

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the four hundred and twenty-first meeting of the Academic Board held in the Council Chamber, John Scott Meeting House, La Trobe University, Bundoora Campus on Wednesday 13 February 2008 at 9.30am

PRESENT: Professor M Rimmer (Chair), Ms L Bassar, Professor A Brennan, Professor J Brett, Professor T Brown, Dr G Byrne, Professor S Crowe, Professor D de Vaus, Professor G Durden, Mr K Farrell, Dr K Fitzmaurice, Ms M Frederico, Mr B Goddard, Professor N Gough, Professor C Handley, Professor R Harbridge, Professor F Hardman, Dr R Hoye, Dr J Jackson, Dr B James, Mr G Jamieson, Dr T Jarvis, Professor P Johnson (Vice-Chancellor), Ms Heather King, Ms Helen King, Dr D Kirkby, Dr A Kokavec, Dr K Legge, Dr J McArdle, Dr E Michael, Ms S Morrissey, Professor P Murphy, Professor T Murray, Dr J Oates, Dr S O'Keefe, Professor R W Parish, Professor S Paxton, Professor B Probert, Mr P Richardson, Mr J Seward, Professor A Smith, Dr P Stacey, Professor R Walker, Dr D Wilkinson, Professor P Wilson, Mr Y Yang and Dr L Yates.

SECRETARIAT: Ms A Cowburn

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor D Altman, Mr B Carboon, Ms L Carey, Professor J Chen, Dr K Ferguson, Mr P Gould, Professor Z Hoque, Professor R La Polla, Mr L Lyell (*vice* Mr J Molony), Dr M Shortland, Professor A Smith, Professor G Stephenson and Ms S Went.

The Chair opened the meeting with the following announcement:

As everyone will know, today is an historic occasion. I believe it is fitting for Academic Board – the senior academic body of La Trobe University – to endorse with respect and note for the record, the apology offered today by the Prime Minister of Australia, on behalf of Parliament, to the indigenous people of Australia, for the stolen generations.

PART A: PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(i) Apologies and Attendance

The Chair welcomed the following new members to Academic Board: Professor Belinda Probert, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Professor Tim Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); Dr Julie Jackson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement); Ms Helen King, *Acting* University Librarian; the Associate Deans; new Heads of Schools; Mr Yunbao (George) Yang, postgraduate student – metropolitan campus; Mr Lachlan Batchelor, undergraduate student – metropolitan campus; Ms Simone Morrissey, undergraduate student – metropolitan campus; and Ms Katherine Nix, undergraduate student – regional campus.

Apologies were received for Professor Carol Adams, Dr Sue Beeton, Dr Lin Crase, Professor David Finlay, Ms Liz Lavender, Professor Lorraine Ling, Dr Geoff Mayer, Ms Katherine Nix, Dr Paul Pigram, Professor Ian Robinson and Professor Hal Swerissen.

(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:

- AB08/03 *Attachment Q*, Establishment of position and appointment without advertising: Principal Research Fellow in Chemistry
- AB08/03 *Attachment R*, Establishment of position and appointment without advertising: Associate Professor, Clinical Vision Sciences

- AB08/03 *Attachment S*, Appointment without advertising: Reader and Associate Professor in Chemistry
- AB08/03 *Attachment T*, Report of Selection Committee: Associate Professor in International Relations
- AB08/03 *Attachment U*, Report of Selection Committee: Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences
- AB08/03 *Attachment V*, Report of the Committee for Emeritus Professors and Scholars: 10 December 2007
- AB08/03 *Attachment W*, Charles La Trobe Fellowship
- AB08/06 Award of Degrees and Diplomas

(iii) Outstanding Matters

The Board received and noted report AB08/02.

