

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the second meeting of the Student Engagement Advisory Committee held on
Monday 25 August 2008 at 3:30 pm in the Conference Room 333,
Humanities Building 3, La Trobe University.

Present: Dr Kerry Ferguson, Chairperson, Mr John McDonald, Ms Margaret Botterill,
Dr Diane Kirkby, Mr Matthew Riddle, Mr Peter Boyle, Mr Robert Stephenson,
Ms Anne Kuypers, Ms Ngaere Blair, Ms Anne Stansfeld, Ms Liz Lavender,
Ms Julia Lambert, Ms Cecilia O'Halloran, Mr Michael Torney, Mr Dennis Bainger,
Ms Ruth Delagas, Ms Sally Went, Ms Donna Baldwin, Mr Leon Moulden, Mr Martin Cheale

Secretariat: Mr John Mrakov

Apologies: Dr Linsey Howie, Mr Patrick Testa, Dr Jennifer Sheed, Mr Simon Gibson, Dr Michael Shortland, Mr Garry Thomas, Ms Debra Langton,.

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
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1. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHAIRPERSON FOR THIS MEETING

The Chairperson notified the secretary that she would be a late attendee to this meeting due to a previous appointment.

The committee appointed Ngaere Blair as the acting Chairperson.

2. APPROVAL OF DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The acting Chairperson outlined the draft Terms of Reference which were approved and endorsed by the committee subject to the following amendment:

"that the order of the 1st and 2nd Terms of Reference be reversed".

3. REPORT FROM AUCEA CONFERENCE

John McDonald tabled a report on the AUCEA Conference which was held in July at the University of the Sunshine Coast. He highlighted the following:

- The theme for this year's conference was "Engagement for Sustainable Futures".
- Many universities reported that they had adopted a proactive approach in instigating engagement programs and activities with their community.
- There is a trend for universities to integrate community engagement programs in their curriculum. For example, Victoria University stated that they would like to have all their courses with 25% of the assessment delivered through community engagement programs or projects.
- Many sessions presented revolved around a holistic approach to community engagement and the needs for universities to build links with their local community.
- Evidence presented seemed to suggest that regional universities are more likely to engage in partnerships with their local communities and councils in developing community programs.
- Engagement programs and activities need to benefit all stakeholders by addressing the mutual needs of both the university and the community.

4. FIRST YEAR TRANSITION AND RETENTION AT LA TROBE

The acting Chairperson emphasised the importance of first year transition for new students and the need to address and improve university retention rates. A number of initiatives and programs have been devised to deal with these issues such as:

- Peer mentoring programs (FSTE and FHS)
- Peer mentoring tool kit
- The development of a web portal for first year students
- The Curriculum Taskforce (established by DVC A) will be developing a new approach to first year curriculum.

The committee and its members are invited to attend a seminar entitled "*The First Year Experience: Being Strategic in Promoting Student Learning and Success*" which will be presented by Professor Kerri-Lee Krause.

4.1 BENDIGO ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

Leon Moulden outlined the details for the Advantage Program which is offered to first year students at La Trobe University, Bendigo. This program is designed to assist first year students with transition to university life. The program was established in response to a high number of first year students dropping out of university at Bendigo.

The program is funded by a federal government grant called HEESP and it aims to give first year students a sense of purpose, direction and confidence in becoming part of the university community. The course structure consists of six seminars conducted by a range of facilitators including academic staff, mentors and student support staff. There are currently 27 students enrolled in the program.

4.2 SHEPPARTON TRANSITION PROGRAM

Donna Baldwin provided an overview of a new transition program for first year students attending La Trobe University in Shepparton. The program was developed to address the needs of newly enrolled students and to assist them with transition to university.

The design of the program consisted of two major elements: a 4 day on campus O Week program and the production of a interactive CD entitled *Transition 2008: Resources for New Students*. The O Week program supported and expanded on much of the information and content included in the CD and also provided the opportunity for students to attend an official welcome ceremony, academic sessions and social events. It was estimated that 50 out of 75 new first year students at Shepparton attended and participated in the O Week program.

4.3 ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Martin Cheale outlined the details of the Orientation Program offered to new students at La Trobe University, Bundoora. The program is run over 3 days and consists of a range of academic sessions, information sessions, tours, ceremonies and social events. The program is developed with extensive input and consultation with the faculties, colleges, student services and student associations. It is estimated that the attendance figures for this year were between 3500- 4000 new students.

All new students are notified about the activities of Orientation Week during the enrolment process. They are provided with information packs, program guides and they can sign up for on campus tours. The program also employs around 150 student volunteers.

5. ORIENTATION PLANNING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The committee noted that the Orientation Planning Group are seeking members and would like more representation from the faculties in the planning process.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 ORIENTATION PLANNING DAY

It was suggested by the committee that an Orientation Planning Day be organised to involve all campuses in discussing ideas and proposals for Orientation.

Ngaere Blair

6.2 AUSSE SURVEY

The AUSSE Survey has concluded and a report will be available in November.

6.3 REGIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

The University advertised for a regional Student Engagement Officer and received a excellent response. An appointment will be made in September.

6.4 STUDENT WEB PAGE

The current student web page can be updated regularly with news, events, links, announcements etc. Anyone interested in utilising this page to promote services, programs or activities can contact Ngaere Blair.

7. NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.