

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY EQUITY UPDATE 2006

A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2005

La Trobe identifies the following as the key equity achievements for 2005.

1. The development of the University's **Disability Action Plan** which was approved by Council late 2005. This Action Plan was lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in March 2006.
2. The introduction of **equity scholarships** including the La Trobe Study Support Scholarship, La Trobe University Indigenous Support Scholarships, and the continued support by the University of the Honours Year Grant Scheme. These scholarships indicate the University's commitment to supporting the under-represented groups in our community to enable them to achieve their higher education goals.
3. The approval by Council of **mandatory attendance** by fixed term and continuing staff to the Equity Staff Development Program facilitated by the Equity and Access Unit, which includes face-to-face training on anti-discrimination law and on issues faced by students with disabilities, Indigenous students and cultural awareness.

B. EQUITY GROUP FOCUS IN 2005

The La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2004-2008 identified three objectives relevant to student equity which are:

1. to continue to attract and retain a capable, diverse student cohort and to build on the University's commitment to equity, access and participation for students;
2. to maintain the commitment of the University to facilitating quality learning outcomes while ensuring that the discipline profile reflects a commitment to both traditional and emerging areas, taking account of changing student demand and labour force needs; and
3. to build on the long-term commitment of the University to its regional communities.

The Strategic Plan seeks the following relevant outcomes: a high level of awareness of and respect for La Trobe University among feeder institutions and organisations; good student progression and completion rates, increased numbers of disadvantaged students receiving University assistance, maintenance of a study environment free from discrimination; and improvement in participation, progression and completion rates for Indigenous students and other equity groups. Initiatives and programs listed below in sections E, F and H are designed to further these outcomes.

La Trobe University's Strategic Plan identifies Indigenous students as a priority equity focus. However, matters relating to Indigenous students will be addressed in the Indigenous Education Statement. In addition, La Trobe places priority on equity outcomes for the following groups.

Students from rural and isolated areas

La Trobe University has a state-wide network of campuses based at Bundoora (metropolitan), Melbourne, Bendigo, Wodonga, Mildura, Shepparton, Beechworth and Mt Buller. The University has a strong and growing commitment to the provision of higher education in regional Victoria and southern New South Wales, reflecting its concern to ensure that all suitably qualified residents of the regions it serves have opportunities to access higher education. Through the University's Regional Advisory Board network, increased emphasis is placed on maximising with regional communities the mutual benefits of the regional presence of the University. There is a Regional Advisory Board at Albury/Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura and Shepparton campuses. These Boards report directly to the University Council.

A number of strategies were developed and outcomes achieved in 2005 which include:

- there was an increase in university access and higher education participation rates in regions served by the University from 58% in 2004 to 71% in 2005;
- University activities relevant to regional economic, social, cultural and environmental needs indicated that 51% of the number of graduates from regional campuses returned to regional areas after graduation. An increase of 10% over 2004.
- there were a number of enhanced infrastructure facilities and services and improved community access to infrastructure at regional campuses in 2005.

More information of outcomes achieved by the University can be found in the 2005 La Trobe University Annual Report of Council.

Students of low socio-economic status

La Trobe has traditionally catered to a large percentage of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Currently, according to La Trobe University statistics, 20% of students at La Trobe fall into this category.

Low-ses students who undertake tertiary study are often the first in the family to do so, and face difficulties in dealing with unfamiliar expectations, combining study with paid work, affording basic living expenses and associated stress.

Students with disabilities

La Trobe University is committed to 'maintenance of a study environment that is free of discrimination', and believes the presence of a diverse student population enhances the experience of the university community. La Trobe has a history of providing significant support to students with disabilities. The consultation process of the Disability Action Plan raised awareness throughout the University of the financial support provided by DEST through the Assistance for Students with Disabilities Programme as well as other various support that can be accessed, eg, specialist technology, notetakers, Auslan interpreters. Issues associated with disabilities are complex and the Equity Staff Development Program is a means of addressing such complexities with staff. However, the determining of "inherent requirements" is a source of concern for many academic staff. The Equity and Access Unit see this as a priority and is working with Faculties to assist them in determining the "inherent requirements" of their courses so as students with disabilities are fully aware prior to enrolling what the expectations of a course.

C. EQUITY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN 2005

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity and Student Services) is responsible for the oversight of matters relating to access and equity for students. There are a number of student services that directly report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Services). These services include:

- Equity and Access Unit
- University Counselling Service
- Course and Careers Services
- Indigenous Education Office
- Chaplaincy
- Children's Centre
- University Ombudsman

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Services) is a member of the University's Senior Management Group and is an ex officio member of the University Council and Academic Board.