(iv) Matters approved on behalf of Academic Board

The Board received report AB87/03 and noted the following matters which had been approved on its behalf since its last meeting:

- (a) Award of degrees and diplomas, as detailed in Attachment A to AB08/03;
- (b) Establishment of Prizes:
 - (i) Albury-Wodonga Campus: Albury-Wodonga Community Scholarships, as detailed in Attachment B to AB08/03;
 - (ii) Faculty of Health Sciences: Royal College of Nursing Australia High Achiever Award [*amendment*], as detailed in Attachment C to AB08/03;
 - (iii) Faculty of Health Sciences: Foot Solutions Podiatry Scholarships [*amendment*], as detailed in Attachment D to AB08/03;
 - (iv) Faculty of Health Sciences: Soroptimist International of Shepparton Inc Nursing Scholarship [*amendment*], as detailed in Attachment E to AB08/03;
 - (v) Faculty of Law and Management: arbias Advanced and International Marketing Prize, as detailed in Attachment F to AB08/03;
 - (vi) Faculty of Law and Management: The BMG Partners Prize, as detailed in Attachment G to AB08/03;
 - (vii) Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering: The Friends Scholarship, as detailed in Attachment H to AB08/03;
 - (viii) Faculty of Education: The John Stirling Scholarship, as detailed in Attachment I to AB08/03;
 - (ix) Faculty of Education: Mildura Returned Services League (RSL) Education Scholarship, as detailed in Attachment J to AB08/03;
- (c) Membership of Committees:
 - (i) *Selection Committee: University Librarian*, as detailed in Attachment K to AB08/03;
 - (ii) *Standing Committee on Level E Academics*, as detailed in Attachment L to AB08/03;
- (d) Establishment of Position and Composition of Selection Committees:
 - (i) Two Chairs in Law, as detailed in Attachment M to AB08/03;
 - (ii) Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Law and Management, as detailed in Attachment N to AB08/03;
 - (iii) Director, Academic Development Unit (Centre for Learning and Teaching), as detailed in Attachment O to AB08/03;
 - (iv) Chair of Educational Leadership and Management, as detailed in Attachment P to AB08/03;
- (e) Establishment of Position and Appointment without Advertising:
 - (i) Principal Research Fellow in Biochemistry, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment Q to AB08/03;
 - (ii) Associate Professor, Clinical Vision Sciences, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment R to AB08/03;
- (f) Appointment without Advertising:
 - (i) Reader and Associate Professor in Chemistry, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment S to AB08/03;

- (g) Report of Selection Committees:
- (i) Associate Professor in International Relations, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment T to AB08/03;
 - (ii) Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment R to AB08/03;
- (h) Report of the Committee for Emeritus Professors and Scholars: 10 December 2007, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment V to AB08/03; and
- (i) Charles La Trobe Fellowship, as detailed in confidential tabled Attachment W to AB08/03.

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

The Board received and noted circulated paper AB08/04, the report of the Vice-Chancellor which included the following matters of current interest.

- (a) *People*
- On behalf of the University community I would like to welcome Professor Belinda Probert, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Professor Tim Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), both of whom have now taken up their positions at La Trobe.
 - Congratulations to Mike Torney on being awarded the Order of Australia Medal.
 - Congratulations to Mrs Sylvia Walton on her re-election as Chancellor of the University for the period 23 April 2008 to 22 April 2011.

(b) *External Issues*

State Government Issues:

On 5 February, Premier Brumby announced that the State Government would conduct a review of all legislation relating to universities in 2008. This will provide us with an opportunity further to consolidate and streamline our Statutes and Regulations to promote the better governance and internal working of the university. Most of the legislation relates to higher level governance issues, eg. the size and structure of council, the relationship between the university and associated entities - but there may be other issues relating to the relationship between Academic Board and Council and the associated sub-committees to which we will need to give attention. The University has to submit its initial views on the consultation process before the end of April.

Federal Government Policy:

At a meeting last week of the IRUA, Ministers Gillard and Carr gave some initial indication of how Government policy towards the higher education sector may evolve. Universities will be relieved of specific industrial relations requirements that had previously been embodied in the HEWRRs. In addition, Minister Gillard indicated that the Government was likely to introduce a new funding structure for universities that would be based around distinctive mission statements for each university. It is clear that the Labour Government wishes to promote diversity and excellence within the sector and I believe that this will provide an opportunity for any university that has a clear sense of its areas of strength to benefit in future bargaining with the Government.

