

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
COMMITTEE OF CONVOCATION

MEETING 4/08

MINUTES

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 18 June 2008 at 5.30pm in the Council Chambers, University of Melbourne.

Present

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

In Attendance

Ms J White (University Secretary), Ms Leonie Boxtel (General Manager, Alumni Relations), Mr S Halliwell (Minute Secretary) Professor Mark Considine (Dean of Arts)

SECTION 1

1 Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Mr M Corrigan, Ms J Crowe, Mr P Davies, Mr B Southern and Ms M Weston.

A leave of absence requests was received for the July and August meetings from Mr D Ford.

Ms Boston welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed in particular Ms Irene Jablonka to her first meeting of the Committee. Ms Jablonka was formally introduced to the Committee by Mr Eric Bellchambers.

2 Returning Officer's Report

There was no report.

3 Starring of Additional Items

The following items were starred: 9.2 and 9.4. Other business items were added as follows:

- 15.1 Strategic Plan;
- 15.2 Economics and Commerce issue.

4 Receipt of Unstarred Items

The Committee received the unstarred items.

5 Minutes of Meeting 3/08 (16 April 2008)

The minutes were approved, subject to the addition of Dr Simpson to the list of apologies and the correction of a typographical error in Item 7.

6 Matters Arising

6.1 Action Sheet 3/08

6.1.1 Introduction of Ms Jablonka

Complete.

6.1.2 Provide a summary of enrolments

This is to be arranged when the data are available.

6.1.3 Include meeting protocols in Standing Orders

Complete. Copy of new section of Standing Orders was provided at the meeting.

6.1.4 Grainger Chronology

Complete. Recommendations are in the report to Council (see item 11).

6.1.5 Submission to State Government review

Complete. Submission was sent on 23 May 2008.

6.1.6 Dinner arrangements (review advertising requirements)

In progress by the Secretary's Department.

6.1.7 Business Cards

This matter was discussed under Item 9.4.

6.1.8 Submission to Information Futures Commission

Complete. See comments under item 9.2.

6.1.9 Unsupported Olympic Participant

Complete.

6.1.10 Invite Pat Freeland-Small

Complete. Invited to the July meeting.

7 President's Report (and Item 9.2 Submission to State Government Review)

Ms Boston reported that the tour of Engineering that took place before the meeting was very informative. She recently attended a most enjoyable Town and Gown function. She further reported that the Vice-Chancellor had agreed to be at the November meeting from

6-30pm to 7-30pm for questions and discussion.

The Committee began discussion of the “Post-Meeting Dinners” paper circulated under item 8.1 but deferred further discussion in order to hear the guest speaker, Professor Mark Considine, Dean of Arts.

14 Guest Speaker

Professor Considine thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak about the faculty of Arts and particularly about the Arts Renewal Strategy. He noted that he found it very valuable to speak to groups such as senior management, Council and the Committee because of the valuable perspective such meetings gave to the complex issues facing the faculty. Professor Considine explained how the faculty found itself with a structural deficit. This has a long history going back as far as the Dawkins reforms of higher education and is compounded by the fact that Arts, one of the largest University faculties in Australia, is a very complex financial entity comprising many undertakings and processes. The most recent growth surge occurred in the early 2000s with a significant rise in international fee income. Unfortunately, as the figures below for increase in revenue show, the initial surge was not repeated:

2002 24.9%
2003 15%
2004 7%
2005 negative growth

The faculty employed approximately 100 new staff in the period 2002 to 2006, and as 82% of the faculty’s expenditure is in staffing costs, this led to a structural deficit in the faculty. This caused a level of shock both inside and outside the faculty, and it has taken a couple of years to digest all the ramifications and make adjustments.

The Arts Renewal Strategy has three key components as follows:

- Re-organisation of the BA program – the largest BA program in the country – stimulated by the introduction of the Melbourne Model. The challenge is to reduce the number of subjects (originally c1,400) while preserving, where possible, minority subjects;
- The introduction through the Melbourne Model (and a potential Graduate School for the faculty from 2009) of two new Masters coursework courses; and
- Reduction in staff numbers through voluntary departure schemes.

