

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

**MEETING 1/08**

**MINUTES**

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 19 March 2008 at 5.30pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, University of Melbourne.

**Present**

Ms L Boston (Chair), Mr A Abbott, Ms A Ada, Mr E Bellchambers, Dr C Close, Mr M Corrigan, Ms JM Crowe, Mr BFB Dance, Mr P Davies, Mr B Fitt, Dr J Flesch, Mr D Ford, Dr T Gould, Dr JK Harcourt, Mr P Hirst, Mr G Israel, Mr F Lees, Dr R McMillan, Dr V McRae, Mr J Meehan, Dr J Nelson, Dr R Otzen, Dr DG Parbery, Dr B-A Rodan, Mr L Rowe, Dr L Simpson, Mr BN Southern, Dr J Stillman, Mr G Thomas, Mr M Warwick, Ms MA Weston, Mr N Whiting, ,

**In Attendance**

Ms J White (University Secretary), Mr I Marshman (Senior Vice-Principal), Ms L Boxtel (General Manager, Alumni Relations), Mr S Halliwell (Minute Secretary)

**Declaration of Casual Election Results**

Under Standing Order F1, this meeting was declared a special meeting for the purpose of electing members to casual vacancies remaining after the elections of October 2007 and following the resignations of Dr R McMillan from a four-year position in Music and the VCA and Dr J Nelson from a position in Science. The President declared the following elected unopposed:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>Nominees</b>
Music & VCA	1 x two-year term 1 x four-year term	Dr Ros McMillan Dr Tony Gould
Economics & Commerce	2 x four-year term	Ms Clare Cummins Mr Brian Fitt
Education	1 x two-year term	Dr John Nelson
Arts	1 x two-year term	Dr Juliet Flesch

**SECTION 1**

**1 Apologies and Leave of Absence**

Apologies were received from Dr I Rechtman, Ms H Fitzpatrick, Ms C Cummins, Mr R McGuaran and Dr A Gibbs.

Leave of absence requests were made as follows:

D Parbery: May and June  
R Otzen: April  
D Ford: July  
L Simpson: May  
J Meehan: July  
P Hirst: April and May  
L Rowe: July  
P Davis: July  
N Whiting: April and May  
J Crowe: April

*[Secretary's note: section 23(10)(b) of the Melbourne University Act 1958 declares a position vacant if the member has been absent "from all meetings [of the committee]... held during a period of six consecutive months without the leave of the committee" It may therefore be legitimate for absences of less than six months simply to be recorded as apologies.]*

## **2 Welcome and Introduction of New Members**

*[Secretary's note: at this point, the Chair moved and the meeting accepted an extension of time to 7-30pm.]*

New members were welcomed to the Committee and introduced as follows:

Dr R McMillan introduced Dr T Gould  
Mr J Meehan introduced Mr B Fitt, and the introduction of Ms C Cummins will be made at the April meeting  
Dr C Close introduced Dr J Flesch  
Mr G Israel introduced Mr P Davis  
Mr A Abbott introduced Mr D Ford  
Dr D Parbery introduced Dr V McRae  
Mr B Dance introduced Mr M Warwick, with a full introduction to be made at the April meeting.

New members were presented with Committee of Convocation Induction Folders developed by the Induction sub-committee convened by Mr Abbott. Ms Boston advised that a meeting for new members will be organised shortly.

Ms Boston welcomed Mr I Marshman (Senior Vice-Principal) and Ms L Boxtel (General Manager, Alumni Relations).

## **16 Guest Speaker**

*[Secretary's note: this item was moved forward in the agenda to enable Mr Marshman to leave at 6-15pm for the Conferring ceremony.]*

Mr Marshman addressed the meeting on the following matters.

### **The Melbourne Model**

The University is very pleased with the results of the introduction of the Melbourne Model. Both domestic and international student demand for places is strong, and in 2008 85% of students either accepted offers or deferred compared with 72% in 2007. Offers made have increased in most faculties, the one exception being Science. There has been enthusiastic take-up of the new “University Breadth Subjects” that are taught by staff from across faculties, and there has been a welcome increase in the number of students taking languages. On the administration side, 12 new “Interim Student Centres” have been operating. Mr Marshman suggested that the Committee might like to tour the new Engineering precinct at some time in the near future.