Research, planning and day-to-day student equity and access assistance are conducted by the Equity and Access Unit. The Manager (Equity and Access Unit) is a member of a number of key committees within La Trobe University, including the University Equal Opportunity Committee (and its sub-committees), Faculty of Health Sciences Learning and Teaching Committee, the Selection and Enrolment Committee, the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering Equal Opportunity Committee.

The Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee is the key committee of Council which promotes equality of opportunity and reports to Council on matters relating to the University's educational activities, its employment practices and its governance. The importance of this Committee to the principles of equal opportunity is evidenced by the fact that the Chair of this Committee is the Chancellor of the University. Key fundamental objectives of this committee are:

1. to monitor the provision of education and advice to members of the University community on personal security, sexual harassment, harassment and discrimination, equity, student services, equal opportunity, cultural diversity and issues affecting persons with disabilities.
2. to advise Council on the operation of the University's equity plans and to advise on equity policies for the equity groups identified in the plan.
3. to report to Council on the operation of the University's anti-discrimination and harassment policy and to recommend appropriate developments in the policy.
4. to report to Council on the operation of the University's student services and to advise on their effectiveness in promoting the welfare of students.

To assist the Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee, it has established three sub-committees which provide reports and recommendations relevant to their particular area. These sub-committees are:

(a) University Equal Opportunity Committee (UEOC)

The University Equal Opportunity Committee terms of reference cover a number of areas addressing equal opportunity and issues relating to students who in under-represented groups. Each Faculty at La Trobe University has a Faculty Equal Opportunity Committee which reports to its Faculty Board and the University Equal Opportunity Committee. One of the key objectives of these Committees is to advise the UEOC on strategies, recommendations and implementation of outreach programs instigated by their Faculty. Similarly, the Chair of each Faculty Equal Opportunity Committee is a member of the UEOC and discussion and strategies developed by that Committee are in turn relayed back to the Faculty via their Faculty Boards.

(b) Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG)

The Student Services Advisory Group comprises the Head (or nominee) of most of the student support services. The primary role of the SSAG is to review and monitor the effectiveness of student services, to raise issues affecting student welfare and forward recommendations to the Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee on student support services.

(b) Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

The Disability Advisory Committee comprises key staff from the University and is primarily responsible for:

- considering matters of policy concerning people with disabilities at the University and to report appropriate recommendations to the Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee;
- assisting the University meet its legislative obligations to ensure discrimination against students and staff with disabilities does not occur;
- actively promote full and equal participation of students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of University life;
- monitoring and providing advice on the implementation on La Trobe's Policy for People with Disability and the Disability Action Plan.

D. PERFORMANCE OF EQUITY GROUPS IN 2005 [not required at this stage]

E. STRATEGIES/MEASURES IN PLACE TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES IN 2005

New measures to further identified equity objectives:

Research Project: *A Qualitative Investigation into Improving Access to University for State Secondary School Student Equity Groups*

The Equity and Access Unit has commenced a research project at the University's largest regional campus (Bendigo) aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the barriers and enabling factors to senior secondary school students from three of the DEST equity groups: people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds; people with disabilities; and rural and isolated backgrounds. Findings will inform the University as to the most appropriate and effective ways of ensuring equality of opportunity for disadvantaged senior secondary school students who face the choice between leaving school or continuing with formal education. This will assist the University in determining the most beneficial outreach programs for the Bendigo region and developing a transition program that meets the needs of these groups.

Equity Staff Development Program

A major strategy of the Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee was the recommendation to Council of a revised Staff Attendance Policy for the Equity Staff Development Program (ESDP). Council approved this revised policy which makes it mandatory that all new and existing fixed term and continuing staff must undertake this program. This program is facilitated by the Equity and Access Unit and involves an online module and modules which include student equity issues, issues relating to equal opportunity in the workplace and issues relating to disability. All casual and sessional staff will be provided with an orientation package at commencement of their employment.

The strategic direction for the University is that it will continue to attract and retain a capable, diverse student cohort and to build on the University's commitment to equity, access and participation for students. By instigating the ESDP policy, the University is ensuring that staff are cognisant of its obligations under anti-discrimination laws as well as assisting the University to meet its strategic objectives.