There is also a review in the Languages area. At the moment, the faculty teaches 11 modern languages plus 2 classical languages and Hebrew, and most are taught at multiple levels.

In conclusion, Professor Considine noted the high level of goodwill within the faculty, and the support throughout the University for the Renewal Strategy.

In response to members’ questions, Professor Considine reported as follows.

- A matrix has been developed in the faculty to cover academic staff work; most

staff do both teaching and research, and the model posits 40% for research, with an extra 13% if there is supervision of RHD students

- The faculty board has been very involved in discussion of all proposals and suggestions, and in deliberating on issues and recommendations from reviews such as the D'Agostino review of the faculty
- While there is no Chair of Australian Literature, the (unsuccessful) process of applying for funding from the Federal Government revealed a significant level of specialism and expertise in the faculty
- Professor Considine would be happy to discuss "off-line" how Arts graduates on the Committee could be more closely involved
- The lack of French History illustrates one of the conundrums when an attempt is being made to restrain costs; the increase in beginners language study does not seem to lead to significant increases in cognate subjects in other departments and Arts needs to look at ways to strengthen this relationship
- The Melbourne Model has been generally good for the faculty; it stimulated a detailed review of the BA and the faculty benefited from the requirement for students to take "breadth" subjects. The biggest unknown is in the postgraduate area
- The new Masters courses are coursework and there will be no reduction in RHD students; it is hoped that these postgraduate courses will be attractive to international students as there is a projected loss of income of approximately \$6m from domestic students, and several countries such as Malaysia and Singapore from where international students frequently came have put significant effort into their own undergraduate courses in order to encourage their domestic students to remain.

Ms Boston thanked Professor Considine for his interesting and informative presentation, noting that he had had rather a baptism of fire as new Dean. She conveyed the Committee's best wishes and hoped that there could be a further report on the success of the strategies in the future.

8 Arrangements for 2008

8.1 Meeting and Dinner Arrangements

The committee discussed again a paper from the University Secretary. Ms White also drew members' attention to the tabled paper being a summary of expenditure on Convocation and Committee matters in 2007 and 2008 to date. Ms White explained that all University departments had been asked to make economies in the context where the University is facing a loss of revenue in 2009 when it will no longer be permissible under Federal Government policy to enrol domestic fee-paying students. She also emphasised the fact that the Convocation budget should be seen as a two-year budget because the major expenses of election and graduate roll advertising occur every two years. The Committee accepted proposals as follows.

- 1 Dinners will be subsidised at \$20 per head until the end of the year.
- 2 One member of the Secretariat will attend each dinner.
- 3 Statutes, regulations and standing orders will be reviewed by the University

Secretary's Department with a view to making the advertising requirements more realistic and up-to-date.

4 These arrangements will be reviewed in 2009.

The following arrangements were also agreed. Dr McMillan will collect members' contributions at University House and will pass the money collected directly to University House staff. The Secretary's department will be invoiced for the balance. Members with ideas for post-dinner speakers and pre-meeting tours should forward suggestions to Steve. Speakers are already arranged for July, August, October and November, and the President suggested the possibility of getting the Chancellor for the final meeting in December. Dinner will be at Graduate House in July, with Mr Eugene Spanti – Graduate House Head of College and CEO – as guest speaker. This will be confirmed in the meeting agenda. Meetings of the committee will continue in the Council Chambers, but when the chambers are unavailable (typically in March and December for conferrings), meetings will also be at Graduate House.

In response to a question from Mr Lees about expenditure on Alumni related material, Mr Halliwell undertook to ask Ms Leonie Boxtel, General Manager Alumni Relations, to report to the next meeting on these matters.

9 Recommendations from Sub-committees and Working Groups

9.1 Review of University Acts

The Committee noted the copy of the submission sent to the State Government review on 23 May 2008.

