

New Zealand Universities Antarctic Alliance (NZUAA)
Minutes for the Second meeting held at the University of Auckland
Thursday 27th October 2005

Present: John Montgomery (U Auckland), Bryan Storey (Chair, U Canterbury), Graham Barrell (Lincoln U), John Cockrem (U Massey), Lloyd Davis (Otago U), Peter Barrett (VUW), Ian Hogg (U Waikato), Dean Peterson (Antarctica New Zealand)

Apologies: BCS reported that John Buckeridge had left AUT to take up a new position in Australia. He suggested Steve O'Shea from AUT would take his place on the committee. BCS to follow up and send open invite to AUT to remain as part of the Alliance.

Minutes: Accepted from previous meeting

Matter Arising

CRI representative. Following informal discussions with CRI Antarctic researchers and the response from ACRI, BCS asked that we reconsider our view that CRIs have one observer at NZUAA meetings. He emphasized the importance of the link between CRIs and NZUAA and suggested we ask each of the three CRIs active in Antarctic research (GNS, NIWA and Landcare) to nominate a Contact Person whom we would keep informed of our activities by forwarding meeting agendas and minutes. If the CRI contact person wished to attend a meeting, they should contact the Chair beforehand.

BCS to contact CRIs and identify relevant contacts

Link to NZVCC. BCS reported that he had asked Roy Sharp (VC U Cant) for advice re link between NZUAA and NZVCC. Roy will report back after next meeting of NZVCC.

Link to RSCAS. One member raised the issue of the lack of visibility of RSCAS within the community. BCS indicated that RSCAS were aware of this and had prepared a poster for display at suitable meetings to help bridge the gap between the community and SCAR. It was agreed that BCS write to RSCAS asking for more communication between national representatives and relevant communities.

BCS to write to RSCAS

Financial Statement

BCS presented the accounts for past six months. All universities, except AUT, had contributed \$2000.

University Antarctic profiles

BCS thanked representatives that had completed the profiles. Following an initial discussion, it was agreed that the profiles should be made available on an NZUAA website (linked to Antarctica NZ website).

Representatives were asked to

- *Complete the profiles*
- *Include the names of all university staff and post docs involved in each research project*
- *Include Master and PhD thesis titles*
- *Send final and updated profiles to BCS for inclusion on NZUAA website.*

Future initiatives

International Antarctic Institute; BCS presented the draft business plan. The group noted the plan with interest and indicated that this was very much a first draft that lacked detail in key areas surrounding fees, credit transfers and degree structure. It was suggested that the next version should have more detail and examples of potential pathways that students might follow.

BCS to feed back response to IASOS.

SCAR Capacity Building; BCS presented the SCAR paper on capacity building. It was felt that NZ was making progress on capacity building through Antarctic courses and active research programmes but that the key challenges were to:

- Involve top students in Antarctic research
- Create more employment opportunities in NZ, e.g. research positions.

Dean Peterson reported that the numbers of students applying for Antarctic scholarships was low and that AntNZ could not justify more scholarships even though companies were prepared to provide sponsorship. It was suggested that we seek sponsorship through Antarctica New Zealand to enable NZUAA to sponsor young researchers or specific collaborations or new staff and try to leverage more funds from universities to increase research capacity. A 20k annual NZUAA contestable fund would provide NZUAA with immediate visibility within the community.

Peter Barrett informed the group of the Transantarctic Association Fund that was available annually for travel grants of 1-2 k.

Peter to provide details for distribution through NZUAA networks

Antarctic Research within NZ Universities

As part of a general discussion on a workplan for 2006, the meeting focused on research being one of the five key functions of the NZUAA “To explore possibilities to integrate and coordinate University research programmes”. The group had a general discussion around large versus small Antarctic projects, outcome driver (FRST supported) versus blue skies (Marsden/university supported) research, top down strategy-driven-research versus bottom up curiosity-driven-research. The group favoured a mixed model for New balance with a balance between large and small projects, outcome driven and curiosity driven blue skies research, and emphasized the importance of the uniqueness of Antarctica in formulating research projects, the value of research excellence, the historical niches and presence of internationally recognized expert groups in New Zealand. The group recognized that the difference between outcome driven and curiosity

driven research was often in the packaging, and that we could try harder to focus university research on common themes.

The group felt that the discussion was useful and that we should send our views to the Board of AntaNZ .

PB to draft a letter for circulation

The group brain stormed possible themes, and suggested theme workshops be held over the next few years to identify research priorities.

The following themes, and theme leaders were suggested as follows;

- Ross Sea Ecology (coastal, McMurdo Sound, Oceanography); Lloyd Davis
- Southern Ocean-deep; John Montgomery
- LGP-Terrestrial Ecosystems; Group already exists
- Palaeoclimate-ANDRILL; Group already exists
- Cryosphere; Wendy Lawson/Sean Fitzsimmons
- Atmosphere, ozone, Ross Sea Climate; Nancy Bertler
- Geological processes; Bryan Storey

It was agreed that each theme should hold a 24 hour workshop (perhaps sponsored) over two days (pm day 1, am day 2), and that each workshop should identify research priorities and prepare a succinct workshop report.

Workplan for 2006

- Build a website; Dean offered support from Antarctica NZ to build the site that would be linked to/part of AntarcticaNZ website.
- Post university profiles on NZUAA website.
- Arrange two theme workshops for 2006, one linked to the Antarctic conference and next meeting of NZUAA.
- Publish theme workshop reports

Next meeting; It was agreed that this should be during or just prior to the Annual Antarctic conference to be held at VUWellington in July 2006. It was hoped that we could hold one of the theme workshops (Possibly Ross Sea Ecology) in July and that the NZUAA meeting would be a short business meeting.

ACTION: BCS to communicate with AntaNZ/VUW re link up with annual meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.00pm.

BCS thanked School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland for providing venue and lunch.

Bryan Storey
25 November 2005