

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC BOARD  
CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

**Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students**

**MINUTES**

Meeting 10/2010 of the Committee for Admissions Retention and Success for Students (previously Student Admissions, Retention and Success Committee) was held at 2.00pm-4.00pm on Tuesday 16 November 2010, in the HUEd 108 , Level1, Building HU2, Bundoora.

**Members in Attendance**

Professor Tom Angelo	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Planning) Acting Chair
Ms Glenys Harding	Manager, Internal Reporting & Surveys (MIU)
Ms Bernadette Knewstubb	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic) FLM
Ms Raelene Reece	Faculty of Education
Ms Elizabeth Lavender	nominee of PVC (Regional) (video conference)
Dr Glyn Thomas	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic) FE (video conference)
Mr Gary Thomas	nominee of PVC-Equity and Student Services
Ms Janne Gorman	Director, Future Students Centre
Mr C Schneider	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic), FSTE

**Co-opted Members**

Ms Liz Stinson	Director – International
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**Others in Attendance**

Ms Robyn Sinclair	Secretariat
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**Apologies**

Professor John Rosenberg (Chair)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students)
Ms Kristine Kellerman	Manager, AEGTO and VTAC Liaison Officer
Ms Nellie Green	nominee of Director- Indigenous Education
Ms Lyn Hedger	nominee of Director- Academic Services

**PART A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**ACTION**

**10.1 Welcome and Introductions**

The Acting Chair welcomed members to the tenth meeting of the Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students; introductions were made and the apologies noted.

**10.2 Acting Chair's Report**

The Acting Chair provided a brief report.

**PART B – MATTERS FOR APPROVAL**

**ACTION**

**10.3 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students held on 20 July and 19 October as true and accurate records.

#### 10.4 Matters Arising

The Committee noted the progress of all matters arising from the previous meeting as recorded under paper CARSS10-28 presented under agenda item 9

### PART C – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION

### ACTION

#### 10.5 Revisions to Admissions Policy and Suite of Procedures

The Committee received papers CARSS10/25 entitled *Report from Admissions Policy and Procedures Working Group with attachments, Admissions Policy, Admissions Procedures- Application and Selection, Admissions Procedures- Special Entry and Access Schemes, Admissions Procedures- Transfer, English Language Entry Requirement Policy and Procedures.*

Ms Liz Stinson, Director La Trobe International, spoke to this item in her capacity as the Chair of the Admissions Working Group. The Committee was advised that the Admissions policy and related procedures had been reviewed to ensure consistency across the suite and compliance with changed external regulatory requirements.

**Resolution 10.5** The Committee agreed to refer the revised Admissions policy and related procedures to the Academic Board for approval via the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee.

##### 10.5.1 English Language Entry Requirements Policy and Procedures

The Committee was informed that the Working Group had reviewed the original version of the English Language Entry Requirements policy and procedures that had been presented to an earlier meeting of the CARSS with a view to identifying the range of English testing and measures as applicable to admissions. The revised iteration incorporated a broadening of the measures that reflected current practice in the University. The Schedules to the procedures included a table of LTU English Proficiency Measures by International Test Scores and Country Specific results, previous study in English and approved ELICOS programs.

During the discussion that ensued, the Committee raised the following matters:

- there was currently a minimum score for the International Baccalaureate recorded in Table 2, but no score required for VCE English and ESL or English Language;
- “previous study in English” as a demonstration of English proficiency is often misunderstood by applicants and accordingly, selection officers need to interrogate this further. Delegation to other bodies requires assurances that there are agreed Faculty standards enunciated to guide the process about what is acceptable as previous study;
- the Schedules do not aim to change the IELTS levels and the determination of levels lies specifically with Faculties and Schools;
- broadening the range of English tests is a positive move;
- the current IELTS level of 6 for undergraduate courses may not position students well to succeed, however, when benchmarked against other universities appeared to be consistent; and
- English acquisition needed to be incorporated with the Graduate Capabilities.

**Resolution 10.5.1** The Committee agreed to refer the English Language Entry Admissions policy and related procedures to the Academic Board for approval via the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee.

A query about Transfer of Offers was raised and it was noted that this may be a procedure to be developed in future. The Policy Schema should be amended to identify only Transfer of Courses.

The Acting Chair concluded discussion on this item by thanking the working party members for their contributions.

## **10.6 Annual Report to Academic Board on Student Admissions, Retention and Success**

The Committee received tabled paper CARSS10/17 entitled *Draft Meeting Dates for 2011*.

The Acting Chair commenced the discussion on this matter by thanking Mr Rob Hutchinson, Data Analyst, Planning and Institutional Performance Unit, for his contributions to the development of this paper. The Committee was advised that the paper was not available for distribution at this stage as it was not a formal report and the Chair had not received a copy.

The Committee was informed that there is no succinct reporting on Admission, Retention and Success and that the report could provide the catalyst for identifying what sort of data is required in future. The Acting Chair informed the Committee that the data needs to be contextualised in ways that the current reports cannot achieve. The report presented to the Committee provided trends around retention which generally illustrate that the University is heading in the desired direction.

The Committee was advised that the growth rate over the period of the reports was significant, which made the positive retention and success trends even more noteworthy. Professor Angelo provided an account of the positive repercussions for the University's budget on maintaining the growth rate in parallel with increasing retention rates. This was consistent with a component of the Design for Learning project goals.

