

The Challis Bequest

History:

In 1880 John Henry Challis bequeathed his residuary real and personal estate to the University of Sydney "to be applied for the benefit of that Institution in such manner as the governing body thereof shall direct." The first funds from the estate were handed over to the University early in 1890.

At its meeting on 19 November 1888 the Senate appointed a committee "to consider and report what Chairs shall be founded when the Challis bequest is at the disposal of the Senate." After considering the Committee's report at a meeting on 25 March 1889 and at subsequent meetings, Senate established the following:

- A Challis School of Law with a Professor and Lecturers
- A Challis Chair of History
- A Challis Chair of Logic and Mental Philosophy
- A Challis Chair of Anatomy
- A Challis Chair of Biology
- A Challis Chair of Engineering
- A Challis Chair of Modern Literature

Senate also approved a recommendation from its Committee that "all foundations from the Challis Fund should bear Mr Challis's name" (Senate minutes, 25 March 1889)

In 1889 the existing Chairs of Modern Literature and Engineering were transferred from the General Fund to the Challis Fund and Senate offered the Challis Chairs to the Professors concerned. Senate also offered the Challis Chair of Biology to Dr W A Haswell, Demonstrator in Biology since 1882. Appointments to the remaining Challis Chairs were made in 1890 following advertisement in Australia and overseas.

All of the original Chairs have now continued and there are now two additional Challis Professors in the Faculty of Law. In 1919 Senate considered a report from the Dean of the Faculty of Law and "determined to establish a Chair of International Law and Jurisprudence on the Challis Foundation" (Senate report, 1919). Appointments were made to a separate Chair of International Law and a Chair of Jurisprudence were made in the 1970s and the title of Challis Professor was conferred upon these Professors by Senate in 1982.

Information taken from the report to the Chair Appointments Committee in June 1999

Today the Challis Chairs are:

- Challis Chair of Law
- Challis Chair of International Law
- Challis Chair of Jurisprudence
- Challis Chair of Anatomy
- Challis Chair of Biology
- Challis Chair of Civil Engineering
- Challis Chair of English Literature
- Challis Chair of History
- Challis Chair of Philosophy

Policy and procedures:

After an initial review of Challis, McCaughey, Bosch and Peter Nicol Russell Chairs by the Chair Appointments Committee in 1999, the Committee resolved in May 2003:

- (i) that the titles of Challis, McCaughey, Bosch and Peter Nicol Russell Chairs be conferred by the Chair Appointments Committee following the recommendation of the Dean of the appropriate Faculty;
- (ii) that, in forming such recommendations, Deans be required to:
 - (a) consult all professors in the relevant discipline(s); and
 - (b) take into account the factors of distinction and seniority.

- (iii) that vacant Challis and McCaughey chairs be filled by advertisement when there was no professor in the relevant disciplines and by the serving professor when the department did not wish to advertise.

In September 2005, the Committee resolved

- (iv) the policy *Titles of Bosch, Challis, Kellion, McCaughey and Peter Nicol Russell Chairs* be amended to include the following:

“Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a holder of the titles of the Challis, Kellion, McCaughey and Peter Nicol Russell Chairs shall be full-time members of academic staff”.