In addition, further new initiatives target the following priority groups:

1. Rural and isolated students

While DEST equity statistics are not yet available, data collected internally by La Trobe University suggests that there is a decline in the access, retention and success of students from isolated areas. However, the statistics indicate that we are still well above the National averages for rural and isolated students. The following 2005 initiatives assist these students:

- New \$6000 Scholarships for rural and regional students to study in Computer Science and Computer Engineering courses (see section H for details).
- New \$1000 Scholarships for rural and regional students at Menzies residential college (see section H for details).
- Increasing availability of course materials on WebCT, CD-ROMs and video, and teleconference teaching at regional campuses.
- Shepparton campus 'timetabling for access' policy to place all classes for each subject on same day, assisting those who travel long distances.
- The La Trobe University Learning and Teaching Plan includes strategies that address the diversity of the University's student population.
- A number of regional scholarships with industry partners (refer Section H for details).

La Trobe also continues to direct existing support services to these students including outreach programs in rural areas (see Section H for details).

2. Students from low socio-economic background

- Introduction of La Trobe University Study Support Scholarships and other equity scholarships (see Sections G and H).
- Employment for students as educational support workers: following the release of the *Final Report: Student Experiences of Poverty at La Trobe* in 2000, the Equity and Access Unit now employs a number of students to undertake a variety of educational support for students with disabilities. These include: notetaking and acting as a scribe in exams. This has proved to be of great benefit to students as they are able to undertake employment with the Unit that fits in with their own class timetable. The Unit currently has 30 students who undertake educational support for students with disabilities.
- Due to an increasing concern of the financial and personal disadvantage experienced by many students, the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee will commence a research project in 2006 which builds on the student survey research reported in *Paying their way – student finance survey* which was undertaken in 2000. La Trobe University will be able to extract from this revised research, relevant data to enable it to put strategies into place that will support those students.
- La Trobe SRC secondhand book store online: in 2005 the Students Representative Council (SRC) conducted a secondhand book store online where students were able to obtain secondhand books at no cost. This initiative has continued in 2006.

3. Students with disabilities

Disability Action Plan

The University completed its Disability Action Plan which was approved by Council in December 2005. This important document is developed to ensure there is no systemic discrimination of students with disabilities and will build on the considerable progress that the University has already made for students with disabilities. Further, the effect of implementing such an inclusive Action Plan means that it has a far reaching effect in that it will provide accessible education to not only students with disabilities but to all students. La Trobe has considerable experience in this area and offers this document as an example of best practice. A copy of the Action Plan can be located on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website.

4. Students from NESB

Continuing low access, participation, retention and success rates of these students is an area of concern. However, La Trobe University contends there still remains a definitional issue and the University will be establishing a broader definition for institutional purposes. The following programs assist students from NESB:

- Counselling Services' 'Migrating to Uni' Project to support successful transitions for first generation students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Developed after three years work with local Somali community, North East Migrant Resource Centre, and feeder schools. Possible expansion to other NESB groups may be identified via the 2007 student intake.
- HEESP Grant 2005: 'Orientation and Transition to University: a resource for students from non-English speaking backgrounds'. (Language Academic Services (ESL)). An online video resource for new or prospective students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- HEESP Grant 2005: 'Computer-mediated resources to support intercultural access and engagement for Non-English Speaking Background Teacher Education students' (School of Educational Studies).

5. Women in Engineering

Although not identified as a major priority area for La Trobe, internally collected data shows that access of women to Engineering courses remains low. Two initiatives in 2005 targeted this area:

- New \$6000 scholarships for outstanding female VCE students to study in Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering.
- Formation of Women in Engineering network planned for semester 2, 2006, to form La Trobe chapter of Minister for ICT, Marsha Thompson's Women's Network, created to support and encourage girls into non-traditional areas. To include a mentoring program.

Key strategies for 2006:

Equity Computer Scheme

The Equity Computer Scheme was introduced in 2006. This scheme provides a free reconditioned computer to students who are experiencing financial hardship to assist them with their studies. Each computer was internet ready with relevant software suitable for tertiary level students. La Trobe University provided 75 reconditioned computers to commencing or continuing undergraduate students whose application for an undergraduate equity scholarship was deemed eligible, but were unsuccessful due to the number of scholarships available. The cost of this initiative to the University was around \$25,000. It is anticipated that this scheme will be expanded in 2007.

Equity Research Database

The Equity and Access Unit plans to develop and maintain a database of research projects relating to student equity and access undertaken by La Trobe University staff. Such a database will enhance the knowledge of staff working in the area of equity and access and it is hoped that collaboration with relevant staff will follow to assist in the access, participation, retention and success of students from the equity groups. An example of such research is *Missing out on Higher Education*, an ARC funded project conducted by a team involving La Trobe University, the University of Melbourne, and the Australian National University. The project aims to identify factors that prevent or discourage students from lower socio-economic backgrounds from participating in tertiary education. This research will undoubtedly be of benefit to the work of the Equity and Access Unit.

