

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
COMMITTEE OF CONVOCATION

MEETING 10/08

MINUTES

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 17 December 2008 at 5.30pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, University of Melbourne.

Present

Ms L Boston (Chair), Mr A Abbott, Mr E Bellchambers, Dr C Close, Ms C Cummins, Mr BFB Dance, Mr P Davies, Mr B Fitt, Ms H Fitzpatrick, Dr J Flesch, Mr D Ford, Dr A Gibbs, Dr T Gould, Dr JK Harcourt, Mr P Hirst, Mr G Israel, Ms I Jablonka, Mr F Lees, Dr R McMillan, Dr V McRae, Mr J Meehan, Dr J Nelson, Dr R Otzen, Dr D Parbery, Ms E Parker, Dr I Rechtman, Dr B-A Rodan, Mr L Rowe, Dr L Simpson, Dr J Stillman, Mr G Thomas, Mr M Warwick, Mr N Whiting

In Attendance

Mr Ian Renard (Chancellor), Ms J White (University Secretary), Mr S Halliwell (Minute Secretary), and Ms Leonie Boxtel (General Manager, Alumni Relations)

SECTION 1

1 Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence

Ms Boston welcomed members to the meeting, in particular Miss Eileen Parker who has returned to the Committee after serious illness. Apologies were received from Ms Anne Ada, Ms Jillian Crowe and Mr Robert McGauran.

No leave of absence requests were received.

2 Returning Officer's Report

Ms Boston reported on the list of vacancies currently on the Committee. Details are in the paper at Item 9.1 and the process of elections for casual vacancies was discussed in more detail under that item. Dr McRae submitted 2 completed nomination forms for Science vacancies.

3 Starring of Additional Items

Item 12 was starred. The Committee also added a new Item 14.3 for the tabled Arts Faculty Report and starred that item.

4 Receipt of Unstarred Items

The Committee received the unstarred items.

5 Minutes of Meeting 9/08 (19 November 2008)

The following addition was requested to Minute 6.1.3:

“When individual smaller donations are made, there is no provision for a rolling fund.”

Dr Simpson noted that the minute detailing the Vice-Chancellor’s presentation included the phrase “research-led” although Dr Simpson asserted that Professor Davis had not said that. Dr Simpson drew members’ attention to the Vice-Chancellor’s report to December Council (see Item 10) in which 2 pages are devoted to research although there is no reference to teaching and learning.

Ms Boston advised that the detailed minute of the Vice-Chancellor’s presentation had been sent to the Vice-Chancellor for approval before being circulated in the draft minutes of meeting 9/08.

Ms White advised that all teaching and learning matters are dealt with by the Provost. It was suggested that in 2009, the Committee have included in their papers the reports of senior officers to Council. This is a relatively new feature of Council reports following changes in reporting arrangements in late 2008. This will mean that the Committee will receive the Provost’s report in which they are likely to find details about learning and teaching matters and the implementation of the Melbourne Model.

6 Matters Arising

Australian National Academy of Music (Minute 16)

Ms White reported that Council at its meeting on 8 December resolved to make amendments to the Articles of Association in relation to the membership of the Board of ANAM. The federal Arts Minister has allocated \$500K to the University for use during the transition process. This process will assist students who wish to transfer to University award courses. ANAM will continue at South Melbourne in the short term. In response to a question as to whether ANAM had been taken over by the University with the consequence that the funds for ANAM would now be going to the University, Ms White reported that ANAM had always been a wholly owned subsidiary of the University through which Commonwealth funds were normally transmitted to ANAM. The name Australian National Academy of Music will remain. Students will not be disadvantaged. Ms White will report further at the March 2009 meeting.

