

**CONFIRMED**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**  
**COMMITTEE OF CONVOCATION**

**MEETING 4/09**

**MINUTES**

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 1 July 2009 at 5.30pm in the Council chambers, University of Melbourne.

**Present**

Ms L Boston (Chair), Mr A Abbott, Ms A Ada, Mr E Bellchambers, Ms Anna Burgess, Ms B Chan, Ms J Chiew, Dr C Close, Ms C Cummins, Mr B Dance, Mr B Fitt, Dr J Flesch, Mr D Ford, Dr A Gibbs, Dr T Gould, Dr JK Harcourt, Mr G Israel, Ms I Jablonka, Mr F Lees, Mr R McGauran, Dr R McMillan, Dr V McRae, Mr C Middleton, Dr J Nelson, Dr R Otzen, Dr D Parbery, Ms B Perry, Dr B-A Rodan, Mr L Rowe, Dr L Simpson, Dr J Stillman,

**In Attendance**

Professor Field Rickards (Dean of Melbourne Graduate School of Education), Mr J Green (Deputy University Secretary), Mr S Halliwell (Minute Secretary)

**SECTION 1**

**1 Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence**

Ms Boston welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Ms L Adams, Ms H Fitzpatrick, and Mr M Warwick

Mr J Meehan, Dr I Rechtman, Mr G Thomas and Mr N Whiting were on Leave of Absence.

Leave of Absence requests were received as follows.

29 July: Mr A Abbott, Dr R Otzen, Ms H Fitzpatrick and Dr J Flesch

26 August: Dr R McMillan, Dr D Parbery, Mr B Fitt and Dr R Otzen

**2 Returning Officer's Report**

There was no report.

**3 Starring of Additional Items**

Item 11.1 was starred.

**4 Receipt of Unstarred Items**

The Committee received the unstarred items.

## **5 Minutes of Meeting 3/09 (3 June 2009)**

The minutes were approved.

## **6 Matters Arising**

### **6.1 Action Sheet 3/09**

#### **6.1.1 Template letter for faculty representatives**

Dr Stillman will liaise with the minute secretary and report to the next meeting.

#### **6.1.2 Library Storage**

Mr Israel referred to the report from the Libraries and Information Access sub-committee (paper for Item 11.1). Mr Israel proposed that the substance of the report be used as part of the Committee's response to Refining Our Strategy. Any questions or comments are to be emailed directly to Mr Israel.

#### **6.1.3 Material on transport issues**

The material supplied by Ms Jablonka was emailed to members on 4 June. A summary report was circulated as a paper for item 6.1.3

#### **6.1.4 Refining Our Strategy**

This matter was discussed in detail under Item 9.1.

#### **6.1.5 Email vote on date for extended meeting**

The email vote closed on 12 June. The majority vote was for 11 July.

#### **6.1.6 Letter to parliamentarians and the Minister re the University Act**

There has been no response from the Minister. As indicated on the agenda, a copy of the "Model Bill" is available on the web site at <http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/corporate/providers/universities/government-higher-education-review> Neither Convocation nor its committee is mentioned in the Model Bill.

#### **6.1.7 The VCA and Music**

Dr Gould reported that in response to an article in *The Age* in which the new dean of the merged faculty of the VCA and Music ('VCAM') appeared to be critical of the VCA and its staff, he had written to the Vice-Chancellor. Dr Gould read from the Vice-Chancellor's response in which he proposed a meeting between Dr Gould, Dr McMillan and the Acting Provost, Professor Sue Elliott. The Committee endorsed a meeting as suggested with Dr Gould and Dr McMillan acting as representatives of the Committee. Mr Rowe pointed out that there were other issues with the merger of the faculties and these too should be addressed. The minute secretary advised that the new dean of VCAM, Professor Sharman Pretty, was to be guest speaker at the August meeting of the Committee and Ms Boston suggested that these other issues could be raised then.

