

## **Report from Council Meeting 10 December 2012**

The following issues were considered:

### **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

- Members noted that Management has continued discussions with co-located TAFEs and the State Department overseeing the transition process. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the situation should be clearer early in 2013.
- The Vice-Chancellor discussed the staff and community launches of the new Strategic Plan held at all Campuses, with a launch also held at Parliament House in Canberra and also in Melbourne;
- Members noted the public transport strategy which has been developed to increase access to the Bundoora Campus. Members were asked to promote the strategy and garner support wherever possible;
- The Bundoora Campus vision was discussed and it was noted that this would be considered in detail at the Infrastructure and Estates Planning Committee of Council meeting later in the week.
- The Vice-Chancellor informed members that the recently released ERA rankings have established La Trobe as the third ranked University in Victoria across 4 digit research fields, and clearly the best in the country in some areas
- It was noted that the Bendigo Bank has recently established 20 scholarships for students at the Bendigo Campus, each valued at over \$36,000 over a three year period. Council recorded its thanks to the Bendigo Bank for their generous support of the University and its students;

### **Issues Raised by the Students**

Ms Clare Keys-Liley, current President of the Student Representative Council and Mr Chris Wheeler, incoming President, attended the meeting for this item.

A summary of progress made against all the issues raised by the students earlier in the year was outlined in a report to Council, these included:

- Medical Service and pharmacy on the Melbourne campus
- Performing Arts Centre (Menziess Theatre)
- Public transport
- Improved cycling facilities
- Accommodation support/advice centre
- Expansion of student theatre and film program to local schools and regional campuses
- Cost of printing on campus

Ms Clare Keyes-Liley outlined a proposed student consultative committee structure for 2013, which would involve meetings between students, management and Council. The Chancellor congratulated the students on the development of this process and confirmed that the Council would provide the students with updates on issues discussed at Council meetings, as it is essential that this process be a two way dialogue.

Council acknowledged Mr Keyes-Liley for her hard work during a tumultuous and sometimes difficult year as President of the Student Union and wished her luck in the future and welcomed Mr Chris Wheeler to the position for 2013.

Members discussed the potential terms of reference and membership of this group and agreed that it should be discussed at a special meeting of the Human Resources Planning Committee of Council early in new year. An update on this issue will be brought to the first Council meeting in 2013.

### **Murray Darling Basin Medical School Proposal**

Council approved proceeding to an Initial Establishment Phase for the Murray Darling Basin Medical School jointly with Charles Sturt University and the University of Western Sydney.

Council requested that Management come back to the April 2013 meeting of Council with an update on the progress of the establishment phase of the project.

### **North Melbourne Institute of Technology**

Members discussed the potential development of a partnership with the North Melbourne Institute of TAFE, noting that would include increased access, pathways and complementarity of programs.

Council agreed that the paper was a very informative one and outlined a potentially very worthwhile proposal for the future.

### **Council Composition**

Council discussed the new Education Legislation Amendment (Governance) Act 2012. This Act will come into effect on 1 January 2013 and results in amendments to the La Trobe University Act 2009.

Council considered how best to implement the Act. The overarching principles agreed by members were as follows:

1. It is the Council's duty to implement the new Act.
2. Council places great value on staff and student input into decision making and governance across the University.

Council received written proposals from present student members and one staff member of Council. The Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellor met with the proponents to discuss their views prior to the Council meeting. The proposals were then presented to full Council.

Council affirmed that it would welcome nominations from staff and students for Council vacancies as they arise in the future. Appointments will be made on the basis of skills and fit with Council needs at the time and in accordance with the criteria for appointment as set out in the Act. Members confirmed that they have confidence that staff and students can be very effective members of Council.

Council agreed that the next step was for the Human Resources Planning Sub Committee of Council to convene in January to bring recommendations to the full Council for discussion on matters including:

1. the optimum number of Council members;
2. terms of appointment for each member to allow for succession planning;

3. the skills matrix to enable all sub committees to carry out their duties;
4. a defined and open process for filling vacant Council positions, including consideration of nominations from staff and students;
5. a process for Council focus on indigenous issues;
6. drafting of expectation/duty statement for Council membership.

