

## **Report from the Ad-hoc Council Working Group for the Arrangements for Student Representatives**

### **Background**

At its last meeting Council received a progress report on the future arrangements for student representation. Council approved a revised timetable and approved the establishment of an Ad-hoc Council Working Group to provide advice to Council on the proposed arrangements, including the new constitution, prior to Council's April 11 meeting.

The Working Group met on 5 April to consider the draft constitution for a new student organisation, University of Melbourne Student Union Ltd. (UMSUL), and considered that it was not yet in a form suitable to be recommended to Council. A number of important issues were identified as requiring further consideration or amendment. The Working Group also had the benefit of comments on the draft provided by the Vice-Principal and General Counsel, Chris Penman and the Senior Vice-Principal, Ian Marshman. Documents relating to the proposed amendment to the Higher Education Support Act 2003 for the abolition of compulsory up-front student fees were also tabled at the meeting.

### **Proposed action**

The Council Working Group proposes to meet again, at least once, before the end of April to finalise a list of suggested amendments to the draft document. This list, which is to be finalised in consultation with representatives of the Student Representative Working Group, is then formally to be forwarded to that group for further consideration. The Council Working Group has suggested that the University assist the Student Representative Working Group in obtaining drafting assistance from an external legal firm, to ensure that the final document is in an appropriate form and content for presentation to Council. The provision of such assistance is in hand.

The Council Working Group proposes that it reconvene at the end of May to make a further review of the draft document prior to presenting the draft to Council at its July meeting. One of the benefits of extending the time line for the submission of the draft to Council is that it will enable further consideration to be given, in collaboration of the Student Representative Working Group, to any constitutional provisioning that may be required to take account of the Commonwealth Government's proposed legislation on voluntary student unionism.

### **Implications of proposed action**

The deferral of the operation of the new constitution also necessitates an extension of the current arrangements under which the Interim Student Representative Committee is eligible to receive Amenities and Services Fee funding to carry out essential student representation and other activities. Council had previously approved these arrangements up to the end of Semester 1, 2005.

A consequence of this revised schedule is that the student referendum to ratify the constitution, once an indication of support is provided by Council, and the elections for student council representatives be deferred until Semester 2 with consequent MUSUL council, committee and office bearer appointments to take effect from 1 January 2006.

It should be noted that some changes to this schedule may occur should exigencies created by the VSU legislation so necessitate. Any changes will be reported to Council.

The revised time framework now proposed after consultation with the Council Working Group and student representatives is as follows:

April –May	Further consideration of the proposed UMSU Constitution by the Council Working Group including consultation with the Student Representative Working Group.
Mid June	Council Working Group to make recommendation to Council as to the basis on which the proposed constitution might be approved if subsequently ratified by students.
11 July	Council to consider provisional approval of proposed constitution pending student ratification.
Early Semester 2 August-Sept)	Student referendum for ratification of constitution and elections of (i.e. inaugural Council Committee and office bearers.
Late 2005-Jan.2006	UMSUL formally established and student representatives take up elected positions as provided by UMSUL constitution.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council –

- i. note the above report from the Ad-hoc Council Working Group on arrangements now proposed for Council consideration of the draft constitution for a new student organisation;
- ii. Note the revised schedule for the conduct of a student referendum to ratify the draft constitution and elections for appointments relating to the new student organisation;
- iii. agree to extend up to 31 December 2005 the period during which the Interim Student Representation Committee is recognised as a body that represents students for the purposes of eligibility of receipt of Amenities and Services Fee Funding; and
- iv. request that it continue to be kept informed of progress in establishing the new student organisation.

***Ian Marshman***  
**Senior Vice-Principal**