## **7 Guest Speaker**

Professor Field Rickards, dean of Melbourne Graduate School of Education, spoke to the Committee. He began by thanking the Committee for providing an opportunity to share what he believed was a great example of the Melbourne Model and Growing Esteem in action. He referred members to the article in *The Australian Higher Education Supplement* of 1 July (see *The Clinical Approach* at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25713100-12332,00.html>) as some of what he intended to cover also appeared in that article.

Professor Rickards said that in 2005 the faculty had a vision that by 2012:

- Training of teachers would have been reformed to become world leading in its approach;
- Research would be of high impact, be theme led, be collaborative and multi-disciplinary; and
- All postgraduate programs would be informed by research, be in high demand and be responsive.

In 2006, the faculty became a one-department faculty. It established a research institute under Professor Barry McGaw and it set up an Office of Learning and Teaching to ensure the appropriate nexus between research and teaching. Shortly after this, Professor Glyn Davis arrived as the new Vice-Chancellor and introduced Growing Esteem and the Melbourne Model. Professor Rickards noted that as he had previously worked at MDHS developing clinical training in Audiology, he was a whole-hearted supporter of the Melbourne Model from the outset. The model essentially keeps open and maximises the options for students and is designed to create learning communities from different disciplines.

The Melbourne Model provided the impetus to develop a radically new professional model for the training of teachers. Professor Rickards outlined the key features of the way professional teacher education now takes place within the faculty:

- It is now a two-year masters program linking theory and practice;
- Teaching fellows (employed through a \$945k grant from the federal and state governments, the Catholic Education Office and the University of Melbourne) are employed 0.5 in the faculty and 0.5 in schools;
- Groups of students are placed in schools for two days a week over an extended period in contrast to the previous model of two or three week practicums;
- The program produces “interventionist practitioners” who are skilled enough to interact with individual pupils;
- The average age of students is now 28, coming from a range of disciplines into a profession that they have actively chosen rather than drifted into on the basis of an ENTER score.

Professor Rickards reported that the faculty received a further \$8m in 2008 to enable the program to continue in 2009 and 2010. Another significant development was that in late June, the faculty was awarded the tender by the federal government to implement the “Teach For Australia” program. This program aims to recruit the top 5 to 10% of graduates into teacher training and to then place them in disadvantaged schools for two years. Although similar to the “Teach for America” program, in Teach For Australia, the MGSE will support the students for two years rather than simply providing the six-week preparation of the US system. Professor Rickards noted that one of the key features of this program is that the students who participate will be future leaders of the country and will therefore be making key policy decisions.

There is no doubt that the new Master of Teaching program and its students have been well received in schools. Professor Rickards read from a speech given by the Principal of Ivanhoe Girls Grammar at last year’s Provost Colloquium. The Principal praised the new Master of Teaching and the quality of students, particularly their ability to link theory and practice and their understanding of the need for interaction with individual students and their ability to put it into practice.

In closing, Professor Rickards noted the changes that had also occurred in the faculty's research efforts. As noted earlier, the faculty needed more large-scale collaborative research projects. In the last round of ARC linkage grants, the faculty had successfully secured \$3m of the \$10m that had gone to the University of Melbourne for two key projects: one in Early Childhood Education and the other in Early Literacy Intervention.

In response to questions, Professor Rickards reported:

- The faculty is working with regional directors in order to broaden the range of schools that take MGSE students, and is working with municipal councils for students in the early childhood stream;
- It is expected that eventually, the schools taking MGSE students will be 2/3 public, 1/6 Catholic and 1/6 independent.

Ms Boston thanked Professor Rickards noting, as an ex-teacher and school principal, that it was exciting and gratifying to hear about MGSE's laudable program. It was her view that there was nothing more important than the best of teaching for students, and MGSE is clearly at the forefront of exciting new developments taking the nature of teacher education to a new level.

## **8 President's Report**

Ms Boston reported that the Committee had received a specific request to respond to the *Refining Our Strategy* document and this matter would be dealt with under Item 9.1. Reporting on the Council meeting of 22 June, Ms Boston noted the following:

- Professor Mark Considine, dean of the faculty of Arts, gave a positive report on developments in the faculty;
- Council discussed MUP and its continued financial difficulties – Council will continue with its financial support; and
- The merger of the faculty of Economics and Commerce ('E&C') and the Melbourne Business School ('MBS') is progressing.