Mr Marshman also spoke about three key initiatives of the new federal government:

1. There is to be a review of higher education chaired by Professor Denise Bradley that will report at the end of 2008. This is a welcome development and should lead to more planned resource allocation for the sector.
2. The Research Quality Framework (RQF) has been abolished and replaced by the Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) system. It is modelled on the system in place in the UK and is another welcome development.
3. Higher Education Endowment Fund Guidelines have been released. These will cover the allocation of some \$300m per year, in allocations ranging from \$10m to \$100m, for new infrastructure projects that universities successfully argue meet key aspects of their strategic plan.

In respect of developments at the University, Mr Marshman advised that in 2008 there is to be a comprehensive review of the University’s administrative processes under the title “Taking Responsibility”. Work has already begun with a key steering group of which Ms Janet White the University Secretary is a member. The review will critically examine the governance/operations nexus and is intended to clarify, simplify, reduce costs and overheads and increase efficiency. The Steering Group will report to the Council Nominations and Governance Committee from time to time.

In response to a question about the number of domestic fee-paying students, Mr Marshman advised that there are approximately 1,200 of which 4-500 are undergraduate. The University has typically enrolled approximately 300 per year, but the figure for 2008 is around 180.

In response to a question about the effect of the Melbourne Model on the intake of rural students, Mr Marshman advised that he did not have relevant figures to hand, but that the signs are that the Kwong Lee Dow Scholarships and the continued Access Melbourne programs are working well.

Ms White advised that a summary of enrolments would be provided to the Committee when it becomes available.

Ms Boston thanked Mr Marshman for an interesting and informative presentation.

### **3 Returning Officer’s Report**

Ms White advised that following the election of members to casual vacancies as detailed above, there remain three vacancies for representatives of science graduates. Members

were advised to take no action on this matter until they receive an official call for nominations from the University Secretary's office.

#### **4 Starring of Additional Items**

The following items were starred:

15.2 Honours Committee (item to be added)

14.2 Libraries Sub-committee

Other Business was added to the agenda.

#### **5 Receipt of Unstarred Items**

The Committee received the unstarred items.

#### **6 Minutes of Meeting 10/07 (19 December 2007)**

The minutes were approved.

#### **7 Matters Arising**

##### **7.1 The Age Publication (minute 10.1)**

Dr Stillman spoke to this item, again highlighting for members the fact that a lift-out from The Age of December 2007 was factually inaccurate and also carried the statement "in association with the University of Melbourne". The latter was the more serious concern as it risked implying a political affiliation of the University. Members discussed the matter of University protocols for this type of publication, and it was resolved to invite Mr Pat Freeland-Small, Vice-Principal, Marketing and Communication, to speak to a future meeting. Ms Boston will also raise the matter at Council.

##### **7.2 Method of Counting Graduates (minute 14.1)**

This matter was deferred to a later meeting.

#### **8 Action Sheet 10/07**

Comments were made in relation to the following items.

##### **8.1 Paper-saving distribution of papers**

Ms White reported on developments within the University Secretary's Department to move towards more electronic distribution of committee papers including Meeting Information Manager (MIM) and the use of portals for Council and Legislation and Trusts Committee. Ms White will consult further with the Committee about a gradual implementation of this method of distribution.

##### **8.3 Arts renewal strategy**

The new Dean of Arts, Professor Mark Considine, will be invited as a guest speaker.

##### **8.4 Carbon neutrality**

The secretary will confirm that a letter has been sent to the students who raised this issue.

### **8.5 Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE)**

The SIFE group is to be invited to address the Committee if they are still available to do so.

### **8.6 Professor Ridley invitation**

It was reported that Professor Ridley had already spoken to the Libraries sub-committee. It was proposed that Professor Janet McCalman be invited as a dinner speaker.

## **9 President's Report**

Ms Boston reported on the Council retreat held on the last weekend in February. There were many matters addressed, including the Taking Responsibility paper and other issues raised by Mr Marshman in his address earlier in the meeting. Ms Boston commented favourably on the University's willingness to have a frank and open analysis of aspects of the University's operations, noted the University's sound financial position, despite the need for more Government financial assistance. It was further noted that the University is pleased with achievements in Knowledge Transfer; there is a lot of maintenance and building work to be completed; the continuing reorganisation of the faculty of Arts means that a further 40 staff will be offered voluntary departure packages and the subjects in Arts will be reduced significantly from approximately 1,900 to 900-1,000 over a period of time and the new Dean of the Melbourne Law School, Professor James C Hathaway, is particularly interested in the autonomy of the University's schools.

The secretary is following up on matters raised previously in relation to the Bio21 Institute.

