



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

MEMORANDUM

To: Professor Glyn Davis, Chair, Planning and Budget Committee
From: Professor Frank Larkins, Dean, Faculty of Land and Food Resources
Date: 23 June 2005
Subject: Proposal to Establish a Chair in Natural Resource Management

PURPOSE

To establish in the Faculty of Land and Food Resources a Chair in Natural Resource Management within the School of Resource Management. This Chair will provide essential leadership for the School.

BACKGROUND

The details of this proposal are attached.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning and Budget Committee approve for referral to Academic Board and Council, the establishment of a Chair in Natural Resource Management in the Faculty of Land and Food Resources with a five year initial appointment as Head of the School of Resource Management and Head of Burnley Campus.

Frank P Larkins
Dean
Faculty of Land and Food Resources

cc: Ms J Mariani, Secretary, Planning and Budget Committee

Proposal - Chair in Natural Resource Management

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

FACULTY OF LAND AND FOOD RESOURCES

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A

CHAIR IN THE SCHOOL OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE

This paper proposes to the Planning and Budget Committee for referral to Academic Board and Council that a Chair in Natural Resource Management be established within the School of Resource Management of the Faculty of Land and Food Resources (LFR). It is proposed the appointment be a continuing position with a five-year initial appointment as Head of the School and the Burnley Campus.

BACKGROUND

The School of Resource Management was established in the (then) Institute of Land and Food Resources in 2001 following a major re-organisation and was created as one of three Schools to focus on natural resource management, environmental horticulture and forest science. In 2004, the forest science components of the School of Resource Management were separated out to create a new School of Forest and Ecosystem Science through a partnership with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, centred on the University's Creswick campus.

The School of Resource Management thus focuses on the following key research areas:

- Grassland and woodland ecology
- Soil, water and landscape management (in association with the Faculty's School of Agriculture and Food Systems)
- Environmental horticulture
- Resource management, conservation and sustainable ecosystems

The School has approximately 30 staff who are primarily located at the Burnley campus of the University, with some staff located at the Parkville campus. The Chair will be located at the Burnley Campus.

The courses the Faculty offers for which the School has the main input include:

Bachelor of Horticulture
Associate Degree of Horticulture
Bachelor of Resource Management
Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Horticulture
Master of Horticulture
Master of Natural Resource Management

In addition to the above, the School also teaches into other programs of the Faculty. The School has approximately 26 EFTSL PhD students.

Proposal - Chair in Natural Resource Management

ACADEMIC CASE

The Faculty of Land and Food Resources is the largest Faculty of its kind in Australia offering a range of educational and research programs in the land-based industries which are pivotal to Australia's growth. Traditionally the focus for research in agriculture and related industries has been on production. While this is still very important, the research and development agenda for these industries these days includes sustainable management of the natural resources and ecosystems upon which they depend for their productivity, as well as the development of rural communities and the skills and capabilities of the people who live in those communities and work on the land in some capacity.

LFR is involved in research along the value chain in the major land-based industries of Australia, from innovation through basic and strategic science, including the molecular sciences, to assisting the rural industries in their learning and change management objectives. In addition to agricultural production systems, the Faculty's research programs also include food and fibre processing, economics and agribusiness, conservation management of public lands and the natural and cultural heritage of southern Australia, sustainable development of high quality urban environments where the majority of Australia's people live, and international development.

The areas of sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems and of development of urban environments are the major focus of the School of Resource Management.

The Faculty needs key appointments in leadership roles to enhance the research profile and international standing of the Faculty. Four professors have retired in recent years and the Faculty seeks to fill this Chair appointment in natural resource management as well as the Chair in Forest and Ecosystem Science. Such leadership positions are critical to the development of the Faculty and for providing leadership in the identified strategic areas of growth for the Faculty

Following the retirement of Professor Bob White who held the Chair in Soil Science, the School now has only one professor, Professor Roger Cousens who holds a Chair in Crop Science with a strong emphasis on weed science.

To provide strong leadership to the School, it is proposed that the new Chair would specialise in one or more of the key research areas of focus for the School.

A position description is attached which outlines the expectations of the Chair and Head of School, including selection criteria for the position.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The position is to be funded from recurrent funds as a continuing position. Planning and Budget Committee has allocated special funding in 2005 to establish the Chair. The Faculty is separately developing a strategic and associated workforce plan intended to place the Faculty on a sustainable financial footing into the future, and the proposed Chair is a key position in the Faculty to lead the further development of the teaching and research programs in natural resource management.

Proposal - Chair in Natural Resource Management

RECOMMENDATION

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Frank P. Larkins

Dean

Faculty of Land and Food Resources