

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the four hundred and eleventh meeting of the Academic Board held in the Council Chamber, John Scott Meeting House, La Trobe University, Bundoora Campus on Wednesday 11 October 2006 at 9.30am

PRESENT: Professor R W Parish (Chair), Professor M Chanock, Professor S Crowe, Professor D de Vaus, Professor K Dodd, Professor G Durden, Dr J Fahey, Professor N Gough, Professor C Handley, Professor R Harbridge, Dr J Jackson, Professor D Kirkpatrick (Acting Vice-Chancellor), Professor M Lake, Ms L Lang, Ms L Lavender, Professor G Leder, Dr R Lewis, Professor L Ling, Dr G Mayer, Dr J Oates, Mr A Pagliaro, Ms B Paton (*vice* Professor E Gow), Professor S Paxton, Mr P Richardson, Professor M Rimmer, Dr M Sandeman, Ms F Sheean, Dr K Souter, Professor G Stephenson, Professor H Swerissen, Dr L Thwaites, Dr D Tillett, Dr A Vongalis-Macrow, Professor G Walker and Professor R Walker.

SECRETARIAT: Ms A Cowburn

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor R Brownlee, Professor L Cahill, Ms H Carter, Mr A Chong, Mr T Collits, Mr R Cook, Dr K Ferguson, Ms L Hughes, Dr K Fitzmaurice, Mrs B Knewstubb, Ms B Knowles, Dr E Martens, Dr L Pannan, Professor A Perry and Professor E Wertheim.

PART A: PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(i) Apologies and Attendance

Apologies were received for the Vice-Chancellor, Professor H Clarke, Professor D Finlay, Professor E Gow, Dr L Howie, Dr A McClelland, Ms V Mansel Lees, Dr G Murphy, Professor I Robinson, Dr J Russell, Dr D Stuchbery, Dr H Westerbeek and Professor E Wiegold.

(ii) Approval of Agenda and ordering of Agenda Items

The Board resolved to approve the Agenda, as circulated.

The Board received the following tabled papers:

- AB06/144 *Attachment C*, Report of Selection Committee: Chair in Finance
- AB06/144 *Attachment D*, Report of Honorary Degrees Committee
- AB06/146 Award of Degrees and Diplomas
- AB06/148 Senior Appointments – Law and Management: Associate Professor in Conflict Resolution
- AB06/149 Senior Appointments – Law and Management: Chair in Accounting

(iii) Outstanding Matters

The Board received and noted report AB06/143.

(iv) Matters approved on behalf of Academic Board

The Board received report AB06/144 and noted the following matters which had been approved on its behalf since its last meeting:

(a) Course proposals:

- (i) Proposal from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering to introduce a Master of Agricultural Science and Agribusiness (MAgrScAgBus), as detailed in Attachment A to report AB06/144;
- (ii) Proposal from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering to introduce a Master of Biomedical Engineering (MBiomedEng), as detailed in Attachment B to report AB06/144;

- (b) Report of Selection Committees:
 - (i) *Chair in Finance*, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment C to report AB06/144; and
- (c) Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment D to report AB06/144.

(v) **Report of the Acting Vice-Chancellor**

The Acting Vice-Chancellor reported on a number of matters of current interest.

- (a) La Trobe had not appeared in the top 200 of the Times Higher Education rankings this year. The Times Higher Education rankings were based on a range of measures and drew mainly on indicators of research but also of teaching. The increasing competitiveness of higher education and the role of rankings highlighted the importance of maintaining a competitive position and high profile as well as increasing the quality of the University's performance.
- (b) This year's round of academic promotions from level A to B and B to C had just been completed. The Acting Vice-Chancellor thanked all involved for their contribution. It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor had signalled that there would be a substantial review of promotions policy, procedures and criteria, looking at developing a range of career pathways for academics and recognising the diversity of work that was now required.
- (c) The Workplace Productivity Program was continuing with a budget submission being presented to the Finance and Resources Committee at their next meeting. A second stage proposal was being prepared for submission to DEST. The Acting Vice-Chancellor thanked staff for their involvement in such an important project.
- (d) The first meeting of the Regional Review Working Party had taken place this week with over 200 submissions being received to date. Consultations with local communities and campuses would take place over the next few weeks.
- (e) A Learning and Teaching Week, including the Vice-Chancellor's Showcase of Teaching, would commence on Monday 20 November. The Board noted that this would include the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence in Teaching Award to Dr Joan Barclay-Lloyd.
- (f) The data from DEST regarding the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund had been received and sent to Deans and Associate Deans. The Expert Panel had met and results would be disseminated when received.
- (g) ARC results had been announced and the University had received a total of \$6.2 million in funding.

PART B: MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

411.1 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2006 [AB06/141(M)] were confirmed.

411.2 ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DISCUSSION

411.2.1 Award of Degrees and Diplomas

The Board received tabled report AB06/146 and **resolved** to recommend to Council the award of degrees and diplomas as detailed therein.

