

## LA TROBE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the third meeting of the Student Engagement Committee held on **Thursday 4 June 2009** at **9am** in the SEMS Meeting Room, Physical Sciences 1, La Trobe University, Bundoora.

Present: Dr Kerry Ferguson, Chairperson, Mr John McDonald, Dr Sharn Donnison, Mr Robert Stephenson, Ms Ngaere Blair, Ms Anne Stansfeld, Ms Liz Lavender, Ms Ruth Delagas, Mr Lachlan Batchelor, Ms Katherine Nix, Mr Jon Neal, Dr Bingxin Wang, Mr Tony Fikaris, Ms Rebecca Cameron.

Secretariat: Mr John Mrakov

Apologies: Dr Linsey Howie, Mr Simon Gibson, Dr Ron Adams, Mr Gary Thomas, Ms Debra Langton, Dr Diane Kirkby, Ms Anne Kuypers, Mr Jesse Marshall, Mr Michael Torney, Professor Tom Angelo

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
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### 1 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Chairperson advised that the Student Engagement Committee has been established and endorsed by the Academic Board to be a policy-making committee in matters relating to student engagement activities. This is clearly outlined in item 6 of the terms of reference:

*“To advise on and establish policies relating to student engagement activities, priorities and planning”*

The Chairperson also presented an overview of the Academic Board Committee Structure and outlined the position and role of the Student Engagement Committee within this structure. The Student Engagement Committee will report to the Academic Board and it will have two sub-committees under its governance.

The Chairperson conveyed that the Academic Board have requested that this committee review its terms of reference and membership. She invited feedback, comments and suggestions from the committee and it was decided that we review these matters in further detail at the next meeting.

It was noted that the composition of the committee will be amended to include a nominee from LUPA and that a nominee from the University Librarian is yet to be appointed.

John Mrakov

### 2. OVERVIEW OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The committee received a paper outlining the major Student Engagement Activities for 2009. These include:

- Launch of the monthly Student Newsletter
- Student Focus Groups
- Peer Mentoring Toolkit and Network Launch
- Student Engagement Forum
- Student Leaders Program

- International Student Peer Mentoring Program
- AUSSE and First Year Survey Campaign
- Launch of Infinity Leadership Program 2010
- Student Summit

Ngaere Blair outlined the details for the Student Leaders program which will commence in second semester. The program aims to:

1. provide high quality training to students to build and enhance their career development skills and
2. to give formal recognition to students for their contribution in extracurricular activities.

Students who participate in the program are likely to be awarded with a formal certificate or qualification.

The committee suggested that a policy needs to be developed by the University to provide clear direction, common guidelines and substance to the recognition process.

The committee also noted that it is important that we encourage and promote access to the Student Leaders program for all students. Currently, it is quite common to find the same cohort of students being involved in the various student engagement activities and events on campus. We need to encourage more diversity and appeal to a wider and broader cross section of the student population.

### 3. STUDENT HUB

Lachlan Batchelor discussed the plans for the proposed Student Hub area in the Thomas Cherry Building. He identified and demonstrated the main features of the plan which include open student spaces, computer facilities, a retail shop and café, meeting rooms, information and help desks. The Student Hub will be a multi purpose facility which will provide students with a broad range of services to cater for their needs. The construction of the Hub will commence in 2010.

### 4. HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Liz Lavender reported that the Health Promoting University Committee (HPUC) was currently working on the draft Drug and Alcohol policy for the University community. She also reported that the HPUC were liaising with People and Culture in developing a partnership to work together on issues affecting staff and student health and wellbeing.

### 5. WHITE PAPER, FIRST YEAR REFERENCE GROUP AND REVIEW OF ORIENTATION

This item has been deferred to the next meeting.

### 6. FEEDBACK FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Jon Neal informed the committee that a series of student focus group discussions were held at our regional campuses in first semester. The students who participated in the focus groups were selected from different faculties and the main topics covered included the following:

- being a first year student
- academic structure and delivery
- the overall student experience.

Jon Neal reported that a number of themes had emerged from the discussions and he highlighted the following findings:

- many students felt that Orientation was overwhelming and 'information overload.'
- some students misunderstood the purpose of the Orientation program and thought it was only a social event that they didn't need to attend.
- mature age students would like to see more activities targeted to them.
- some students who encountered problems felt advice given to them did not resolve their issue and had left them with nowhere further to go. Others feared complaints being held against them.
- most students were disappointed with video conferencing as a mode of course delivery.
- most students seemed reluctant to commit to extra-curricular activities citing that they were time starved with other commitments including jobs and family.
- some students would be more willing to consider extra-curricular activities if they could be scheduled into student timetables.
- most students felt the regional campuses were friendly, pleasant and inclusive and that they would recommend La Trobe University to other people.

#### 7. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The committee was informed that a Student Engagement Forum will be hosted by La Trobe University in July. The forum will focus on examining the role student engagement plays in enhancing the university experience and it will also explore strategies in improving practice and service delivery for student engagement programs. The main keynote guest speaker at the forum will be Professor George Kuh.

#### 8. STUDENT SUMMIT

A Student Summit focusing on the experiences of first year La Trobe University students will be held in August. The summit will feature student representatives from all campuses and it will examine issues identified by focus groups and surveys conducted on first year students.

#### 9. STUDENT SURVEYS

It was noted that a number of student surveys will be conducted in second semester. They are as follows:

- AUSSE Survey
- 1<sup>st</sup> yr Students Survey
- Student Services Satisfaction Survey

Ngaere Blair indicated that a survey policy is currently being developed and it will incorporate guidelines about the frequency, timing and scheduling of student surveys.

10. OTHER BUSINESSSTUDENT ENGAGEMENT WEB SITE

The Student Engagement web site found at: [www.latrobe.edu.au/students/student-engagement/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/student-engagement/) is regularly updated with news, events, links and announcements. To access and utilise the site to promote services, programs or activities you can contact Ngaere Blair.

11. NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.