Recognition of Traditional Owners (Minute 6.1.5)

Ms Boston reported that the matter had been discussed by Council at its meeting on 8 December in response to the recommendation from the Committee in its report to Council as follows:

“1. *Commemoration of Traditional Owners*

*The Committee discussed a proposal for a permanent commemoration on University grounds of the traditional owners of the land on which the University stands. The Committee noted that this matter was discussed, and such a commemoration proposed, at Council meeting 8/02 in December 2002 (see Minute 7.2). **The Committee recommends that Council reconsider the matter in consultation with members of the Indigenous community.**”*

Council has assigned responsibility for this matter to the Provost. It is not a straightforward matter as historically there have been competing tribal claims in relation to land in this area. Ms Jablonka pointed out that the intention of her original paper in August was for an information plaque and this

may not be the same thing that the Council had in mind in December 2002. She also said that it had been suggested to her that the recommendation to Council include a request for a report back on progress in the next six months.

Minute Secretary's note: The recommendation went to Council on 8 December and is quoted above. Section 25(b) of The Melbourne University Act 1958 requires Council to report back on its deliberations on any matter brought to its attention by the Committee.

6.1 Action Sheet 9/08

6.1.1 Casual Election Process

Details of the proposed changes to Division F of Standing Orders and of the proposals for the 2009 casual elections were discussed in detail under Item 9.1.

6.1.2 Report from the Arts Faculty

Dr Flesch reported under Item 14.3.

7 President's Report

Ms Boston reported on the 8 December meeting of Council. She reported in particular on the following matters:

- Council received a report on the Bradley Review (see <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Pages/default.aspx>)
- A farewell dinner was held for Chancellor Ian Renard who retires as of 10 January 2009
- Council is preparing its response to the Victorian Government's Statement of Intent in relation to the review of University Acts. The University's response will be consistent with the position it adopted in its detailed submission in April 2008.

The Convocation Annual Meeting will probably be held in April. Suggestions for guest speakers should be sent to the Minute Secretary. Ms Boston requested that conveners of sub-committees arrange to meet before the first meeting of 2009 (25 March) so that reports can be circulated with meeting papers. The new Chancellor (Justice Alex Chernov) will be installed at a ceremony on 10 February 2009 at 3-00pm. Members will be invited.

8 Reports from Sub-committees and Working Groups

There was none.

9 Issues of Concern to Members

9.1 Casual Elections

Mr Halliwell gave detail of the current vacancies on the Committee (Science: 4; Arts: 1) as detailed in the circulated paper. He also explained to members the proposed amendments to Division F of Standing Orders. Essentially, the proposed amendments would free the casual election process from the strictures of the Committee meeting schedule. Giving the authority for conducting elections to the University Secretary would ensure that casual elections to the Committee are consistent with other University elections. The proposed adoption of Council Standing Resolution 2.18 (Election of Chancellor and Deputy Chancellors) would ensure that there is an appropriate framework and timeline for the call for and close of nominations and the circulation of voting papers when necessary.

The proposed amendments were discussed and some changes agreed as follows:

- The adapted Standing Resolution 2.18 will become Appendix A to the Standing Orders and “as in Appendix A” will be added to the end of the new Standing Order F2.
- The sentence “Any such decisions are to be reported to the next Committee meeting.” will be added at the end of the new Standing Order F4.

9.2 Alumni Matters University Tours

Ms Boxtel thanked members for their help with the recent Alumni tour on 26 November. She reported that tours are planned for March, June, October and November on 2009 and precise dates will be circulated to members. Signage will be put up around the University for self-led tours and to assist tour leaders.

Alumni Preferences Survey

Ms Boxtel reported on the recent Alumni Preferences survey:

- Thousands of responses had been received
- The top issue was “Alumni benefits” which was interesting to 75% of respondents
- 35% were interested in the arts
- 29% were interested in library access
- 18% would still like to receive a hard copy publication

She said that the survey had led to concrete results and changes to some programs. In 2009, the Alumni E-news will be tailored to alumni expressions of interest – the first such publication in Australia to do this.

Donors List

Ms Boxtel reported that each person who donates \$500+ to the University is listed, but no reference is made as to whether or not they are a member of Alumni. There had been discussion about the potential for referencing membership of the Committee of Convocation, but it had been decided that this was too complex for the current systems and would set an unwanted precedent.

