

## Notes from Brisbane Alumni Dinner: 17 July 2008

6:30pm, Skye Bar, 64 James Street, New Farm

### Attendees:

Jason Beckton	Prue Leggoe
Diana Dolan	Mike Lynn
Walter Dolan	Phillip Nyssen
Stephen Gilmore	Norman Swan
Felicity Heale	Vilma Swan
Donna Imeri	Leonie Boxtel
Peta Krahn	Dallas Fisher

**Purpose: To determine what alumni in Brisbane would like to achieve as a group, and discuss ways that this could be achieved.**

### Process:

#### Part A Where are we now?

##### University

- The University is committed to growing the alumni relations program.
- University resources have been expanded to enable this vision to be achieved. The central office is made up of Leonie Boxtel, General Manager, Dallas Fisher, Manager, Megan Dempsey, Manager and Alison Carr, Alumni Relations Officer. Most faculties have an alumni officer servicing faculty specific alumni activity.
- The team works in collaboration with each of the faculties and graduate schools to deliver an alumni relations program.
- Not all of the faculties/schools operate the same level of alumni programming or alumni engagement – therefore the role of the Central team is to provide overarching alumni engagement opportunities
- Within the Melbourne Model “knowledge transfer” – the collaboration with the external community in real-life projects to use the knowledge and skills of both parties for their mutual benefit – is a prominent part of University activity. This means that there is renewed focus around disseminating and sharing the results of research and activity to alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Individuals

- Individuals feel disconnected and there is a clear need to “bond together first”
- At the moment, there have been few reasons to come together as a group, hence the importance of this first dinner to reconnect with one another.

- Individuals must feel as if they're getting a good return on their investment. There is a sense of "what's in it for me?"
- Strengths: amongst the group there is commitment and enthusiasm to networking opportunities and alumni activities.
- Most alumni feel a strong connection to their student experience and to Melbourne as a place to live
- Many alumni are keen to connect for intellectual stimulation, to broaden their networks and social connections.
- Some alumni want to use their expertise to wield greater impact in the place that they live.

## **Part B Where do we want to be?**

### **University**

- Increasing the transfer of knowledge from the University to alumni and alumni feedback to the University
- Creating partnerships and opportunities for alumni, students and the University to be involved.
- Running a relevant and sustainable program of events with the support of the Alumni Relations team
- Ideally, alumni serving as ambassadors of the University, who have had input into shaping and enriching the current student experience and who are involved in the creation of rewarding alumni experiences
- Supportive of investigating new ways to make the above possible. For example pod-casting/video-streaming of public lectures/VC Orations. Question: Are there easier ways to connect? An alumni facebook of sorts? Leveraging what already exists within the Alumni Web Community?)

### **Individual**

- Individuals coming together for fun – (Question; Is there a preference for this to develop as a social group?)
- Holding and participating in activities and events that provide an intellectual challenge. There is a need to find a balance between creating a learning environment and a teaching environment
- Feeling a sense of privilege about being invited to participate
- Celebrating the collective expertise of the group – look to use individuals to lead discussions on topics of interest.
- "We'd like to be able to access some of the best stuff that's coming out of the University"
- "We want to be more involved in UoM knowledge transfer"
- Including a philanthropic element – wanting to give back, wanting to be involved in some way, wanting to 'embody' the University values

- “Meeting with like-minded people on a semi-regular basis – I want to get up there and breathe some of that air”
- Feeling a sense of enrichment through involvement and participation

## **Business**

- Leveraging the product and the expertise in the room
- Using the forum itself as a service to alumni for accessing expertise as well as products and services linked to alumni
- Philanthropy
- Employment opportunities for students and alumni

## **Part C What are we going to do?**

- **Leonie and Dallas** will make the group aware of upcoming events in 2008 and events mooted for 2009. This includes an event scheduled for 14 October, when a public lecture is scheduled within a larger graduate-school recruitment visit to Brisbane. There will be an opportunity for the Brisbane group to host the public lecture speaker and alumni at a reception before or after the public lecture. The group indicated the timing of this event was good. **Members** need to be prepared to take on a role in the implementation of this event.
- **Leonie and Dallas** will investigate the options available for live video streaming so that interstate alumni could access lectures and events that are happening on campus.
- **Leonie and Dallas** received approval to circulate a list of members in attendance and contact details to enable immediate ongoing discussion.
- **Each member** will provide input, ideas and suggestions for possible events Issues based fora? For example - climate change? solar energy? Also, suggest any good venues or host organisations.

## **Items for further discussion:**

- Need for some agreement on frequency of meetings and gatherings. Eg 2 major/2 minor events per year..More..Less?
- Alumni making a difference campaign – how to raise this idea further, and how each alumnus might connect with this campaign?
- Mission statement – do we need one? Would it provide a focus for the group?
- “Prep Pack” – there was discussion around the value of creating a document for new comers to Brisbane. This could be a brochure of sorts that would provide a brief overview of the group, talk about aims and objectives, have contact details for the group, and potentially a paragraph and photo on each of the members of the core group.
- Following on from the above item, each member can provide a short self introduction outlining their areas of expertise, achievements, interests etc for

compilation into a short 'intro pack' for others expressing interested in becoming involved in the group.

- Format of the group. Do people feel there is a need for formal committee members and roles, or a loose association of individuals? Need for a nominated leader / spokesperson? Selection / term of office etc.