Postgraduate students

A research project aimed at ascertaining the needs of postgraduate students from the equity groups will commence in 2006. The project will also provide information on what strategies need to be considered to encourage students to undertake postgraduate studies.

F. DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAMMES IN 2005

Initiatives funded by Higher Education Disability Support Programme Performance Based Funding:

Academic Forum

With the introduction of the *Disability Standards for Education in 2005*, the Equity and Access Unit facilitated an Academic Forum for staff of the University which addressed issues relating to students with disabilities. The keynote speaker at this Forum was Mr Graeme Innes AM, the Deputy Disability Discrimination Commissioner, whose presentation was specific to the Disability Standards and the implications for education providers. Other topics covered at this Forum were:

- **Creating Accessible Teaching and Support (CATS) Project**
Presented by: Professor Denise Kirkpatrick, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
- **Responding to distressed students and difficult behaviours**
Presented by: Ms Joanne Barlow, Director, Counselling Service
- **Towards inclusive teaching and learning: alternatives to writing**

Presented by: Dr Kate Chanock, Academic Skills Unit, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

- **WYNN literacy software package**

Presented by: Mr Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology

Research Project: *Meeting the Needs of Students with Mental Health Issues*

The Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee had identified the provision of support for students with mental health issues as a key concern for the University's support services. A research project had now been developed by the working party which aims to:

- determine the prevalence of mental health issues among the University's students;
- develop a greater understanding of the experience and needs of students with mental health issues; and
- improve support mechanisms consistent with a broader aim of making La Trobe University a health promoting organisation.

Phase one of the project (literature review of needs and interventions to provide support) has been completed. This phase of the research identified a range of choices available in terms of intervention including: enhancement of existing staff training, peer support structures, mentoring, self-advocacy training and support, the provision of written materials, enhanced awareness of existing services, and particular measures to address the mental health needs of international students. Phase two of the project will use the advice and expertise of students and staff to develop creative interventions to support the needs of students with mental health issues.

Online Production Unit

Funding to expand the computing facilities of the Online Production Unit has enabled significant increases in quantity and quality of accessible learning resources for students with learning and print disabilities, allowing a faster turn around time and better quality materials. This expansion is specifically for meeting the demand of alternative formats for students with print disabilities across all campuses.

Importance of Additional Support for Students with Disabilities

The Additional Support for Students with Disabilities Programme is a very important funding source. La Trobe University students have greatly benefited as we have been able to provide specialist equipment such as a Braille machine which is located in the library, specialist software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, notetakers, scribes, and Auslan interpreters. As the number of Deaf students has increased at our Bendigo campus, with only one suitably qualified Auslan interpreter in the region, the cost of supporting these students is high as interpreters are required to travel from Melbourne. The Equity and Access Unit is exploring specialist technology options to meet this increase in demand, and it is expected that costs to support this specialist technology will be funded by the DSP.

Regional Disability Liaison Officer Initiative

The continuing support of the Regional Disability Liaison Initiative is also very important to the transition of students with disabilities to tertiary education and also in terms of the support they provide to universities. In the case of La Trobe, for example, the RDLO is on the Reference Group for the Learning Disability Forum which will be held early in 2007. This is a joint project with La Trobe, RMIT and Deakin Universities.

A Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) at La Trobe University is a member on the Regional Disability Program Advisory Committee and as a committee member her role is to assist in guiding and monitoring the RDLO program. The RDLO Advisory Committee has provided a number of initiatives which have assisted Disability Liaison Officers at La Trobe University, and in turn students with disabilities. Such initiatives can be demonstrated in the following:

- The RDLO arranged a 'VTAC Information Session for Students with Disabilities' in August 2005, providing La Trobe University with an opportunity to hold an information stall and provide information to potential students.

- The Disability Liaison Officers attended a Learning Disability Seminar in October 2005 to further their knowledge on adaptive technology.
- The RDLO has recently developed a Low-cost/no-cost Adaptive Technology Online Guide for People with Disabilities, which the DLOs are providing to relevant students and staff.
- Currently the RDLO is creating a 'VTAC applicants SEAS/Special Consideration Checklist' and an 'Essential Course Requirements Checklist' that will be available on the RDLO website. The RDLO has asked the DLO at La Trobe University for guidance in developing the checklist. The checklists will provide guidance to Year 12 Students who may have difficulty negotiating the VTAC application process.

