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Launch of VCA and Music discussion paper signals the opening of a conversation

The Faculty of the VCA and Music (VCAM) and the University of Melbourne have today released a 30-page discussion paper, *Defining the Future for the Faculty of the VCA and Music at the University of Melbourne*.

The release of the discussion paper signals the beginning of an extensive consultation on the key challenges and opportunities facing the Faculty and the University in higher arts education.

Canvassing input around the three critical areas of structure, curriculum and finance, the paper is the first stage of commitment to a consultative process given by the University and the Faculty earlier this year.

It was formally released today by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Glyn Davis, and the Dean of the Faculty of the VCA and Music, Professor Sharman Pretty.

A Review Committee is being appointed to consider the responses to the discussion paper and to carry out detailed discussions with key stakeholders at both the Parkville and Southbank campuses.

The Review Committee will have an independent chair and membership drawn from VCAM and University staff and students, the VCAM advisory board and a representative of the community with a background in the arts.

Professor Davis says the release of the discussion paper opens a conversation on a range of options for the Faculty of the VCA and Music.

“We are inviting wide community input – from staff, students, graduates, and members of the arts community, the arts industry, and the broader community. This provides a critical opportunity for various interested parties to contribute to the future direction of this Faculty.”

Professor Pretty says the senior leadership of the Faculty of the VCA and Music strongly support the consultation process.

“We need to find viable solutions to the complex challenges facing the Faculty in order to secure its significant future. The discussion paper is an open document, putting many options for structure and curriculum on the table and we are looking forward to receiving the carefully considered input of all stakeholders,” she said.

The discussion paper begins with an outline of aspects of the tradition of higher arts education in Australia and overseas and recent changes in the Australian context and lays out the curriculum options for a world-class arts education institution.

Questions posed throughout the discussion paper encourage engagement in the consultation process. The consultation is not limited to these questions but invites new questions as well as ideas, comments and proposals from staff, students, alumni, employers and the wider community.

A final report and recommendations of the Review Committee will be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of VCAM and recommendations will be presented to the VCA Integration Committee for approval before submission to the University's governing body, the University of Melbourne Council in early 2010.

Any curriculum changes will require further consultation with the Faculty before approval by the University's Academic Board, which oversees the quality and standards of the University's learning, teaching and research activities, and the University Council.

Copies of the discussion paper and details of consultation focus groups as they are set up will be available on the Defining the Future for the Faculty of the VCA and Music website <http://vcam.unimelb.edu.au/discussion> Written responses are to be submitted by 12 February 2010 to vcam-feedback@unimelb.edu.au

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