Minister Carr indicated that the Government is likely in the long run to increase funding for science and research though short run budgetary constraints means that there is unlikely to be any significant additional financial support for universities over the next twelve to eighteen months. He hinted that as part of the Government's desire to ensure that public support for science and research produced worthwhile benefits, there would need to be much better data produced by the university sector on the real cost of research activity. I think it is likely that all universities will be required to undertake a form of activity-based costing to meet these Government requirements. La Trobe University currently does not have a good understanding of the cost of different activities but part of the reason for moving to a new budget model is to ensure that we generate just this sort of information.

Professor Brennan suggested that politicians should be made aware that it was not inflationary to increase research and development funding/development.

(c) *Internal Issues*

Enrolment Update:

A briefing note outlining the current situation with enrolments was attached. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Development) spoke to the briefing note.

It was noted that the University had increased its load by 687 EFTSL to reach 100.5% of its target. Most faculties were tracking consistently with earlier reports:

- Education: currently 99.7% of target compared to 100.5% this time last year.
- Health Sciences: currently 104.2% of target compared to 108.5% this time last year.
- Humanities and Social Sciences: currently 95.1% of target, the same as this time last year).
- Law and Management: currently 107% of target compared to 103.4% this time last year.
- Science, Technology and Engineering: currently 102.1% of target compared to 96.3% this time last year.

It was noted that the University could expect to be around 101.5% of target at year end.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed his appreciation for the hard work of the staff across the University to reach these enrolment targets.

Professor Harbridge suggested that the University could review their units in a strategic manner to ensure that LTU offers units that are attractive to students and in high value clusters - by changing the content the University could adjust low value units to high value units.

Budget:

The process of establishing a budget for 2008 has been long, tedious and generally disheartening. In 2006 the University reported an operating deficit of \$7m; for 2007 the early indication from the draft annual accounts is that the University operations produced a surplus of a little over \$100,000. At the commencement of detailed budget discussions last September for the 2008 financial year the expenditure claims submitted by operating units to sustain existing activities exceeded the projected revenue by \$27m. In addition, expressions of interest for additional activities represented a further \$50m and expressions of interest for capital development represented a further \$90m. It is clear that

- i) the University is currently running operations that cost more than the University's revenue;
- ii) there is ambition in the University to do many new things but almost no willingness to forgo current activities;
- iii) there is a large pent up demand for capital investment.

Much of the budget discussion that has taken place between September and now has focussed on finding ways of reducing the projected expenditure by \$27m in order to produce a balanced budget.

I have not been prepared to take to Council a deficit budget where that deficit is wholly accounted for by an excess of expenditure over revenue on the University's ongoing operations. The budget I took to Council on 4 February was a balanced budget and included a necessary further reduction in expenditure across the University of around \$3.5m over the course of 2008. To achieve even this financial position it has been necessary to restrict the capacity of all units in the University, academic and non-academic, to spend carry-forward balances in 2008. Depending how the revenue projections emerge over the next two weeks, as we learn more about the position of enrolments, it may be necessary to formally request all budget holders to make an efficiency saving of around 1.5% across the 2008 financial year to cover the existing \$3.5m funding gap.

The deficit position that the University currently finds itself in is largely a consequence of changes in the external environment which have not been matched by compensatory changes in University activity. Over the last seven years the University's research output and teaching output has been more or less constant, whilst the research achievements and fee income of competitors in the sector have grown substantially.

The average research income per member of academic staff at La Trobe is currently just over \$30,000 per annum. The average for IRUA universities is \$55,000 per annum. The proportion of international students at La Trobe is about 14% of all students; the sector average is around 23%. La Trobe's performance was close to the average in the sector on both these indicators in the late 1990s, but whilst others have moved forward we have kept going with business as usual. Hence our revenue has fallen behind that of many of our competitors. If we were to be meeting the research income and international fee income averages we would see an additional \$50m plus of revenue coming into the University every year.