The Committee was informed that further reports would be required to understand how the relative size of the Faculty impacts on the data provided. Notwithstanding the lower retention rates in the Faculties of Science, Technology and Engineering and Humanities and Social Sciences, these were Faculties where it was anticipated greater increase in student retention will be realised due to the significant endeavours on the part of the Faculties. The Committee noted that the definition of retention used by PIPU was related to students who were maintained by the University from one year to another. The Acting Chair advised the Committee that the definitions used by PIPU did not necessarily reflect the understanding internally to the University. The Acting Chair foreshadowed that he will be meeting with the Director, PIPU to propose a set of indicators that not only address the external reporting requirements but address the needs of internal managers

The Committee noted that the Bundoora Campus data appeared inconsistent and it was prudent not to disseminate the material until the data has been fully interrogated. The Acting Chair reiterated to the Committee that the data does not provide an explanation about what is actually happening at campuses or within various Faculties. The Committee also noted that the impact of ATAR scores on Retention appeared quite anomalous and below certain levels would constitute low raw numbers thereby affecting the trend data. The Director LTI noted that the reports did not capture the international data.

The Committee agreed that the high level data reports are very useful for the Faculties and it would be important to be able to provide such reports, commencing in 2011.

The Acting Chair concluded the discussion on this matter by advising the Committee that he will be providing PIPU's Director with some further suggestions about information to be included in the report. This activity should set the frame for further interrogation in the Faculties and the Schools.

*Paper CARSS10/17 was collected at the end of the meeting.*

### **10.7 La Trobe's VTAC Poll Performance**

This item was withdrawn, due to the apology tendered by the VTAC Liaison Officer.

### **10.8 2010 Self Review of the Committee**

The Committee received paper CARSS10/19 entitled *Self Review of the Committee*.

The Acting Chair queried whether the Committee will exist after the meeting and it was noted that the Planning and Resources had recommended to the Academic Board that the Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students be disestablished, with residual functions to be incorporated into the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee, Planning and Institutional Performance Unit, the Access and Achievement Committee, and other relevant management areas as required.

In order to provide appropriate feedback to Academic Board the Committee agreed to undertake a detailed review of its operations during 2010:

#### Responsibilities

- activity under Term of Reference 2, “provide advice on the transfer of credit between courses within La Trobe and between La Trobe and other institutions” had been impeded by the transfer of the original Term of Reference 5 “ Approve and refer to Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee Articulation agreements for TAFE and other domestic and offshore providers” to the Programs Committee in June 2010;
- the Committee had undertaken considerable activity under all other Terms of Reference and it was noted that there was considerable business reported via the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee to Academic Board;
- the Committee noted that a strength of the Committee had been the willingness of the membership to identify policy and procedural work required to improve matters within its remit and to undertake the work outside the formal meetings to ensure that business was progressed through the governance system. There was some concern that the proposed creation of a new committee structure may not be able to maintain this feature;
- there appeared to be no forum to provide oversight on Admissions and it was of a concern that the work conducted throughout the year on the SALT Scheme, Regional Bonuses, Special Entry Schemes may be lost unless there was a committee with a similar focus;
- a Committee to replace the CARSS will need to be configured in such a way to be comprised of people sitting across both the academic and administrative areas responsible for procedures, policy and guidelines and who can implement any recommendations arising from the decisions of the Committee;
- alignment between the CTLC Terms of Reference and the function of the CARSS was not perspicuously clear and any consideration of a new structure by Academic Board should clarify the scope of decisions of sub-committees can and should make in terms of the Committee that they report:
- the Committee has clearly stuck to its brief throughout the year;
- setting objectives for 2011 would not be sensible in light of the foreshadowing of the Committee's disestablishment.

#### Organisational matters

- the meeting papers provided during the year have supported the Committee's decision making;
- the current composition of the Committee supported the business of the Committee, however, not all members attended on a regular basis. The opportunity to send proxies to committees should be considered by Academic

Board. The Board should consider a protocol for non-attendance of members and implementing an annual review of membership for each committee;

- it would be useful to ensure that membership is comprised of people who undertake the relevant function rather than title;
- the appointment of a Chair who is required to spend considerable time off-shore and off campus places an extra pressure on that position;
- the Committee had convened frequently enough to ensure that its business was progressed.

#### Stakeholder

- the Committee considered that it had served the University, Academic Board and the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee effectively as it had addressed and referred significant items throughout the year which in turn, had been adopted by Academic Board
- the Committee noted that it in fact did not make decisions but referred matters to the CTL Committee and Academic Board for its consideration;
- the UNITE site has been working well for the Committee this year;
- the role of the individual committee members was not clearly defined and that it was important for members of any committee to identify their responsibilities in relation to representation. Admissions, Success and Retention involved different staff within a Faculty and therefore the notion of representation needed to be clearly articulated.

#### Operational matters

- the Committee worked effectively throughout the year and had been supported well by the Secretariat,
- the meeting provided an effective forum for members to contribute to the University's decision making processes and to canvass ideas about admissions, retention and strategies for success.

#### Weaknesses

- the attendance of some members of the Committee has been variable. The ability to replace non attending members in a timely manner via a series of protocols would be useful. Review of membership should be an annual process for the parent committee.

#### Strengths

- the composition of the Committee has been a strength of the Committee and a strong point in the facilitation of a critical discussion on the items before the meeting. The breadth of experience and substantive positions represented in the current composition have ensured broad approaches to the discussions; and
- the Committee has been able to respond to the emerging issues in a timely manner throughout the year,

In anticipation that Academic Board will decide to disestablish the Committee, the Acting Chair took the opportunity to thank the members for their contributions.

### **10.9 Register of Committee Actions/Resolutions**

The Committee received paper CARSS10/20 entitled Discussion Paper- VTAC Strategic Directions (July 2010) Response by La Trobe University.

### **10.10 Other Business**

There was no other business