6. PRIZES FOR THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS) - Refs: F3347 & F28852

Members considered a request from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations for the establishment of a prize for the most outstanding graduand in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons). It had been suggested that the proposed BPhil (Hons) prize would be the most prestigious undergraduate prize in perpetuity under the new course structure.

Members had before them a discussion paper entitled Prizes for the New Undergraduate Degrees: Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) that identified a number of issues for members’ consideration:

- Criteria for selecting an outstanding graduand in the BPhil (Hons)
- Eligibility of students who transfer into the BPhil (Hons)
- Prizes in perpetuity
- Appropriate platform for awarding non-faculty specific prizes
- Prize money

The following points were noted in the subsequent discussion:

- It was agreed a policy that incorporated key principles should be developed to guide the establishment of future prizes.

[Executive Officer’s Note: A University Policy on Establishment of Prizes is currently being formulated by Academic Policy Services and will be referred to the Academic Council for approval in due course. Appropriate consultation with key stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the formulation process.]

- While recognising that the University’s processes for prizes and scholarships were different, it was noted that the BPhil scholarships should aim to attract eastern states applicants. The value of a Melbourne University scholarship was quoted as $10,000 per year plus a fee waiver.
- Traditionally, prizes normally involved the award of a certificate and prize money. However, it was suggested that the prize in the BPhil could be made more visible by way of also awarding a medal.
- The concept of labelling the proposed BPhil prize referred by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations as the ‘most prestigious award’ was discussed. It was noted that the University had already established the J. A. Wood Memorial prize which is also a prestigious prize awarded to the most outstanding graduand completing an honours in any disciplinary area. Therefore, it was agreed that it would not be possible, or desirable, for the proposed prize to be tagged as the most prestigious award.
- Members briefly discussed the possibility of establishing a prize for the GCRL1000 unit and awarding it to a student who would achieve the highest grade in the unit.

Since research would be the capstone of the BPhil degree, members agreed with the suggestion that the proposed Dr Harry Cooper Memorial Prize could be awarded to a student who achieves the top score in the dissertation component of the four-year BPhil course. Members noted that if such a prize were to be established it would be necessary to establish a benchmark for dissertation grades that accounted for disparate grades across disciplines, and to establish other related requirements of the prize. It was therefore agreed that the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) should be responsible for the establishment of prizes at the course level for the BPhil and consequent selection processes.

Further, it was agreed that the proposed allocation of $50,000 in perpetuity and the stated annual prize value of $2,500, although a generous amount for a prize, would need to be revisited for a prize at the BPhil course level. It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor had commissioned a working party to consider third party agreements (convened by the Registrar).
and that this Working Party was considering appropriate values of gifts, donations and prizes, including prizes at the course level within the context of new courses.

It was agreed that the minuted discussion be referred to the Board of Coursework Studies for its information and that a University Policy on Establishment of Prizes would need to take account of these issues, together with outcomes from the Working Party on Third Party Agreements.

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