Mr Green reported on the following:

- The planned merger of E&C and MBS took a step forward on 30 June when the Due Diligence committee approved several necessary documents;
- Professor Jim Angus, dean of the faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences ('MDHS'), reported to Council on the restructure of MDHS into four graduate schools; and
- The Hon Susan Crennan, High Court judge, has been elected a Deputy Chancellor for a term of office to 31 December 2009.

### **8.1 Report to Council**

The report to Council on 22 June of meeting 3/09 of the Committee was noted.

## **9 Issues of Concern to Members**

### **9.1 Refining Our Strategy**

Ms Boston referred members to the various papers circulated for the item and noted that there are approximately three weeks remaining in which to frame a response. She proposed dividing into 10 groups as outlined in paper 9.1 (d). Groups formed and discussed their allocated questions for some 40 minutes.

Group leaders will write up their groups' responses in an email to the minute secretary who will compile the responses in a single document in preparation for the extended meeting on 11 July.

In a plenary session, group leaders reported as follows.

**Group 1 Melbourne vision & a changing external environment (Dr Nelson)**

- The material raised several more questions rather than leading to answers in all instances
- Knowledge Transfer took up a lot of discussion time

**Group 2 A world-class University – resources, size and international strategy (Mr Ford)**

- There is a need to go back to the basic question of what is the purpose of the Melbourne Model
- Funding is a key issue
- There seems to be no need to increase the size of the University
- The proportion of undergraduate to postgraduate students will inevitably alter to be closer to 50:50

*[At this point, a fifteen minute extension was approved.]*

**Group 3 Research (Dr Stillman)**

- There are questions around the meaning of research excellence
- There are questions around the value of international ranking systems
- A key issue is the employability of graduates
- Core and non-core research areas need to be defined
- There is a need for research partnerships, internal and external

**Group 4 Research training – metrics and commercialisation (Dr Rodan)**

- The source of students is crucial
- Financial barriers for students need to be examined
- Teaching methodology is crucial
- Family issues need to be taken into consideration
- An exit poll for non-completing RHD students would be a good idea
- Students need assistance with writing up and commercialisation

**Group 5 Learning and teaching (Dr Otzen)**

- There may be benefit in making civic service compulsory for students
- Moral attributes need to be defined
- Time is needed to assess breadth and coherence
- Pedagogy needs to be suited to the student cohorts – undergraduate and postgraduate

*[At this point, a ten minute extension was approved.]*

**Group 6 Research higher degrees – student profile – scholarships (Mr Israel)**

- A PhD does not warrant breadth subjects
- The University should widen its countries of origin for students
- Increased federal funding is needed
- The question of the equity and merit balance is a difficult one

**Group 7 Quality of teaching – a distinctive Melbourne experience – quality assurance (Ms Cummins)**

- Several changes could be made to the form and administration of the QOT surveys
- Mentoring by both students and staff would be a good idea

- Collegiality needs to be increased
- There is a case for the re-introduction of compulsory student unionism

**Group 8 Knowledge transfer (Mr Rowe)**

- Knowledge Transfer ('KT') needs to be professional and fully funded and supported
- The possibilities of KT vary from faculty to faculty
- There needs to be more public events, more outreach to regional centres and more use of modern technology

It being 8-00pm, Ms Boston said that reports from other groups would be held over. She referred members to the Alumni Report – tabled as paper 19.1 – and to the two documents tabled by Ms Boxtel being an invitation to the Alumni Welcome to Melbourne Program and details of the hosting of international students.

No other business was conducted and the meeting closed at 8-00pm.

Next Meeting is on Wednesday 29 July 2009 at 5-30pm in the Council Chambers.

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2009

- 29 July (Council Chambers – next meeting)
- 26 August (Graduate House)
- 23 September (Council Chambers)
- 21 October (Council chambers)
- 25 November (Graduate House)
- 16 December (Note change of Date from original schedule; venue to be advised)

President's Signature.....Date.....