

Knowledge Transfer

The Committee discussed a short paper by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and Development), Professor Braach-Maksvytis, on Knowledge Transfer and its relationship to the areas of advancement, marketing, communications and commercialisation, and received the Knowledge Transfer Taskforce Report.

The following points were raised in discussion of the term “Knowledge Transfer”:

- The word “transfer “ tended to imply a one way flow, and a word suggesting a two-way exchange between the University and the community would be preferable;
- “Knowledge Transfer” is a term generally understood to have a narrower meaning than the sense of engagement with the community which the University seeks to signify by it;
- “Knowledge Transfer” is a term which has been taken up with approval by the Commonwealth Government;
- Market Research indicates that the use of the term can reinforce the belief that the University is an arrogant institution;
- Even “knowledge exchange” as a two way process is a narrower term than the process of community engagement which forms the third strand of the triple helix;
- The term “Public Engagement” is utilized in this sense in the United States, and might be better understood by the University’s stakeholders; and
- “Knowledge Transfer” could still be used to designate the subset of community engagement activities generally understood from it (e.g. commercialization of research, public lectures).

The Committee asked the Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and Development) and Vice-Principal (Marketing and Communications) to discuss these issues further with the Vice-Chancellor.

In discussion of the Taskforce Report the Committee noted that, while it contained a stronger emphasis on two-way engagement and partnership than “knowledge transfer” normally signified, it did confine itself to the intellectual sphere and the University’s community engagement was a wider process than that. The Committee noted and strongly endorsed the six recommendations originally made by the Taskforce to the Curriculum Commission, as set out on pages 39 and 40 of its report. The Committee broadly welcomed the four measures proposed on page 12 of the report, but noted that the detailed application of these would need to be determined at the local level on a project by project or subject by subject basis. It was also noted that the sub-heading “Moving the triple bottom line within communities” on page 10 would need some clarification before the report was promulgated any further.