

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
COMMITTEE OF CONVOCATION

MEETING 2/09

MINUTES

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 6 May 2009 at 5.30pm in the Council chambers, University of Melbourne.

Present

Ms L Boston (Chair), Mr A Abbott, Ms A Ada, Ms L Adams, Mr E Bellchambers, Ms A Burgess, Ms B Chan, Ms J Chiew, Dr C Close, Ms J Crowe, Ms C Cummins, Mr P Davies, Mr B Fitt, Ms H Fitzpatrick, Dr J Fleisch, Mr D Ford, Dr A Gibbs, Dr JK Harcourt, Mr G Israel, Ms I Jablonka, Mr F Lees, Dr R McMillan, Dr V McRae, Mr J Meehan, 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, Mr N Whiting

In Attendance

Professor Peter McPhee (Provost), 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 Ms Jocelyn Chiew, the newly elected representative of graduates in Architecture, Building and Planning. Mr McGauran will formally introduce Ms Chiew at the June meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr B Dance, Dr T Gould, Mr R McGauran and Mr M Warwick.

Dr I Rechtman was on Leave of Absence.

Leave of Absence requests were received as follows.

June: Ms L Boston, Ms J Crowe, Mr L Rowe

July: Mr N Whiting, Mr J Meehan,

Ms Boston thanked Dr V McRae for organising the tour of the Baillieu Library.

2 Election of Deputy President

Dr Laurie Simpson was declared elected unopposed to the position of Deputy President of the Committee for a term of office to 30 April 2011.

3 Returning Officer's Report

Ms Boston reported on the election of Ms Jocelyn Chiew as the representative of graduates in Architecture, Building and Planning. The election was a casual election caused by the resignation of Mr P Hirst. The term of office is to 31 December 2009.

4 Starring of Additional Items

Items 9.1, 9.4, 11, 12 and 17 were starred.

5 Receipt of Unstarred Items

The Committee received the unstarred items.

6 Minutes of Meeting 1/09 (25 March 2009)

The minutes were approved, subject to the addition of the word "Arts" after Ms B Perry's name in Item 1.

7 Matters Arising

7.1 Action Sheet 1/09

7.1.1 Statement of Intent re University Acts

This document was emailed to members on 7 April. Ms Boston referred members to the paper tabled by Mr J Meehan.

7.1.2 Senior Vice-Principal's paper on enrolments

The first item in the Senior Vice-Principal's report at Item 13 is about enrolment targets and projections.

7.1.3 Template letter for faculty representatives

This matter was discussed under Item 9.2.

7.1.4 Library Access

The minute secretary reported that the matter of borrowing rights for members had now been resolved. Mr Israel added that Ms Ruth Baxter at the Baillieu Library should be contacted if members experience any difficulty with borrowing or library access.

7.1.5 Presentation by Mr Tony Crooks

A copy of the presentation was emailed to members on 27 March.

19 Guest Speaker

At this point, Ms Boston welcomed Professor Peter McPhee, Provost of the University, as guest speaker. Ms Boston noted the recent announcement of Professor McPhee's retirement and the difficult task it will be for the University to find a replacement of the same calibre.

Professor Mc Phee thanked Ms Boston for her kind words, saying that it was the right moment for him to retire and for the University to appoint a new Provost with fresh ideas. He would give a brief presentation about the implementation of the Melbourne Model and then would be happy to

answer questions about that or any other matter of interest.

Professor McPhee spoke to a PowerPoint presentation. He noted that the implementation of the Melbourne Model had not been all plain sailing, but that if he had been told in 2007 that this is how the implementation would go, he would have been delighted. There were several significant points to note:

- Initially, students were critical of a number of subjects, but the percentage has declined markedly in semester 2.
- University Breadth subjects are critical – and more so than initially envisaged.
- University Breadth subjects are particularly difficult to teach – *Climate Change*, for example, is being taught by a Physics specialist to a group of mostly Arts students.
- Students have been critical of the University's first attempts at collaborative teaching where there is a tendency for teachers from different disciplines to try to cram too much into their allotted teaching time; a lot of work has been done to improve this aspect of the Melbourne Model.

Before the model was introduced, it was thought that selection would be a problem, but this has turned out not to be the case. The quality of students has not diminished. There was particular concern in relation to Science applications, but preferences have actually increased by 20%. Professor McPhee was pleased also to report that Access Melbourne Scholarships had been used in a more targeted way and that 20% had been offered in 2009. There is good demand for the JD and for the Master of Teaching programs, but the University is concerned that there are not enough students going into agriculture programs.