G. SCHOLARSHIPS

La Trobe University has introduced a number of institutional scholarships aimed at students who are financially and educationally disadvantaged. These scholarships include:

La Trobe University Study Support Scholarship (LSSS)

The La Trobe University Study Support Scholarship was introduced in 2005. The LSSS is available to students who are commencing their first undergraduate degree at any of the Victorian campuses of La Trobe University. The general eligibility criteria are the same as the Commonwealth Learning Scholarships. The LSSS is valued at \$3,000 per year, for the normal duration of an undergraduate course in which a student first enrolls, including Honours if applicable. There were 90 LSSSs awarded in 2005 with a total cost of \$270,000 with a pipeline effect of around \$810,000 for a three year degree (excluding Honours) and \$1.08m for a four-year degree. Similarly, another 90 LSSS were awarded in 2006.

The Scholarships Unit's 2005 Report to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity and Student Services) on the Allocation of Commonwealth Learning Scholarships and the La Trobe Study Support Scholarships shows that the scholarships awarded in 2005 were distributed evenly across the campuses. At least 63% of students who applied from each of the regional campuses received a CLS or a LSSS, compared to 58% at the metropolitan Bundoora campus. The distribution of scholarships therefore appears to be proceeding equitably and reaching areas of need.

The preliminary results of a La Trobe University Scholarships Impact Survey conducted in 2005 showed that 61% of CLS Scholarship holders were in paid employment, with 22% working between eight and 16 hours per week and 2% working more than 16 hours. This is a preliminary result only but the University plans to conduct another survey in 2006, with a view to further investigating the impact of the equity scholarships particularly in relation to paid employment for disadvantaged students and the impact on their studies.

La Trobe offers a range of other scholarships which are directed towards, or indirectly assist, students in equity groups. See Section E above and Section H below for further details.

H. STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME FUNDS IN 2007

I confirm that La Trobe University is undertaking activities which assist disadvantaged students, consistent with the aims of the Programme as outlined in paragraphs 1.45.1 of the Higher Education Equity Support Programme and 1.85.1 of the Performance-based Disability Support Funding and that the University meets all the criteria set out at paragraph 1.45.1 (a)-(d) which is demonstrated under the following headings.

.....
 Professor Brian Stoddart
 Vice-Chancellor

1. Outreach programs

There are a number of outreach programs being undertaken by each Faculty, residential services and support services across all University campuses. In addition, several new projects are being

undertaken by the University to assist in gaining a better understanding of what the barriers and enabling factors are for prospective students, as described in Sections E and F above.

A position of Outreach and Transition Project Officer has been established to assist the University in developing a coordinated Outreach Program for all its campuses and a well structured transition program. It is anticipated that this expanded coordinated program will commence in 2006.

Outreach programs directed towards equity groups

- Albury Wodonga Campus: comprehensive Outreach Program to schools on wide catchment area, and campus visits from rural schools.
- Shepparton Campus: 'Tertiary Information Service' held annually for Year 12 students from local and outlying schools.
- Faculty of Health Sciences: open offer to secondary schools including those in low SES areas and rural and regional Victoria, Tasmania and Southern NSW, for University staff to visit and talk about courses/facilities.
- Faculty of Health Sciences: 'Rural Health Visits'. Faculty hosts high school students from rural and regional areas for 2 days per year, resulting in high percentage of enrolments of these students (34% in 2006).
- Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering/Department of Electronic Engineering: Girls only IT and Engineering Workshops for students from Years 10-12.
- VTAC Special Entry Access Scheme: La Trobe University considers applications in the categories: Mature age entry, Non-English Speaking Background, difficult family circumstances, disadvantaged and socio-economic background, rural and isolated, women in non-traditional courses, disability or long term medical condition.