EO(AB)

411.2.2 Adjunct Professorial Appointments

The Board noted that the Vice-Chancellor had recently made the following adjunct and visiting professorial appointments and **resolved** to report this to Council:

EO(AB)

- (a) Dr Leslie Reti: Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Public Health (three year re-appointment);

- (b) Professor Heddy Zola: Adjunct Professor, School of Molecular Sciences (three year re-appointment); and
- (c) Professor A Mathieson: Visiting Professor, School of Public Health (one year re-appointment).

411.2.3 Senior Appointments

The Board **resolved** to endorse, for referral to Council, the following senior appointments without advertising:

EO(AB)

- (a) Faculty of Law and Management: Associate Professor in Conflict Resolution, as detailed in confidential tabled report AB06/148; and
- (b) Faculty of Law and Management: Chair in Accounting, as detailed in confidential tabled report AB06/149.

Professor Crowe noted his concern about senior appointments being made without advertising mainly due to the seeming lack of transparency in the process.

411.3 STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC BOARD

411.3.1 Report of Research and Graduate Studies Committee: 8 September 2006

The Board received report AB06/1150.

(a) *Posthumous Awards of Research Degrees*

The Board noted that the Research and Graduate Studies considered a draft Posthumous Awards Policy, prepared by the Division of Academic Services. Following discussion, the Committee had agreed that Section 3.2, *The Granting of Research Awards*, be replaced by the following:

Dir. AS

Where a candidate has submitted a thesis for examination and dies before having an opportunity to comply with the examiners' request for corrections/additions, the degree should be considered passed provided the submitted material reflects a substantial and otherwise adequate level of scholarship. A note to this effect should be bound into the thesis.

The Board **resolved** to approve the clause, as detailed above.

(b) *Research Quality Framework*

The Board noted that it was anticipated that the Research Quality Framework Development Advisory Group would recommend that research active staff who were attached to a university by a census date would be eligible for inclusion in the RQF portfolio submissions. As a result, active recruitment of outstanding staff could be expected throughout the system. It was also anticipated that groupings put forward for review would have a minimum size of 5 research active staff, with no upper limit and only in exceptional circumstances would groups with less than 5 research active staff be admitted for review. Universities would nominate the staff to be evaluated. It was expected that the Department of Education, Science and Training would publish the numbers of research active staff at each university. Universities would not be funded for research active staff not nominated as part of the RQF exercise.

(c) *Australian Research Council Discovery Program*

The Board noted that the success rate for the Australian Research Council Discovery Program was expected to be no more than 20%. It was further expected that the results of the 2006 round would be released earlier than has been the case in previous years as the recommendations to the Minister were no longer subject to endorsement by the ARC Board which had been disbanded.

(d) *Merit Awards for Outstanding Doctorial Theses*

The Board noted that the Committee had endorsed a proposal from the Higher Degrees Committee (Research) to establish merit awards for outstanding doctoral theses and requested that guidelines and procedures be developed for further consideration.

(e) *Membership of the Human Ethics Committee*

The Board noted that Ms Hilary Cantwell, Category E Member (Lawyer), had resigned from the Human Ethics Committee and the University was in the process of recruiting a replacement. Dr P Janssen would replace Ms Cantwell in the interim.

411.3.2 Report of Academic Committee: 26 September 2006

The Board received report AB06/151.

(a) *Proposal to revise the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary)*

The Board **resolved** to approve a proposal from the Faculty of Education to revise the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary), as detailed in Attachment A to report AB06/151.

Fac. Reg.

(b) *Proposal to upgrade the Postgraduate Diplomas to Masters in Sports and Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy*

The Board **resolved** to approve a proposal from the Faculty of Health Sciences to upgrade the Postgraduate Diplomas to Master of Sports Physiotherapy or Master of Musculoskeletal Therapy by completing the unit PTY50LSE, as detailed in Attachment B to report AB06/151.

Fac. Reg.

(c) *Proposal to introduce a Graduate Diploma in Information Systems Management, a Master of Information Systems Management and a Master of Business Information Management and Systems*

The Board **resolved** to endorse, for referral to Council, a proposal from the Faculty of Law and Management to introduce a Graduate Diploma in Information Systems Management (GDISM), a Master of Information Systems Management (MISM) and a Master of Business Information Management and Systems (MBIMS), as detailed in Attachment C to report AB06/151.

EO(AB)

411.4 OTHER MATTERS

411.4.1 2005 Annual Reports of the Faculties

(a) *Science, Technology and Engineering*

The Board received and noted the 2005 Annual Report of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering, as detailed in report AB06/152.

PART C: MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

411.5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

411.5.1 Minutes of the Faculty Boards

The Board received and noted the following minutes of the Faculty Boards:

- (a) Humanities and Social Sciences: 5 July 2006 LHUSS/FB2006/91M

PART D: QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

There were no "Questions with Notice" provided.

PART E: DISCUSSION

411.6 CHALLENGE FACING LEARNING AND TEACHING AT LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

The Board received and noted report AB06/153, a discussion paper titled “*Challenge facing Learning and Teaching at La Trobe University*”.