Hosting International Students

Ms Boxtel reported on a proposed program that is currently being discussed that would involve an alumni family meeting international students on their arrival in Australia and keeping in regular contact throughout the students’ stay. Dr Simpson endorsed such a program noting that experience shows the benefits.

Ms Boston thanked Ms Boxtel for the detailed report on Alumni matters and noted that there has now developed a firm, constructive relationship between the Committee and Alumni Relations.

10 Vice-Chancellor’s Report to 8 December Council.

Ms White reported on the University Plan as tabled, noting that it was produced before the report of the Bradley Review of Higher Education had been released. She reported that the federal Government was planning to allow universities to resume charging students a fee for “amenities and services” that had been disallowed by the previous government’s “voluntary student unionism”

legislation of 2005. The current government is likely to prohibit use of the fees for “political purposes” although detailed guidelines have not yet been released. Students will be able to defer payment as with HECS-style course fees. Ms White reported that Professors Rob Saint and Sharman Pretty had been appointed to the positions of Dean of Science and Dean of Music and the VCA respectively. Finally, Ms White reported on the proposed merger of the faculty of Economics and Commerce (E&C) and the Melbourne Business School (MBS), and the establishment by Council of a Due Diligence Committee in relation to this merger.

Mr Whiting noted that a report from Asia in 2007 said that only 2 places in Australia were attractive destinations: the ANU and the MBS. MBS was attractive because of the MBA course – a course taken by mature students. He feared that it would lose its value if it became simply a post BComm course. Mr Renard responded saying that there has been no announcement yet of the proposed merger because there is as yet no final agreement. Any new entity must have the best elements of both organisations. What is already agreed is:

- There will be a single graduate school called Melbourne Business School
- The MBA will not be changed
- There is confusion in the community between the faculty of E&C and the MBS, and there is considerable overlap between their offerings

There will be a meeting on 18 December of senior academics from both organisations. In relation to the Master of Management course, there can be no definitive answer until a merger is agreed. The MBA should be offered as is, but there needs to be provision for post-BComm masters programs. Mr Renard advised that there was a three-step process:

1. Non-binding Heads of Agreement
2. Detailed contract
3. Formal ratification by E&C faculty and MBS

In relation to the University Plan as tabled, Mr Renard advised that it was an early draft document and the final version would be presented to the Planning Conference in mid-February. It used to be called the “Operational Plan” and elements of it do feed into the Key Performance Indicators of senior managers.

11 Legislation and Trusts Committee Report to 8 December Council

No further matters were reported on.

12 Building and Estates Committee Report to 8 December Council

Ms White referred to the University Master Plan as tabled. It had been presented to Council on 8 December by Daryl Jackson and had been signed off by the Building and Estates Committee. Ms White noted the emphasis on heritage values and on the division of the campus into segments with which it was intended, over time, to match disciplines at the University. Any comments should be sent directly to Rob McGauran.

13 Academic Board Report to 8 December Council

No matters were raised.

14 Reports of Faculty and Committee meetings

14.3 Arts Faculty

Dr Flesch reported that as far as the faculty is concerned, the matter of redundancies is now

settled and there has been no need to make “involuntary redundancies”. Further details of the faculty’s meeting of 17 December are in the report as tabled.

15 Meeting Dates

The Committee noted the 2009 meeting dates as circulated.

16 Guest Speaker

Mr Ian Renard, Chancellor of the University, spoke to the Committee. In his introductory remarks, he noted that as the Bradley review had only just been released, he would address that issue at the dinner to follow the meeting. In preparing for what would be his final talk (as Chancellor) to the Committee as he was retiring as of 10 January 2009, Mr Renard said that he had reviewed his Committee of Convocation file and wished to comment on the following matters.

Grainger Museum

Mr Renard said that a good outcome had been achieved, not least because of the dedication and persistence of the Committee. Work would commence early in 2009 and funds had been found outside the normal recurrent funding. Thanks in particular should go to Dr McMillan.

Foundation Stone Replica

This is a striking feature of the Old Law quad and is much appreciated.

