

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

**MEETING 7/08**

**MINUTES**

A Meeting of the Committee of Convocation was held on Wednesday 17 September 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, Ms H Fitzpatrick, Dr J Flesch, Mr D Ford, Dr JK Harcourt, Mr P Hirst, Mr G Israel, Ms I Jablonka, Mr R McGauran, Dr R McMillan, Dr V McRae, Mr J Meehan, Dr D Parbery, Dr I Rechtman, Dr B-A Rodan, Mr L Rowe, Dr L Simpson, Dr J Stillman, Ms M Weston

**In Attendance**

Ms J White (University Secretary), Mr S Halliwell (Minute Secretary) Professor Rick Roush (Dean of Melbourne School of Land and Environment) and Mr Chris Penman (Vice-Principal and General Counsel) – for Item 6.1.1

**SECTION 1**

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

Apologies were received from Dr A Gibbs, Mr F Lees, Mr G Thomas, Mr M Warwick, Dr T Gould and Ms L Boxtel

Ms E Parker, Ms J Crowe, Mr N Whiting, Dr R Otzen, Ms A Ada and Dr J nelson were on Leave of Absence.

Leave of absence requests were granted for the October meeting to Mr E Bellchambers and Dr I Rechtman and for the December meeting to Ms Malory Weston.

**2 Returning Officer's Report**

Mr Matthew Corrigan has resigned from the Committee as he is taking up a post overseas. There is therefore a casual vacancy for a Law graduate. **The President declared** the October meeting a special meeting for the purpose of the casual election according to Standing Orders. The minute secretary will email members with further details. It was suggested that the Bar Council and other relevant organisations be informed of the vacancy, and the minute secretary will also approach Mr Phillip Davies who is currently an Arts representative but also holds a LLB from the University.

### **3 Starring of Additional Items**

The following item was starred: 10.7 .

The following items were unstarred: 10.3 and 10.4. In respect of item 10.3, discussion was deferred until the October meeting when the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Relations) Professor Warren Bebbington will be in attendance to facilitate discussion. In respect of item 10.4, discussion was deferred pending further advice from Council particularly in relation to Council discussions on a similar matter in late 2002 and early 2003. The University Secretary will provide further information.

### **4 Receipt of Unstarred Items**

The Committee received the unstarred items.

### **5 Minutes of Meeting 6/08 (20 August 2008)**

The minutes were approved.

### **6 Matters Arising**

#### **6.1 Action Sheet 6/08**

##### **6.1.1 Legislation Review Progress Report**

Mr Chris Penman was in attendance for this item. He spoke briefly to the package of material that had been circulated being a copy of the progress report from the Senior Vice-Principal to the Senior Executive meeting of 10 September and copies of draft statutes 1.7 on University Governance and 5.1 on the establishment of faculties, schools, departments and centres. The proposed Statute 5.1 will replace the current chapters 5 and 6 statutes that currently govern faculties, schools, departments and centres. Mr Penman advised that faculties are not currently defined in the Melbourne University Act 1958 and the draft statutes are designed to clarify and regularise matters pertaining to faculties while at the same time putting the onus on faculties to manage their own affairs as long as certain criteria are met.

The Committee was also provided with a timeline related to the package of legislation under which it will finalise its responses by 15 October (the date of the next meeting) and the Council Nominations and Governance Committee ('CNGC') will consider responses and submissions at its meeting on 17 November.

The Committee discussed in particular the representation of the Committee of Convocation on faculties and faculty structures. The current Statute 5.1 gives the Council the power to appoint members of the Committee to faculties (see section 5.1.5). The proposed Statute 5.1 includes the provision that to be established as a faculty, a faculty's arrangements must include, inter alia:

*“a mechanism by which a body, that includes external representatives from graduates, any relevant professional bodies, government agencies and industry partners, has advisory input into the faculty and its executive,*

*including in relation to its strategy and performance.”*

The point was made that the Committee of Convocation is explicitly acknowledged in the draft Statute 1.7 (see section 1.7.3(1)) although it is now excluded from representation on faculties under the proposed Statute 5.1. This is anomalous and also reflects the tendency for the University to operate on an “executive” model rather than on a “collegiate” model. The point was also made that the Committee of Convocation was the only formal mechanism through which graduates could raise their concerns with Council or with the faculties themselves.

In response to questions about the rationale for the exclusion of the Committee per se as outlined on page 8 of the progress report, Mr Penman explained that this was in keeping with the greater flexibility being given to faculties (within Council guidelines) and to enable wider graduate representation on faculties.