9.2 Libraries and Information Access

Mr Israel drew members' attention to the proposed new terms of reference for the sub-committee as listed in the report – paper 9.2(a). The terms of reference were approved. Ms White reported that the first meeting of the University's "Senior Executive" had been held that morning and they had discussed a report from the Information Futures Commission. It was thought that the report was still at too high a level and therefore further reports to Senior Executive will be required, particularly to identify priorities for spending on any proposed projects arising out of the Commission's work. Ms Boston thanked Mr Israel and the sub-committee for all their work in putting together the submission from the Committee.

9.3 Strategic Plan

There was no report.

9.4 Membership

Mr Dance spoke to his report (a tabled paper) and moved the motion:

"That business cards be issued to all members of the Committee". The motion was subsequently amended with the approval of the mover to read:

"That business cards be issued to all members of the Committee who wish to receive them."

The Committee discussed various matters concerning business cards, including the fact that such cards had been suggested by the University Secretary some years ago. In response to a question, Ms White advised that cards are not given to members of Council, and it is only senior staff of the University who have them (for example, Ms White as University Secretary has cards whereas Mr Halliwell as Co-ordinator of the Central Secretariat does not). Various options for printing and funding were suggested, but it was pointed out that the cards will have to be approved by the University and have the appropriate logo and so on.

The motion as amended was carried.

The Membership sub-committee will now consider options for the production and funding of business cards and will report back to the Committee with recommendations as appropriate.

In relation to the sub-committee report, it was clarified that in relation to Task 3 there has been no change in the definition of “graduate”. It may be that this was confused with the definition of “Alumni” which was recently changed by Council.

9.5 Melbourne Model

There was no report.

10 Issues of Concern to Members

10.1 Raising the Effectiveness of the Committee

Mr Abbott spoke briefly to his memo and paper as circulated. He proposed the motion:

“That the Committee hold an extended meeting at a weekend”. The motion was carried. A Planning group was established comprising Mr A Abbott (Convener), Mr P Hirst, Dr L Simpson and Dr J Stillman. The group will meet, assisted as necessary by the Minutes Secretary, and will make recommendations to the Committee for date, location, costs and funding and proposed agenda of items for discussion. Mr Ford suggested that the role and function of the Committee should be discussed as a preliminary to proposals for making the Committee more effective in carrying out its role. Ms Boston reminded members of the Committee’s Mission Statement and Strategic Plan and the role of the relevant sub-committee in constantly reviewing these. Members should forward any other ideas or suggestions to Mr Halliwell.

10.2 Members’ Photographs on the Web Site

In the absence of Mr Corrigan who raised this matter, the item was deferred until the next meeting.

11 Report to Council.

The Committee noted the report to June Council as circulated.

12 Vice-Chancellor’s Report to June Council

In relation to the matter of Professor Rathjen's appointment to the WEHI and Bio21 Boards, it was pointed out that Professor Rathjen has been appointed as DVC Research and not as Dean of Science (his former position). In future, the Committee will also receive a copy of the Academic Board report to Council.

13 Reports of Committee Meetings and Faculty Meetings

13.1 MDHS Faculty Board Report

The Committee noted the report as circulated.

14 Guest Speaker

Professor Considine spoke during the early part of the meeting and the minute can be found after minute 7.

15 Other Business

15.1 Strategic Plan Working Group

As requested by Ms Fitzpatrick, faculty representatives' email addresses will be forwarded to Ms Leonie Boxtel, General Manager Alumni Relations, to ensure that representatives are on relevant faculty email distribution lists for faculty events and functions.

15.2 Faculty of Economics and Commerce

The Committee noted the document from Mr Lees as tabled, being an extract from a recent copy of *The Age*, notably an article celebrating the career of John Vaizey, educational economist. Mr Lees advised the Committee that it had been reported by the Dean of Economics and Commerce that the faculty had 60% international students and made a profit of \$7m in 2007. Mr Lees inferred from this that the University is effectively excluding 60% of Australian students and asked that the point be minuted.

Meeting closed at 7-30pm.