The President's Advisory Group (PAG) met on 5 March and discussed at length the organisation of the Annual Ordinary Meeting (AOM). A range of high-profile speakers was discussed. The secretary advised that the AOM will be held at 6-30pm on Wednesday 30 April at Graduate House, 220 Leicester Street, Carlton. The guest speaker will be Laureate Professor Peter Doherty. The AOM will be followed by an informal reception at Graduate House.

Minutes of the PAG will be circulated to members shortly, and in general will be circulated whenever possible within two weeks of the meeting.

## **10 Issues of Concern to members**

### **10.1 Review of University Acts**

Mr Meehan, convenor of the Review working group, spoke to the report as in the tabled papers. Contributions were invited from members. The next meeting of the working group is on Thursday 3 April at 5-15pm. The submissions are due by 30 April, and the Chancellor has advised that contributions to the University's submission, being overseen by the Council Nominations and Governance Committee, were due by 24 April. A draft submission will be presented to the Committee for endorsement prior to its being submitted to the State government.

### **10.2 Strategic Plan**

Ms Boston spoke to the paper as circulated being a summary of comments and suggestions from the group discussion on 5 March. The Committee resolved that the Strategic Plan Implementation working group would examine the comments and

suggestions and, where appropriate, turn them into recommendations for discussion by the Committee.

### 10.3 Sub-committees 2008

Ms Boston advised that at the Strategic Plan Implementation meeting on 5 March, it had been proposed that the sub-committees be reconfigured to give them a broader area of responsibility. Sub-committees proposed were:

Legislation

Membership (to subsume Induction and Length of Service)

Information Resources (to subsume Libraries)

Melbourne Model Implementation

The issue of the need to retain the word “libraries” in the sub-committee name was discussed at length. Although there was consensus on the need to examine more than just hard copy printed material, it was felt that retaining the word “library” or “libraries” was important. The Committee resolved that the Libraries sub-committee would discuss the matter further and recommend to the full Committee a new name and terms of reference.

### 10.4 Meeting Schedule 2008

Ms White spoke to the paper as circulated, being a proposed schedule of full Committee and sub-committee meetings for 2008. The main rationale for the proposed new schedule is to assist the Committee to carry out its role more effectively within budget constraints. Although there was some sympathy for the idea of giving sub-committees more time to carry out their work, the view of the majority was that the current schedule of monthly meetings should remain. The 2008 schedule is as follows (Council meeting dates are included for convenience):

<b>Council</b>	<b>Committee of Convocation</b>
17 March	19 ( including election to casual vacancies)
	16 April ( including election to casual vacancies)
12 May	21 May
	18 June
14 July	16 July
	20 August
1 September	17 September
20 October	15 October
	19 November
8 December	17 December

*[Secretary’s note: at this point, the President moved and the meeting accepted an extension of time to 8-00pm.]*

### 10.5 Nominations to University Committees

Ms Boston advised that it was necessary for the Committee to nominate its 2008 representatives on various University bodies on which there were a number of vacancies due to the retirement of Committee members. Ms Boston advised that all representative positions, except those that are ex officio (Honours Committee) are open for members to nominate. The secretary distributed nomination forms which were returned at the end of the meeting. The secretary will assess the outcome and, if necessary, organise elections.

*[Secretary's note to Chair: it is likely that this matter will be revisited at the April meeting and members not present given the opportunity to nominate.]*

**10.6 Annual Report 2007**

The Annual Report of the Committee as circulated was approved. The report will be printed and presented to the AOM on 30 April.

**10.7 University Secretary's Matters**

Ms White advised the Committee of the budget constraints. There is a budget of \$20,000 for the Committee for 2008, an increase of \$5,000 over 2007. A significant portion of this will go on advertising the AOM, given the Standing Orders requirements for two separate advertisements in two Melbourne newspapers. In view of the recent development of other means of advertising events such as the AOM (and indeed Committee of Convocation elections), she suggested that the Committee consider recommending amendments to the strict advertising requirements in the Standing Orders and the relevant Statutes. With the current budget allocation, it is not possible to fund dining other than a dinner following the first and last meeting for the year (fully funded), and the catering costs of the AOM.

It being 8-00pm, Ms Boston proposed that the rest of the agenda items be deferred to the April meeting. The Committee agreed.

Mr Israel invited members to comment on the draft submission to the Information Futures Commission consultation paper when it is circulated.

Dr McMillan drew members' attention to the paper "Grainger Chronology" that is included as the penultimate item in the set of tabled papers. She foreshadowed discussion of this matter at the April meeting.

Meeting closed at 8-05pm.