies.

There may need to be an alternative prize giving ceremony at the degree level or it may form part of a relevant Faculty prize giving ceremony. The Board is asked to make suggestions regarding BPhil related prizes.

3.2.2 Prize Money

Although an endowed sum of $50,000 is sizable and generates an approximate annual prize of $2,500, the question arises as to whether the proposed prize amount is sizeable for such a prestigious prize in the BPhil (Hons)?

Current policy states that the minimum value for a prize at the unit level is $250. However, this was determined in December 1995 (Senate Resolution 375/95) and is under review.
Although there is an intention to increase the prize money in the long term, the current allocation of $2500 prize money for an outstanding BPhil graduand should be considered in the context of the prestigious and flagship status of the BPhil (Hons) degree. What is deemed prestigious in terms of monetary value to be awarded as a prize for an outstanding BPhil (Hons) student? If the proposed prize money remains unchanged, should the prize therefore be tied at the dissertation level? That is, an outstanding BPhil student with the highest dissertation mark.

Preliminary discussions on the issues identified above are important so that key principles which may guide the establishment of prize offers in the future may be established. Such principles will in turn shape the formulation of conditions governing the establishment of any prize in the BPhil (Hons), which in due course will need to be considered and approved by the Board of Studies.

APPENDIX A

From: Fabienne Vonarburg  
Sent: Wednesday, 14 March 2012 4:39 PM  
To: Kabilan Krishnasamy  
Cc: Fenna van Charldorp; Sue Smurthwaite; Jo Agnew  
Subject: Most prestigious BPhil prize for the Board of Studies to consider

Dear Kabilan

I was asked to put forward following request to the Board of Studies of the Bachelor of Philosophy to consider for approval:

Mr Roderick Cooper would like to establish an endowed prize in honour of his father, Dr Vincent Harry Cooper, a foundation Board Member and Chairman of the Western Australian Faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners and pioneering General Practitioner Obstetrician in Western Australia.

The prize is to be called: ‘Dr Vincent Harry Cooper Memorial Prize’

The capital sum of not less than $50,000 is to be endowed in perpetuity and the annual value of the prize is to be determined based on the distribution rate set by Senate policy after capitalisation. A copy of a booklet with a short biography of the late Dr Cooper will also form part of the prize and be provided by Mr Roderick Cooper.

The prize is to be awarded:

- to the overall most outstanding graduand of the year of those completing the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours). As to determining “outstanding”, Mr Cooper would be prepared to listen to the University, though he tends to agree with the suggestion that it ought to mean “highest weighted average” of all the 4 years of study;
- for the first time when the first BPhil cohort has completed the 4 years of study;
- at the annual graduation ceremony.

The prize is to be governed under the general conditions of prizes.
Naming is to be in perpetuity and the overall most outstanding BPhil prize solely reserved for this prize.

******************************************

In considering this request, I would like to take the opportunity to stress a few matters:

- Mr Cooper has already donated the $50,000 over the past few years and we have had many discussions on what project – scholarship or prize he wanted to support.
- Mr Cooper is a Senate member representing Convocation and familiar with all existing prizes. (He read them all on the web.)
- Mr Cooper is anxious to ‘future proof’ the prize and, whilst there might not always be faculty prize giving events, surely there will always be graduation ceremonies.
- Mr Cooper intends to also establish an endowed scholarship after this prize has been set up to his satisfaction.

The Board of Studies needs to be aware that this would be the most prestigious undergraduate prize in perpetuity under the new course structure at UWA. Many other donors and companies may also be interested in establishing such a prize. The Board may like to develop a strategy on prizes for non-faculty specific prizes for the Bachelor degrees.

Should more non-faculty specific prizes be established a comparable event to the Faculty prize giving ceremony would need to be considered. Or alternatively the graduation ceremony used as a platform to award the prizes as suggested by Mr Cooper.

Although an endowed sum of $50,000 is sizable and generate an approximate annual prize of $2,500, is it enough for such a prestigious prize? (Mr Cooper intends to top it up over time but amounts have not been specified.)

I would appreciate a timely response and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Fabienne

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