Commemoration of Traditional Owners

As this matter had been raised again recently, Mr Renard had reviewed the previous files. As reported by Ms Boston (see Item 6 above), the matter has been referred to the Provost. There are complications because of competing tribal claims over relevant land. There is always an acknowledgement at conferrings, but Mr Renard welcomed the recommendation to have something more formal.

Taking Responsibility for Making Melbourne Manageable Project (TRMMM)

This significant project is being led by Senior Vice-Principal, Ian Marshman. It includes the detailed review of University legislation being undertaken by Mr Chris Penman and Mr Len Currie. The University is heartened by the Committee’s detailed interest and it has been useful to have reminders of the Committee’s position and role on faculties. The revised University internal legislation will enshrine the Committee’s membership of faculty advisory boards.

Review of University Acts

There has been only slow progress by the State Government given that submissions were due by 30 April 2008 and it had only recently released its “Statement of Intent” in relation to University Acts. The University will be sending a response to the Statement of Intent before Christmas. The next step is for the government to draft a bill and send it to stakeholders for comment.

Important Council Items

Mr Renard referred the Committee to the following:

- The University Plan

- The reform agenda being led by Ian Marshman
- New deans

He also reported that a new Ormond Chair of Music would be appointed soon. In respect of the VCA and Music, Mr Renard said that the Committee needed to maintain its vigilance particularly in relation to the VCA following the expiry of the 2007 agreement in 2012. The government had not maintained its previous funding levels for VCA courses, leaving the University to bridge the “gap”. When the five year agreement expires, it will be essential that the standard of teaching is maintained and it will therefore be necessary to attract more funds and to continue planning for a Melbourne Conservatorium. He noted that the newly appointed Dean of Music was instrumental (no pun intended) in the development of the Sydney Conservatorium.

Mr Renard noted that the University is very fortunate in its Vice-Chancellor who works well with the current federal government. He noted that Council works very effectively, particularly in its committee structure to which Committee of Convocation members make a valuable contribution, for example in the Remuneration and Employment Conditions Committee and Finance Committee.

Mr Renard said that it was not surprising that at times the Committee felt side-lined as legislative history does show that it had more direct power and representation in the past. There is an opportunity to repair some of that during the review of University Acts. It has been requested that at least 25% of Council members be alumni and, mutatis mutandis, they could then be co-opted onto the Committee.

In response to questions, the Chancellor reported as follows.

Libraries

Funding for everything is affected by the “GFC” (Global Financial Crisis), but the Bradley report may result in increased funding for the University once the government’s response is known. Certainly the Information Futures Commission (IFC) report envisaged increased funding for the library, but there will be no more commitments of capital expenditure until the government’s position is known. The position of Librarian has been advertised.

[Minute Secretary’s note: The University community was advised on 22 December of the appointment of Mr Philip Kent, currently Librarian at Victoria University, as University Librarian to commence in early March.]

University Rankings

Mr Renard advised that he too did not like the methodology of several of the university ranking systems, but many people take notice of them and therefore the University strives to do as well as possible. There are essentially two types of ranking system: those which are factually based on measurable criteria (these systems favour research); and those which are at least partly subjective through the use of surveys. Mr Renard noted that the University of Melbourne was recently ranked 9th in the world in the employability of its graduates based on the questionnaire responses of employers.

Ms Boston thanked the Chancellor for his detailed presentation. She said that the University was indeed fortunate in the calibre of its Council members and that the Chancellor’s chairmanship of Council was outstanding. The Committee was extremely grateful for the support the Chancellor had shown over the years, and for his abiding interest in the work of the Committee. She noted that his interest has encouraged the Committee’s interest in University matters. Mr Renard had been an exceptional Chancellor. She read the citation that had been presented to Council on the occasion of

the awarding of the Chancellor's honorary LLD.

In closing, Ms Boston thanked Ms White, Mr Halliwell, the conveners of sub-committees and all members for their work during 2008.

Meeting closed at 7-40pm.

Next Meeting is on Wednesday 25 March 2009 at 5-30pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room.