Outreach programs directed to all students including those in equity groups

- Open days on all campuses on all Sundays in August.
- Tertiary Talk (Tertiary Information Service) of which La Trobe participates with other State universities and was the host for the northern region.
- Bundoora campus: information evenings for Year 10 students and mature age students, 'Talk and tour' guided tours for all secondary students.
- Bundoora & Bendigo campuses: 'Experience La Trobe' Workshops for year 11 and 12 students.
- Access Education Programs for Year 11 & 12: 'VCE Revision'
- Postgraduate Expo held at Bundoora campus
- Various publications of Office for Prospective Students and Careers available to prospective students, for example Newsletter for Prospective Students which contains information on support services. Other publications include: 'Postgraduate Study at La Trobe', 'Select La Trobe' (Year 10), 'Parents Guide to La Trobe University' and 'NSL Mature Age Applicants Guide'.
- Visual Arts and Design: Mid-year 'Portfolio workshop' for VCE students wishing to enrol in Visual Arts courses; active staff involvement in delivering course information sessions at local Secondary Colleges; open invitation for schools to visit the Visual Arts Centre, attend exhibitions & public lectures.
- Science, Technology and Engineering: 'in2science' Peer Mentoring in Schools Program, in association with Faculty of Science, University of Melbourne and William Buckland Foundation. Students from the Faculty attend High Schools to work as mentors in science classes.
- School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences: School Holiday Workshop for students from years 10-12.
- Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering VCE School Workshops.

- University-wide participation in VTAC conducted Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS).

2. Support Services

All students at La Trobe University have access to support services at all campuses. These student support services provide a range of support through personal counselling, careers counselling and employment related advice, learning assistance, guidance on financial counselling, accommodation assistance, and chaplaincy. Some examples of the support provided are as follows:

Familiarisation/orientation programs

For Equity groups:

- 'Uni Life in Shepparton' function April 2006
- New Counselling Services 'Migrating to Uni' project to support successful transitions for first generation students from non-English speaking backgrounds: targeted through local Somali community, North East Migrant Resource Centre, and feeder schools. Possible expansion to other NESB groups may be identified via the 2007 student intake.

For all students:

- University-wide orientation program including residential colleges, conducted annually in February.
- Mid-year orientation programs are undertaken by residential colleges and the International Programs Office.
- In 2005, the SSAG were responsible for the development of the *Student Services at La Trobe University Bundoora* postcard. This postcard is distributed to all new students as well as all staff and provides contact details for each of the following student services:

Careers Service	Language Centre
Chaplaincy	Legal Service (SRC)
Children's Centre	Medical Centre
Counselling Service	Postgraduate Association (LUPA)
Employment Service	Part-time, Evening and Mature-age Students' Organisation (PEMSO)
Equity and Access Unit	Student Accommodation
Indigenous Australian Students' Liaison and Academic Support	Student Records
Financial Aid	Students' Representative Council (SRC)
International Student Support Services	Student Union
IT Services	Union Services Centre/Contact
Language and Academic Skills (ESL)	

Similar brochures are available at La Trobe University regional campuses and the International Programs Office.

Mentoring/Peer support programs

For Equity groups:

- Formation of Women in Engineering network planned for semester 2, 2006, to form La Trobe chapter of Minister for ICT, Marsha Thompson's Women's Network created to support and encourage girls into non-traditional areas. To include a mentoring program.

For all students:

- Health Sciences: 'Buddy' mentoring programs for commencing students.
- All residential services provide extensive academic mentoring and peer support programs coordinated by expert staff.

Assistance in finding accommodation

- Bundoora Campus Accommodation Services, Bendigo Campus Residential Services, and Campus administration on other campuses can provide assistance with finding accommodation.
- Glenn College's acceptance policy gives preference to students from rural and isolated communities.

Group tutoring assistance

- Study groups/tutoring in all residential services which therefore include a high proportion of rural students as well as those in other equity groups.

Student counselling

- Counselling Services provide the following services to students, including a significant number of students from equity groups: individual and small group counselling, information and referral to community groups and services for students. They also run group programs: orientation and adjustment, study and life-skills, training/educative, and therapeutic groups, and provide counselling at residential colleges.

Career advice services

- The online resource 'CareerHub' makes careers resources including job advertisements, career advice and advice on job seeking skills available to all La Trobe students including those in rural and regional campuses. This important initiative enables students from all regional campuses access to a well structured service.
- The Student Union's Student Employment Services maintain a database which matches students looking for employment with vacant positions.
- The Bendigo Student Association provides a student employment service in conjunction with local businesses.

Student financial services

- The University makes available funding of \$1.5m to the Student Loan Fund which supports students in financial need.
- Loans are available to students for textbooks, equipment, course fees, computers and software and other essential needs in order to complete their studies.
- Students are able to access advice regarding social security benefits directly from a Centrelink Office located on the Bundoora campus.