In discussing draft Statute 1.7, members noted the absence of items relating to accountability and scrutiny from the values section. Mr Penman explained that they had been included in an earlier draft, but that Council had determined to maintain the set of University values as agreed in the 2004 Annual Report. The Committee felt that the deleted values might be adequately covered in a proposed Code of Conduct that is being developed.

Mr Penman advised that the proposed changes to the University’s internal legislation did not have to wait for any changes to the *Melbourne University Act 1958* that might occur as a result of the State Government’s review of University Acts. Nevertheless, members felt that the proposed changes could be delayed to allow for further consideration and discussion. Mr Penman advised that the Committee could make such a submission to CNGC along with comments related to particular draft legislation in the package.

In summary, **the Committee recommended** the following:

- That explicit Committee of Convocation representation on faculties and graduate schools be included in Statute 5.1
- That the following be added to section 1.7.3 of Statute 1.7-  
“(h) promoting open and transparent communication with the community and submitting the University’s proposals and actions to external scrutiny.”
- That the items deleted from section 1.7.3 of the later version of Statute 1.7 be included in the Code of Conduct currently being developed
- That consideration be given to delaying the recommending of any new internal legislation to give more time for consideration and discussion

These recommendations, and any further views received from members by the minute secretary, will be circulated for the October meeting following which a formal submission will be made to the CNGC meeting of 17

November.

**6.1.2 Invitation to Ms Linda O'Brien for October**

This action had been completed but the President reported that Ms O'Brien had since advised that she is leaving the University to take up a position as Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Griffith University. She has advised of a replacement for the October meeting who has been invited.

*[Minute secretary's note: the replacement is Ms Jenny Ellis who has subsequently accepted the invitation]*

**6.1.3 Detailed Paper re University Giving Program**

A further paper on this matter from Mr Gary Israel was circulated for the meeting but discussion was deferred until the October meeting (see Item 3 above).

**6.1.4 Details of the University's Management Structure**

Organisational charts were circulated for the meeting. It was pointed out that in printing the first of these charts, the connection lines implied that MBS and subsidiary companies reported *through* the Committee of Convocation and this is not the case. The minute secretary will follow up this matter.

**6.1.5 Tour of the Graduate School of Management**

This has been organised by Dr McRae and Ms Cummins to take place prior to the October meeting. Further details will be circulated to members closer to the date.

**7 Guest Speaker**

Ms Boston welcomed Professor Rick Roush, Dean of Melbourne School of Land and Environment (formerly the Faculty of Land and Food resources).

Professor Roush began by explaining what an exciting time it was in the faculty. The recent name change had been brought about partly because the expertise of the faculty had broadened with the move of Geography staff from the faculty of Arts, and partly to reflect the faculty's whole-hearted involvement in the Melbourne Model. The faculty was also at the forefront of research into and teaching of key areas related to climate change, particularly water use, energy use and food security.

The faculty is evolving towards being a Graduate School. It currently teaches only one discrete Bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Agricultural Science at Dookie) although it is a major contributor to the Melbourne Model Bachelor's degrees of Environments, Arts and Biomedicine. The majority of the faculty's programs are now at the postgraduate level. The University's successful proposal to the Federal Government that Commonwealth Supported Places be made available for graduate programs had seen a 50% increase in its Master's uptake in one year.

The faculty maintains four campuses and the focus of their efforts is as follows:

**Dookie:** The Farm of the Future, including work on a \$10.5m research project on water use  
**Creswick:** Forestry, particularly carbon capture, the effects of bush fires and the hydrology of forests

**Burnley:** the nature of urban living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with projects such as the “green roofs and walls” project

**Parkville:** the main focus is on teaching

Professor Roush acknowledged that money is tight across the University and reported on recent discussions with Advancement with a view to encouraging endowments for scholarships and particular Chairs, for example in the much needed area of resource economics.

In response to questions, Professor Roush made the following comments:

- Little work is currently being done on aquaculture and hydroponics because of a lack of resources, although Victoria is thin on expertise in this area
- Links have been made with relevant government departments (eg Sustainability and Environment) and other faculties – for example Engineering in relation to the Green Roofs and Walls project
- There is a need for a greater understanding of the water right system and the implications of any “buy-back”: the Toorale Station, for example, is probably better used for dry land farming than being returned to a “natural” state
- Students have responded well to the “breadth” requirement of the Melbourne Model, and the signs indicate that they are keen on taking languages
- Professor Peter Rathjen – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is the best person to ask about how faculties are collaborating on the University’s four key research areas.