Council also agreed that the current student members of Council be given the opportunity to present their propositions in person at a meeting in the new year, as unfortunately neither student was able to be physically present at the Council meeting.

Council thanked the elected members of Council for their services and confirmed that their input and hard work on behalf of Council will be acknowledged formally early next year.

### **External Foundation Board**

Council discussed the proposed External Foundation Board and after discussion, approved the Deed of Trust for the Board and the draft constitution of the Board. Management was requested to come back to Council with details of potential members.

### **Finance and Resources Committee Report to Council**

Council **approved** the final update version of the 2013-2015 La Trobe University budget. In summary, the budget provides for:

- an underlying surplus of a minimum 4% for 2013
- a forward estimate of 5.5% and 7.7% for the years 2014 and 2015 respectively
- a contingency of \$5m in 2013 for any potential downturn in student revenue
- a productivity target of \$7.6m across all budget units
- estimate of unspent research income from 2012 to be spent in 2013 of \$5m and \$5m in 2014 and 2015.

### **Corporate Governance Audit and Risk Committee Report to Council**

It was noted that following discussion the Committee had agreed that the University should continue to comply with the Australian Accounting Standards. Although the current standard poses some ambiguity in interpretation particularly of available research funds, Council accepted that compliance with the current standard was the appropriate way to proceed, rather than have qualified accounts. The Chancellor was asked to contact the Auditor General and offer support, if appropriate, in progressing the proposed revision of the relevant accounting standard. Council emphasised that the actual research funds available to each researcher, in terms of their known grants and budgets, is not affected by this accounting standard.

### **Human Resources Planning Committee Report to Council**

Members were informed that steps were being taken to address concerns raised previously about occupational health and safety issues across the University.

Council approved the recommendation to re-appoint Professor John McKenzie and Mr Bill Kelty to the University Council for a further term, from 1 January 2013 to the 31 December 2015. The important contribution both members have made during their previous terms was acknowledged with gratitude.

### **External Relations Committee Report to Council**

Members discussed the current processes for the approval of Emeritus Professor positions at the University and agreed that Academic Board should have the appropriate delegation from Council, to give final approval to Emeritus Professor applications, from the beginning of 2013.

The Chancellor informed Council that the management of Alumni Awards and Honorary Degrees was currently under review, to ensure a more strategic and integrated approach across the University.

Council requested further information regarding recognition of long serving and outstanding service of professional staff at the University.

Council approved the following:

- the nomination of Professor Marian Pitts for the title Emeritus Professor;
- the nomination of Dr Phil Suter for the title of Emeritus Scholar.
- the Donor Relations Plan for the University;
- the revised terms of reference of the External Relation Committee (as attached to the report);
- the draft proposal for a streamlined process to manage the Honorary Degrees and Alumni Awards, subject to revisions recommended by the External Relations Committee (as attached to the report);
- the proposal as the recognition strategy for strategic partnerships, subject to revisions recommended by the External Relations Committee (as attached to the report).

### **Academic Board report to Council**

Council **received and noted** the report of the Academic Board to Council, and noted the following:

- endorsement of the Faculty Review Policy;
- endorsement of the Conscientious Objections: Policy for a Student to request adjustment to study requirements;
- endorsement of the Student workload policy;
- endorsement of the Completion within expected duration of study policy (International students);
- endorsement of the Conditions of Candidature for Higher Degrees by Research Policy;
- endorsement of the Higher Degrees by Research Milestones Policy, Reporting and Confirmation of Candidature;
- endorsement of the Australian Qualifications Framework Transition Policy;
- endorsement of the Masters by Coursework Policy;
- endorsement of the Service Teaching Policy.

### **LaTrobe Annual Report – First Draft**

Council noted the previously circulated first draft of the text for the 2012 Annual Report. Members were asked to provide feedback to Ms MacDonald or the Secretary of Council.

Members noted that a full draft report would be provided at the February 2013 meeting of Council and a final draft including the financials would be circulated out of session to all members for final approval.