As well as the academic aspects of the Melbourne Model, Professor McPhee reported that the new Student Services Model is also central to successful implementation. The University aims to provide consistent and good quality advice for all students. This has been particularly challenging given that the nature of student advice has changed dramatically in the context of six general degrees and the wealth of options open to students following their undergraduate degree. There are physical dimensions to the Melbourne Model and the Melbourne Experience which raised questions about the best kind of teaching spaces for graduate programs and for students' individual study. Professor McPhee recommended that members visit the Frank Tate, the ERC and the Old Engineering building to see for themselves the dramatic transformation of teaching and learning spaces.

In closing, Professor McPhee made particular note of the Kwong Lee Dow Scholarship program. At present, the majority of the University's students come from 50 schools; the Kwong Lee Dow program has a scholar in 468 schools. It is a very ambitious but effective program.

In answering questions, Professor McPhee provided the following responses.

- The global financial crisis has had an effect on the Library Materials Vote, but Senior Executive has recently made a one-off addition of \$500,000 and Professor McPhee will put a submission to the June PBC conference for a general increase in the materials Vote.
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning and Equity, Professor Sue Elliott, oversees a range of programs for the Kwong Lee Dow scholars among others [Mr Bellchambers was advised to email Professor McPhee directly with any specific concerns].
- The ratio of undergraduate to graduate students at the start of the Melbourne Model was approximately 70:30. It is envisaged that when the Model is fully implemented, the ratio will be closer to 50:50. This will present a challenge for the residential colleges.
- All courses are new courses and this should provide inspiration for academic staff in their teaching.

- Although there may be some specific issues to be addressed with students' abilities in the "enabling" subjects such as language and mathematics, there is no general problem with students that would require a generalist "remedial" program. In fact, ENTER scores in some subject areas have increased with the Melbourne Model.
- There is no intention to alter the entry criteria for the MBA as currently offered by MBS.

Ms Boston thanked Professor McPhee for his presentation and for being so generous with his time. She did not know how to begin to measure Professor McPhee's outstanding input into the University, particularly his role in the development and introduction of the Melbourne Model.

[Secretary's note: the PowerPoint presentation will be emailed to members.]

8 President's Report

Ms Boston reported on the following matters:

- Pre-meeting tours are co-ordinated by Dr Valda McRae. She is happy for anyone to organise a tour and she welcomes suggestions for future visits. Members should let Dr McRae know about prospective tours. She will then liaise with the minute secretary and relevant faculty staff.
- The very good attendance at the AOM on 23 April.
- Prior to this meeting, she and the Deputy President, along with the University Secretary, had met the Chancellor who had raised some interesting issues at the AOM. The Chancellor proposes that the President and Deputy President be part of a Council working group to consider ways of broadening graduate and alumni representation, possibly with the establishment of an Alumni Council which would include members of the Committee of Convocation. She proposed that issues discussed be brought to the "extended meeting" planned for August for full discussion with the Committee.

The Committee discussed a range of issues around the suggested "super council":

- Whether there were concrete proposals for the form of any new body;
- Whether any new body would be mentioned in the new University Act;
- Means of appointment or election to any new body, and its terms of reference;
- Whether the Committee of Convocation would continue to exist or be subsumed into any new body.

Ms White reported that thinking around this issue was still in the very early stages. The Chancellor at the AOM noted that there is currently a range of disparate groups representing graduates and alumni and the purpose of the working group is to discuss ways of bringing them together so that the interests of the constituents, the members and the University might be better served. In response to a question, Ms White confirmed that at present, Convocation and its Committee are not mentioned in the draft legislation drawn up by the State Government. It is likely that there would be provision for any new group in a new University statute.

Ms Boston noted that in the context of these discussions, it is essential that the Committee continues to make itself relevant through its representatives on faculties and committees and through its submissions to the University such as the detailed submission made in 2008 to the Information Futures Commission.

Ms Boston thanked members for the detailed discussion of issues and said that this matter would come back to the Extended Meeting when there would be something more concrete to discuss. In a show of hands, the timing of the extended meeting was supported as follows:

Saturday meeting – 13 votes

Evening meeting – 17 votes.

8.1 Report to Council

The report to Council on 27 April of meeting 1/09 of the Committee was noted.

9 Reports from Sub-committees and Working Groups

9.1 Library and Information Access

The matter of members' borrowing rights was clarified under Item 7.1.4.

9.2 Strategic Plan

Dr Stillman reported that the letter the Mr Peter Hirst had written to members on his resignation had made the group think about ways in which committee and faculty representatives could be better supported. Ms Fitzpatrick spoke to the paper (Item 9.2(a)) as circulated being suggestions for improving the profile of faculty representatives. The paper was endorsed by the Committee.