Language programs

- The University has Language and Academic Skills Unit (ESL) specifically for students whose first language is not English. The Unit runs workshops and provides individual study skills assistance.
- Each Faculty in the University has a Language and Academic Skills Unit for which any student can seek assistance. These Units are designed to assist students to cope with the demands of tertiary studies including writing, reading, notetaking, oral presentations, time management, exam preparation and related language skills.
- Albury/Wodonga campus employs an ESL consultant.
- Shepparton campus library: purchase of 'textHELP' software for students needing to develop language skills.
- Shepparton Campus: purchase of webcam for students to talk with Language and Academic Skills (ESL) Unit in Bundoora.
- Language/cultural discussion groups coordinated by expert staff are conducted in all residential services.

3. Commonwealth Learning Scholarships [not required].

4. Institutional Equity Scholarships

La Trobe University has developed a number of equity scholarships which are administered by the Scholarships Office under the portfolio of Academic Services. The Scholarship Office coordinates the advertising, application and selection process. The Equity Scholarships Committee is responsible amongst other things, in ensuring that the selection process determined by this Committee is fair and transparent and to review the assessment procedures for an application when requested by an unsuccessful applicant. The following equity scholarships are available to students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, rural and isolated students, Indigenous students, and students with disabilities. These scholarships are:

La Trobe University Study Support Scholarship (LSSS)

The La Trobe University Study Support Scholarship was introduced in 2005. The LSSS is available to students who are commencing their first undergraduate degree at any of the Victorian campuses of La Trobe University. The same general eligibility criteria for the Commonwealth Learning Scholarships are used in the selection of successful applicants. The LSSS is valued at \$3,000 per year, for the usual duration of an undergraduate course in which a student first enrolls, including Honours if applicable. There were 90 scholarships awarded in 2005 with a total cost of \$270,000 with a pipeline effect of around \$810,000 for a three year degree (excluding Honours) and \$1.08m for a four-year degree. Similarly, another 90 LSSS were awarded in 2006.

La Trobe University Indigenous Student Scholarships (LISS)

The La Trobe University Indigenous Student Scholarships were introduced in 2005. These scholarships are open to commencing students only and have a value of \$5,000 per year for the usual duration of an undergraduate course. There are 10 LISS available each year. Further information will be provided under the Indigenous Education Statement.

La Trobe Vice-Chancellor's Regional Scholarships (LVCRS)

The La Trobe Vice-Chancellor's Regional Scholarships (LVCRS) are available for commencing students only. There are five LVCRS available to each regional campus and have a value of \$3,000 per year for the normal duration of an undergraduate course.

La Trobe Vice-Chancellor's Municipal Scholarships (LVCMS)

The La Trobe Vice-Chancellor's Municipal Scholarships are available to commencing students only and have a value of \$3,000 per year for the normal duration of an undergraduate course. There are five scholarships available each year.

Honours Year Grant Scheme (HYGS)

The Honours Year Grant Scheme was established by the University as an equal opportunity measure in 1988 to encourage more students to enrol for the Honours year of their undergraduate course. The scheme is available to Australian citizens and permanent residents. The University encourages academically qualified students enrolling for Honours and experiencing hardship to apply for a grant. This may include students from low-socio economic background, Indigenous students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, rural and isolated students, students with disabilities and women in non-traditional fields of study. Academic merit is an important criterion for this grant. Funds have been made available by the University each year since 1988. The HYGS is administered by a Committee who reports to the Academic Board of the University.

The Honours Year Grant Scheme Committee was allocated \$65,000 by the University and together with a \$6,000 surplus from 2004 had a total of \$71,000 available to award to students in 2005. Students are eligible for an award from \$500 up to a maximum of \$2,000. Applications were received from 89 students from both metropolitan and regional campuses in 2005 with 52 students being offered a grant with 49 acceptances.

Any surplus from 2005 was carried over to 2006 and added to the \$65,000 allocated by the University. Thirty-nine students were successful in obtaining a grant in semester 1 2006. As students can commence their Honours course in second semester, new applications will be considered at that time.

In summary, the introduction of the Commonwealth Learning Scholarships (CLS) and the University's equity scholarships has seen a considerable growth in applications since 2004 where the University received around 400 applications. This number increased in 2005 to more than 700 applications and increased significantly in 2006 to over 1,100 applications. The CLS and the various equity scholarships are monitored by the Equity Scholarship Committee who provides an annual report to the Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee who in turn reports to the University Council.