Ms Boston thanked Professor Roush for a detailed and stimulating talk about developments in Melbourne School of Land and Environment and about the exciting and important work being done there.

## **8 President’s Report**

Ms Boston reported on the death of the wife of Justice Ray Northrop – a past President of Convocation. A card has been sent. Recent discussions have been held with professor Bebbington in relation to a potential donation to the University and more will be reported on this matter when the outcome is known. Members were reminded to forward comments in relation to the University’s submission to the Bradley review of higher education to the minute secretary by the end of the month. At the Alumni lunch held on 16 September and involving some members of the Committee, the issue of University tours was raised and Ms Boxtel will speak on the matter at a later meeting. Dr McMillan and Ms Boston welcome any suggestions from members in relation to the Annual Dinner proposed for the end of the year.

## **9 Reports from Sub-committees and Working Groups**

The Committee noted the report from the Melbourne Model sub-committee.

## **10 Issues of Concern to Members**

### **10.1 Raising the Effectiveness of the Committee**

Members were referred to the minutes of President's Advisory Group meeting 4/08 (28 August 2008) as circulated. Ms Boston highlighted in particular the various dot points under the headings derived from discussion groups at the extended meeting on 9 August. All of the specified actions are currently being worked on by appropriate people or groups.

In relation to the self-evaluation pro forma, Ms Boston reported that it was intended to give members an opportunity to think about the effectiveness of the Committee and their role in it, and to give feedback. Members may remain anonymous if they wish. The pro forma has been completed and will be sent to members, with an introduction from the President, later in the year. The President will compile the responses and will provide a report in general terms.

It was proposed that the Provost, Professor Peter McPhee, be invited to the first meeting of 2009 and that the Senior Vice-Principal, Mr Ian Marshman, be invited to the second meeting.

#### **10.2 Members' Photographs on the Web Site**

This item will be removed from the agenda.

#### **10.3 Support for University Giving Program**

Discussion on this item was deferred until the October meeting (see Item 3 above).

#### **10.4 Commemoration of Traditional Owners**

Discussion on this item was deferred until the October meeting (see Item 3 above).

#### **10.5 Advertising Requirements**

The minute secretary spoke to the three documents as circulated:

- Statute 3.2 The Graduate Roll
- Regulation 3.3.R1 Elections to the Committee of Convocation
- Standing Orders of Convocation Section C (Annual Ordinary Meeting)

At meeting 3/08 (see minute 8.1), the Committee resolved to review the relevant University legislation and Committee Standing Orders in relation to advertising requirements in relation to elections and the Annual Ordinary Meeting as these represented the largest single cost items with little observable benefit over recent years.

**The Committee resolved** to accept the amendments to Statute 3.2, Regulation 3.3.R1 and section C of Standing orders as circulated.

#### **10.6 Meeting Schedule 2009**

**The Committee resolved** to adopt the meeting schedule as detailed in Table 2 of the paper as circulated.

At this point, the President moved and the meeting accepted a ten-minute extension

of time.

#### **10.7 Report to Council**

Ms Boston reported that the representation of the Committee of Convocation on the Building and Estates Committee had been reinstated through negotiation with the Chancellor. Mr R McGauran is the Committee's representative. On the more general matter of consultation before making such decisions, Ms Boston reported that the matter had not been discussed in detail by Council but that it was to be followed up by the Chancellor and she hoped to have a more detailed report following the Chancellor's return from overseas on 23 September.

#### **11 Vice-Chancellor's Report to 1 September Council.**

No matters were raised.

#### **12 Legislation and Trusts Committee Report to 1 September Council**

No matters were raised.

#### **13 Building and Estates Committee Report to 1 September Council**

No matters were raised.

#### **14 Academic Board Report to 1 September Council**

No matters were raised.

#### **15 Senior Vice-Principal's report on Bio21**

No matters were raised.

#### **16 Reports of Faculty and Committee meetings**

No reports were received.

#### **17 Other Business**

##### **17.1 Arts Faculty**

Mr Ford raised the matter of the report in *The Age* of 17 September concerning potential "involuntary" redundancies in the Arts faculty. There was concern that the only criterion referred to in the newspaper report related to "good" research. Dr Flesch undertook to seek the Dean's approval to circulate the document that was actually sent to Arts faculty staff.

*[Minute secretary's note: the document was circulated to members, with the Dean's approval, on 18 September]*

Meeting closed at 7-40pm.