In relation to the paper Item 9.2(b), Ms Boston reported that this was a compilation of suggestions that had been sent on request to the minute secretary. Further suggestions were welcomed – to be sent to the minute secretary by Friday 15 May. A draft letter will then be prepared.

9.4 Melbourne Model

Dr Simpson reported that the sub-committee had 8 members who communicate regularly through email. He thanked members for their contribution. There is to be a meeting with the Provost on 27 May at 12-30pm.

10 Issues of Concern to Members

10.1 Representatives on faculties and University committees

Ms Boston thanked members for their nominations. Mr Davies has nominated again for the Remuneration and Employment Conditions Committee. Both Ms Crowe and Mr Davies are nominated as representatives on Melbourne Law School as each can make one of the faculty's 2009 meetings. Dr Close withdrew her nomination for the Theatre Board. Mr Abbott, Dr Simpson, Dr McMillan and Ms Boston confirmed their nominations for the faculties and committees on which they served in 2008. The minute secretary will confirm with Mr Warwick and Mr McGauran their continued interest in the Audit and Risk Committee and the Building and Estates Committee as in 2008.

Dr Parbery nominated for representative on the Science faculty. This meant that there were three nominees for the Science faculty representative: Ms Anna Burgess, Ms Irene Jablonka and Dr Doug Parbery. The minute secretary will organise an election via email to be concluded on Wednesday 13 May.

11 Vice-Chancellor's Report to 27 April Council.

In relation to Item 22 on Energy Saving, Mr Whiting asked what the University was doing in relation to solar energy for its buildings and for water saving on campus. Ms White reported that the Vice-Chancellor had acknowledged progress in this area but also noted that there was a long way to go in further developing energy and water savings initiatives. Ms Boston advised Mr Whiting to send any specific questions to Mr McGauran for raising at the Building and Estates Committee.

12 Provost's Report to 27 April Council

Mr Whiting noted that neither this report nor the Vice-Chancellor's made any reference to the Provost's retirement. Ms Boston advised that the papers had been printed and circulated before the news was announced.

13 Senior Vice-Principal's Report to 27 April Council

No matters were raised.

14 Legislation and Trusts Report to 27 April Council

No matters were raised.

15 Academic Board Report to 27 April Council

No matters were raised.

16 Building and Estates Committee Report to 27 April Council

No matters were raised.

17 University Secretary's Report

Ms White reported on the following matters:

- She referred members to the tabled paper headed Item 17 – the report to Council of the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Committee. Council has recommended the inclusion in the new Act of a relevant clause relating to Indigenous people. Ms White noted the efforts of the Committee and Ms Jablonka in particular in bringing this matter to Council's attention.
- University representatives have met with State Government representatives to discuss the draft template bill for University Acts. They expressed their disquiet at the proposed level of "ministerial directions". The Department will be providing a further "exposure draft" shortly for comment.
- Council has adopted a recommendation from the Graduate Students Association calling for equal public transport concessions for graduate students.
- In his report, the Vice-Chancellor addressed the effects of the Global Financial Crisis on the University. Under the Responsible Division management project, it is intended to realise savings of 7.5% in 2010.
- The University is applying to subscribe to the "Magna Charta Universitatum" which documents fundamental university values and rights.

Ms Boston thanked Mr Meehan for his paper responding to the Statement of Intent from the State Government in relation to the review of University Acts. The Committee discussed how best to respond given that it made a formal submission to the government in the consultation phase in April 2008. **The Committee resolved** to re-convene the working group under Mr John Meehan that developed the earlier submission. Dr Gibbs, Dr McRae, Mr Whiting, Mr Ford and Ms Perry volunteered to be on the group. **The Committee resolved** to request a copy of the draft bill directly from the relevant government department.

18 Reports of Faculty and Committee meetings

No matters were raised.

19 Guest Speaker

Professor Peter McPhee addressed the meeting earlier.

20 Other Business

20.1 Alumni Relations Report

Ms Leonie Boxtel reported on the following:

- She thanked members for their participation in events which enhanced the profile of the Committee.
- Edition 2 of the E-Bulletin has been circulated.
- She circulated a follow-up to the recent Alumni survey and information about the up-coming Festival of Ideas.
- Some members may receive correspondence about the Annual Appeal which last year raised \$902,000.

Meeting closed at 7-45pm.

Next Meeting is on Wednesday 3 June 2009 at 5-30pm in the Council Chambers.