At the same time as our research and international fee revenue has been stagnating, the real value of our Commonwealth income has been declining because of the lack of indexation of the Commonwealth grant. Thus while many other universities have undertaken additional activities that have more than compensated for the decline in the real value of Commonwealth revenue, we have not, hence we have moved over a number of years from a healthy to an unhealthy financial position. There have been a number of attempts within the University to address these financial issues; some of them, particularly in the area of international student recruitment, are now bearing fruit, but others are not. A decision was taken three years ago to create a research investment fund within the University to improve our research performance. In 2007 over \$5m was allocated to this internal fund, but as the University's expenditure on research investment has increased, we have seen a decline in the number of successful research grant applications. This is one example and not the only example, of a University policy failing to produce the anticipated results. In this particular case Professor Tim Brown is undertaking a review of the research investment fund in order to ensure that future expenditure is appropriately targeted.

The budgetary position of the University will continue to be difficult until we can achieve better management of our expenditure and until we can increase our income streams. The University is currently engaged in several significant discussions with external parties over prospects for the major enhancement of our international student recruitment and I hope to be able to bring details of these negotiations to Academic Board in due course.

I am also committed to introducing some wide-ranging structural reforms both to our budgetary process, which I believe to be fundamentally flawed, and to administrative organisation within the University, which I believe will benefit from a careful analysis of what is done, where it is done and for whom it is done.

The University is currently considering the capabilities of a number of external companies who may be able to help us

- a) rapidly reform our budget processes;
- b) introduce a coherent forward planning structure within the University; and
- c) improve service delivery within the University.

PART B: MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

421.1 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2007 [AB07/176(M)] were confirmed.

421.2 MATTERS ARISING

421.2.1 Title for Personal Chairs

(Previous reference: 418.4.1, AB07.140(M) – 12.09.07)

The Board received report AB08/05 and **resolved** to endorse the following recommendations from the sub-committee established to develop criteria for promotion to Level E:

- (a) that the current title of professor for personal chairs be retained for the present;
- (b) that the Academic Board revisit the situation in 2009, after there has been an opportunity to assess the impact of the new regulations allowing promotion to Level E (which come into effect in 2008), and to determine at that time whether there is a need to retain or retitle personal chairs; and

Dr J Carr/
EO(AB)

- (c) at that time the Academic Board also might wish to consider whether the University should introduce a new category of award to recognise exceptional contributions by staff already at professorial level.

421.3 ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DISCUSSION

421.3.1 Award of Degrees and Diplomas

The Board received tabled report AB08/06 and **resolved** to endorse the award of degrees and diplomas, conferring of awards *in absentia* and award of higher degrees as detailed therein.

AEGTO

421.3.2 Establishment of prizes

The Board **resolved** to establish formally the following Prizes:

- (a) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Robin Jeffrey Politics Honours, as detailed in report AB08/07; and
 (b) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Albury-Wodonga Prize for Academic Achievement, as detailed in report AB08/08.

Fac. Reg.
Ms D Lynn
Ms K Allitt

421.3.3 Membership of Committees

(a) *Personal Chairs Committee*

The Board **resolved** to approve the membership of the Personal Chairs Committee, as detailed in report AB08/09.

Dr J Carr

(b) *Selection Committee: Chairs in Law*

The Board **resolved** to approve the appointment of Professor Jianfu Chen (*vice* Professor Martin Chanock) to the Selection Committee: Chairs in Law.

Dr J Carr

(c) *Selection Committee: John Richards Chair in Rural Aged Care Research*

The Board **resolved** to approve the appointment of Professor Tim Brown (*vice* Professor Erich Weigold) to the Selection Committee: John Richards Chair in Rural Aged Care Research.

Dr J Carr

(d) *Library Committee*

The Board **resolved** to approve the appointment of Professor C Handley, Dr C Meathrel (Albury-Wodonga) and Dr J McArdle (Bendigo) to the Library Committee under Category D (three members of academic staff nominated by the Academic Board, at least one of whom will be nominated from the academic staff of the Bendigo Campus and at least one of whom will be nominated from the academic staff of a Regional Campus other than the Bendigo Campus). Term of membership: 01.01.08 – 31.12.09.

Sec. LC

421.3.4 Adjunct Appointments

The Board received report AB08/10 and noted that the Vice-Chancellor had recently made the following adjunct appointments:

Dr J Carr

- (a) Adjunct Associate Professor: Dr David Edvardsson, Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care (initial appointment);
 (b) Adjunct Professor: Professor Carol Tishelman, School of Nursing and Midwifery (review of appointment);
 (c) Adjunct Professor: Professor Anthony Patrick Potts, Faculty of Education (initial appointment);
 (d) Adjunct Professor: Professor Alastair Davidson, School of Social Sciences (re-appointment); and
 (e) Adjunct Associate Professor: Dr Roslyn Boyd, School of Physiotherapy (one year appointment).