The Chair introduced the Expert Panel who were to lead the discussion:

- Professor Martin Chanock, Faculty of Law and Management
- Dr Kerry Fitzmaurice, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Dr Kay Souter, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Professor Eleanor Wertheim, Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering

Some of the issues that were addressed by the Panel included:

- Students valued (quality and flexibility of the learning experience; staff roles; support systems; assessment; equity).
- Mechanisms to facilitate student expectations.
- Coordination of approach.
- A well-organised and lively environment.
- Parity of learning experience.
- Flexible delivery.
- Building and developing teaching skills (career path).
- Judging excellence in teaching (peer mentoring and review; benchmarking).
- The current context (available support; key indicators; maximising opportunities for success; support of innovative projects; effective communication within the university; technology; rewards).
- Genuine professional development of teaching skills ("culture change").
- Developing a responsive environment.
- Teaching only staff.

Dr Fitzmaurice introduced the discussion by asking the question “would we view a major Carrick grant in the same way we view an ARC or NH&MRC grant?” and suggested that the most important challenge for La Trobe was to raise the profile of learning and teaching and for it to be viewed with as much prestige and importance as research. Some of the challenges to be met to raise the profile of learning and teaching at La Trobe include the quality of the student experience and staff who believe they are valued and recognised.

Dr Fitzmaurice discussed the CEQ and the student experience and it was noted that La Trobe students valued:

- quality and flexibility of the learning experience, with a range of learning paradigms;
- staff/student interaction;
- committed, responsive and knowledgeable staff;
- efficient and responsive administrative and support systems; and
- relevant, consistent and integrated assessment supported by appropriate learning methods;

Dr Souter discussed some of the major issues facing students and staff if La Trobe University was to be ranked amongst the top 10 teaching universities seen to offer excellence in teaching and learning:

- Students expect a well-organised and lively environment;
- Students expect flexible delivery, with a range of strategies and technologies to meet their diverse needs;
- Staff need to be able build and develop teaching skills as part of a career path without risking their chances of promotion and without their workload becoming unmanageable;
- Meaningful ways of benchmarking learning and teaching need to be found.

The Board noted that the learning and teaching field had become increasingly competitive and valuable, with the government providing funding via the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund.

Dr Wertheim discussed the current government interest in learning and teaching in universities, with teaching being supported in the following ways:

- Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (\$82 million available in 2007, \$113 million in 2008);
- Teaching awards to high quality teaching staff (Carrick citations and awards);
- Carrick Institute grants for teaching projects.

The Board noted that high quality teaching was currently on the agenda and it had become increasingly important to meet the key government criteria to ensure that the university received funding through the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. The fund is competitive with 14 universities being funded in 2006. La Trobe was ranked 16th and missed out on funding. Key indicators for the funding were the Course Experience Questionnaire, Graduate Destination Survey and Success Indicators.

Dr Werthiem advised that in order for La Trobe to receive any of the funding, the University must:

- ensure that all staff were aware of the key indicators;
- ensure that the skills expected were being taught;
- ensure that students were aware in the language of the indicators that they were acquiring these skills;
- ensure that the University was supporting students to have success in future work and study;
- liaise with those in the job market to ensure that La Trobe students were marketable;
- support students in their progress through the course;
- support innovation/excellence in teaching.

Professor Chanock discussed the new urgent pressures and demands of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and the Research Quality Framework on academic staff when workloads were already excessively high. Professor Chanock suggested that the University needed to carefully manage these issues, particularly when the greatest amounts of teaching could be relegated to the least effectively performing staff (ie untrained casual teaching staff), which in turn could affect the University's learning and teaching performance. The pressures to separate the roles of teaching and research were emphasised and it was suggested that the La Trobe University academic community needed to take these pressures into account due to academic staff that were judged to be weak in research being relegated to teaching only roles.

Professor Chanock also discussed the need to focus on the genuine professional development of the teaching skills of staff and the need for real culture change in relation to staff knowledge of pedagogical issues. The Board noted that La Trobe has a deserved reputation as a student focussed university and that the University should continue to develop a genuinely responsive environment for students. Professor Chanock urged the University to thoroughly research students' expectations and needs and not wait until they fill in the CEQ at the end of their course.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Services) advised that a survey regarding student finances was currently being conducted by the AVCC which could provide some insight into what student experiences and services were important.

Professor de Vaus suggested that faculties should consider different ways to package their courses to attract students by offering different modes of learning and think outside the square with regard to timetabling.

The Board noted that academics have never been teacher trained and this issue should be further considered. It was also noted that many students no longer have time to experience, face-to-face, all that university life could offer them.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised that it was important for the University to establish mechanisms to review what staff were proficient at and give a greater recognition to the service work required by academics.

The Chair advised that Mr Rob Lawrence of Prospect Marketing would provide a presentation on the University's marketing and communications functions and brand strategy to the November meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.50am.

NEXT MEETING: **9.30am**
 Wednesday 8 November 2006
 Council Chamber
 John Scott Meeting House
 Bundoora Campus

CONFIRMED BY CHAIR _____ **DATE** _____