In addition to the above there are a number of other scholarships/bursaries available by the various constituents of the University and include:

- Faculty of Health Sciences is developing a Rural and Regional Clinical or Fieldwork Placements Scholarship. These scholarships will provide funding support to students who are either undertaking clinical or fieldwork placements in a rural or regional setting, or students who live in a rural or regional area who are undertaking a clinical or fieldwork placement in a metropolitan setting. The funds will be provided to assist students meet the additional accommodation, travel and other living costs they may incur as a result of having to undertake such a placement. Each scholarship is for \$200 per week for each full week of placement.
- the Les Kilmartin Regional Scholarship (School of Visual Arts and Design).
- \$6,000 scholarships are available for outstanding female VCE students to study in Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering.
- \$6,000 scholarships are available for high achieving rural and regional VCE students to study in Department of Computer Science and Computer Engineering.
- Menzies College has a number of scholarships available which include \$1,000 scholarships for students from regional and remote areas of Victoria, up to 10 annually, five awarded in 2006.
- Chisholm College provides a range of scholarships which include 30 accommodation bursaries for students demonstrating financial hardship. The bursary provides for payment of 50% of accommodation cost.
- Glenn College have a number of scholarships available for new and existing students which include scholarships for financially disadvantaged students.
- The La Trobe University Housing Co. provides a range of scholarships which include scholarships for students from financially disadvantaged background.
- Residential Student Bursary (up to 50 bursaries valued at up to \$1,000 each) are provided to support students from central and northern Victoria and southern New South Wales undertaking studies at the Bendigo campus who can demonstrate financial need.

The success of the University focus on strengthening the community/industry links with rural campuses is demonstrated by the following examples which are supported from funds provided by relevant industry partners:

- the Coliban Water Civil Engineering Scholarship has been established to support undergraduate students from regional Victoria and southern New South Wales undertaking the Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) course at the Bendigo campus. Two scholarships are awarded annually. Two scholarships available at \$12,000 each.
- Lower Murray Water Engineering Scholarship Program: these scholarships provide undergraduate engineering students from the region serviced by Lower Murray Water with scholarships worth \$5,000 annually for each year of study, up to a potential maximum of \$20,000. In addition, paid vacation employment in a trainee engineer capacity, with the opportunity for an interesting and challenging career on completion of study is provided.
- Mijo Darveniza Engineering Scholarship, Goulbourn Valley Water: this scholarship is to support a full-time student from the Goulburn Valley Region who has completed the first two

years of the undergraduate degree. There is a cash component of \$3,000 per year and Christmas vacation employment for two consecutive years. There is one scholarship awarded annually.

- the Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water provide a Scholarship and Summer Work Program for 2005/06 to encourage young engineering and science students to pursue a future career in the water industry. The offer includes a work placement assignment with GWM Water for up to 12 weeks over the summer vacation period of 2005/06 plus financial assistance with the cost of books and other course-related expenses.
- Ballarat UFS Dispensaries Ltd Final Year Pharmacy Scholarship is available to students who have successfully completed the first three years of a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. Value \$8,000.
- There are a significant number of other smaller bursaries available to students at the Bendigo campus and information about these can be found on the La Trobe University website.
- Dean's Scholarship for Academic Excellence: a \$6,000 one-year scholarship available to first year Agricultural science students who enrol at either the Albury/Wodonga, Bendigo or Mildura campuses of La Trobe University.
- There are a number of regional scholarships available to students studying in agricultural science at La Trobe University. These include:
 - La Trobe University/Grassland Society Scholarship: value \$2,000
 - North East Local Governments' Scholarship: value \$2,000
 - Peechelba Beef Scholarship: value \$2,000
- The University has been awarded a \$145,000 grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) through the Pratt Water Program, to establish a new industry-supported \$600,000 FRRR/La Trobe Civil Engineering Scholarship Scheme. This pilot project will commence in 2007 and will fund 10 four-year civil engineering scholarships for students to study the Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) at the Bendigo campus. With the FRRR contribution, industry partner contribution and vacation employment, each scholarship is valued at \$44,000.

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

Each year, up to three Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Teaching will be awarded to either individuals or teams who have shown excellence in their teaching and have made outstanding contributions to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching at La Trobe University.

Citations to Contribution to Student Learning

This award commenced in 2006 with up to 10 citations being available each year to people who have made an outstanding contribution to student learning in a specific area of responsibility, over a sustained period. These awards are open to all employees of the University and out institutional associates which include:

- Academic staff;
- Administration/general staff from central and support units and campus administration;
- Institutional associates;
- Library staff

Two of the successful citations were awarded to academic staff and were particularly aimed at improving the learning experience of our diverse student community. These citations were entitled:

- Enhancing student learning via an innovative assessment weighting scheme that is sensitive to student diversity and encourages independent learning.
- For transforming insights gained from work with individual students into an innovative integrated program of academic skills development across a diverse Arts Faculty.

Contact for inquiries:

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