421.3.5 Award of 2007 D M Myers Medals

The Board received report AB08/11 and **resolved** to award a 2007 D M Myers Medal to:

- Law and Management Ms Mary Farrugia

Fac. Reg./
AEGTO

421.4 STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC BOARD

421.4.1 Report of Academic Committee: 20 November 2007

The Board received report AB08/12. Professor Chris Handley, Acting Chair, Academic Committee spoke to the report.

(a) *Proposal to introduce the Bachelor of Health Sciences/Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours)*

The Board **resolved** to endorse a proposal from the Faculty of Health Sciences to introduce the Bachelor of Health Sciences/Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) (BHlthSc/BHlthSc(Hons), as detailed in Attachment A to report AB08/12.

Fac. Reg.

(b) *Proposal to amend the nomenclature of the Bachelor of Medical Science*

The Board **resolved** to endorse a proposal from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering to amend the nomenclature of the Bachelor of Medical Science to the Bachelor of Biomedical Science (BBioMedSc).

Fac. Reg.

(c) *LTU TAFE articulation agreements*

The Board **resolved** to endorse a proposal from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement) to establish a University model format for TAFE articulation agreements, as detailed in Attachment B to report AB08/12.

PVC(QE)

(d) *Proposal to offer the full four-year Bachelor of Education at the Mildura Campus*

The Board **resolved** to endorse a proposal from the Faculty of Education to offer the full four-year Bachelor of Education at the Mildura Campus, as detailed in Attachment C to report AB08/12.

Fac. Reg.

(e) *Distributive Leadership in Learning and Teaching: Developing the Faculty Scholars Model*

The Board noted the membership and terms of reference for the Distributive Leadership Project Steering Committee, as detailed in Attachment D to report AB08/12, with the following amendment:

- B Two Deans*
 - C Two Associate Deans (Academic/Learning and Teaching)*
- *Normally would be provided by different faculties.

It was also noted that the Steering Committee would meet monthly for the duration of the University's involvement in the project and would report to Academic Committee in February, July and October. Faculties had been asked to nominate one scholar each.

(f) *Quality Assurance of Units*

The Board noted that Academic Committee members had agreed that the introduction of the on-line system for both QAU and SET in the second semester was not satisfactory and that they would want reassurance from the company that provided the software for the on-line surveys that the problems that had occurred would be rectified. The company had advised that they had a better version of the software which ADU would test on summer units. It had been suggested that ADU should request that ITC provide them with advice regarding the technology and implementation.

The Acting Chair had provided advice to the incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) regarding the concerns of the Committee that there may be an issue for the promotions rounds in 2008 if the data provided by the QAU and SET process was unreliable or not able to be used.

421.4.2 Report of the Committee for Emeritus Professors and Scholars

The Board received and noted report AB08/13, a revised set of guidelines for the conferral of the titles emeritus professor and scholar.

The Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, suggested that there was a lack of clarity in the guidelines regarding whether these titles should be conferred only on retiring staff members.

The Board referred this issue back to the Committee for Emeritus Professors and Scholars for clarification.

EO(AB)

421.5 OTHER MATTERS

421.5.1 Associate Professor in Special Needs Education

The Board received and noted report AB08/14, advice that the position of Associate Professor in Special Needs Education had been advertised twice (in 2006 and 2007) and had proven to be difficult to fill and, as result, the Dean, Faculty of Education, had decided to engage an executive recruitment consultant to conduct a search for potential candidates.

Dr J Carr

421.5.2 Visiting Professor: Graduate School of Management

The Board received and noted report AB08/15, and noted that the Vice-Chancellor had approved the appointment of Professor Otto Jockel as a Visiting Professor in the Graduate School of Management for one year beginning on 1 July 2008.

Ms R Mikus

421.5.3 Committee on Outside Studies Programs: Annual Report for 2007

The Board received report AB08/16 and **resolved** to accept and endorse the Annual Report for 2007 of the Committee on Outside Studies Programs.

