



ED NEWS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
LATROBE UNIVERSITY

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Thank you to all staff across the various campuses for their support and efforts on the Open Days which have just been held. The level of interest in Education Faculty programs on all campuses was extremely strong and demonstrated that there is still a significant demand for courses within the Faculty. Thanks also to Marion Sargeant and others who assisted her in the publication of an excellent suite of leaflets and brochures which showcase the work of the Faculty and its courses. These publications allow the Faculty to market itself locally and internationally in a professional and business-like manner. There is also ongoing work being carried out on the Faculty website and hopefully, in the light of the soon to be released review of Marketing and Branding within the University, there will be more flexibility to build livelier and more interactive websites.

As you are aware the University is embarking upon a review of operations on regional campuses and a report is to go to the University Council in October. The panel and Terms of Reference will be announced within the very near future and submissions will be called for. Being a Faculty operating across 4 regional campuses, we will need to be ready to respond creatively and positively to the review recommendations and this makes the reviews of our courses which are currently occurring in various Schools, even more critical. It is certain that we will need to rethink our modes of delivery, our commitment to blended learning, our entry and exit points for courses, and generally the flexibility of time, place, space and style that we are able to afford our students in their learning. Courses which cannot meet these kinds of criteria in the future are likely to struggle to remain relevant in the contemporary climate of higher education.

Vaughan Prain and I are to attend the Australian Deans of Education Conference in Canberra this week. This is always an important forum for discussion of key issues which Faculties and Schools of Education need to address. One of the matters to be discussed is the imperative to collect more data about what we do, so that we are able to exert some tangible influence on policy. Without the data this is not possible and it appears that this will be a major emphasis in this conference.

There is a round of international graduation ceremonies coming up in October and November and some of the offshore students in this Faculty will be graduating. I will be sending a message with the Chancellor which will be delivered to our graduating students.

The budget for 2007 at Faculty and School level is now being constructed and the core areas of learning and teaching and research are being closely examined in order to attempt to support our strategic plan through our budget. Heads of Schools will be working with the Finance and Resources Manager to cast School budgets and negotiate workloads according to the formula which has been set through the Workloads Committee of the Faculty. This formula allows greater flexibility regarding weightings of workload components and more accurately reflects the way staff salaries are apportioned across the various components.

I take this opportunity to wish Barbara Tadich and Kay Branson well for their future. Barbara leaves for the northern climes of Queensland in October and Kay leaves us to enjoy retirement early in 2007. There have been some advertised vacancies in the Faculty recently and it is hoped that the field of applicants will be strong to take us into what will be an exciting and challenging new era.

A Faculty Annual Report is being prepared for presentation at the October University Council meeting. Thank you to all who have contributed data and information for this report. It is critical, being the first official Annual Report of this Faculty that the data are complete and comprehensive, and this report will be the means to demonstrate to the University, that the Faculty is vibrant, creative and forward thinking. Copies will be distributed to staff as soon as they have been published.

Cheers,

On a lighter note, this reflects my summary of this year's Australian Teacher Education Conference and some of the issues we are facing.

Ode to Teacher Education Reform

Reform of Teacher Education
Has become the talk of the nation.
We know we need an evidence base
But not a study of a case.

We need to have cold, hard facts
Backed up by credible rigorous stats.
We know we need a whole new model
Finding it won't be a doddle.
Because we have to ring in major change
Which extends far beyond the range
Of applying bandaids, tinkering and tweaking
It's radical reform we now are seeking.

Because the context is totally new
And if we cannot read the clue
We will be left out in the cold
It's time for us to be brave and bold.

The government funding will get less
It takes no genius to guess
That resources will not much improve
Our sustainability we'll have to prove
We'll see more private institutions
Whilst public Uni's will see diminutions.

Because not all will be able to compete
Some will be forced to beat a retreat.
Teacher education needs a new way
We need data and evidence to start a new day.
We should make public what we do
But also demonstrate how it's new
How does it meet the needs of those
In whose hands are our tomorrows?

We need to bite the bullet now
And as we do we'll make a row
Because this reform needs to make a splash
Or teacher ed might take a crash

We can do it, we have the will
But governments won't pick up the bill.

*Lorraine Ling
ATEA Conference 2006*