Sec. COSP

421.5.4 Academic Board: Procedures and Standing Orders [amendment]

The Board received report AB08/17 and **resolved** to accept and endorse the amendments to the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Academic Board.

EO(AB)

421.5.5 Out-of-phase promotion to Level E (Professor) – exceptional circumstances

The Board received and noted report AB08/18, a proposal to put in place a system with clear process and criteria for considering urgent cases of “out-of-phase” promotions for Professor. The Board noted the concerns of the Dean, Faculty of Law and Management, regarding the new procedures not allowing for a quick decision. The Vice-Chancellor stated that there needed to be clear processes for out-of-phase promotions and agreed that the process could take time due to the number of external references required. It was agreed that the University needed to support Deans who were actively seeking staff.

The Board **resolved** to endorse the proposal to put in place a system with clear process and criteria for considering urgent cases of “out-of-phase” promotions for Professor and the policy and procedures, as detailed in the attached documentation (Section 5.9 of the *Human Resources Manual*).

Dr J Carr

421.5.6 2006 Annual Reports of the Faculties

(a) *Humanities and Social Sciences*

The Board received and noted the 2006 Annual Report of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, as detailed in report AB08/19.

421.5.7 2007 Annual Report of the Philippines Australia Studies Centre (PASC)

The Board received and noted report AB08/20, the 2007 Annual Report of the Philippines Australia Studies Centre (PASC).

421.5.8 2007 Annual Report of the Thesis Eleven Centre for Critical Theory

The Board received and noted report AB08/21, the 2007 Annual Report of the Thesis Eleven Centre for Critical Theory.

PART C: MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

421.6 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

421.6.1 Minutes of the Faculty Boards

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

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| (a) Humanities and Social Sciences: 5 September 2007 | LHUSS/FB2007/90(M) |
| (b) Law and Management: 4 September 2007 | FLM/FB07/05M |

421.6.2 Minutes of the Library Committee: 26 October 2007

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Library Committee, as detailed in report LIB07/38(M).

PART D: QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

Professor Judith Brett, Head, School of Social Sciences, provided the following “question on notice” for the Vice-Chancellor:

Can the Vice Chancellor please explain to Academic Board the reasons for the resumption of School and Faculty brought forward balances, in particular the resumption of brought forward balances from earned full fee income? In his explanation, can he please address the following:

1. The implications of this policy for the incentive structures in the Schools and Faculties, where the resumption of full fee balances represents a tax of 100% on effort. What will be the effects on the efforts of Schools and Faculties to diversify their income sources when savings can be so resumed?
2. The implications of this policy for the location of responsibility for financial risk within the institution. In resuming School and Faculty brought forward balances, does the Centre now take responsibility for any deficits which may occur because of unforeseen circumstances beyond the Schools’ and Faculties’ control, such as variations in enrolments?
3. The implications of this policy for the trust and good relations between the academic staff in the Schools and Faculties and the Centre. For many of the academic staff, this action seems like a return to the past when the academic staff felt that they were asked to pay for the financial adventurism of the Centre.

Professor Brett also suggested that the budget process had undermined the incentive structures of the University and diminished the trust of academic staff members in the Vice-Chancellor and senior management.

The Vice-Chancellor advised that there had been a budget deficit at the University when he commenced and that senior management had to produce a balanced budget for the Finance and Resources Committee and Council approval this year.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had been faced with two options in his attempt to produce a balanced budget:

1. large scale compulsory redundancies; or
2. removing “brought forward” balances from the units, Schools and Faculties.

The imposition of removing the brought forward balances was unfortunate, but seemed a preferable course of action to large scale compulsory redundancies, which would have further damaged the trust and good relations between the academic staff and the Centre.

The Vice-Chancellor further advised that the current budget processes were fundamentally flawed and in the future the University would operate on different budget principles.

PART E: DISCUSSION

421.7 HOW CAN WE DEMONSTRATE QUALITY?

The Chair introduced the discussion panel:

- Professor Tim Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Dr Julie Jackson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement)
- Professor Belinda Probert, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Professor Tim Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research): Quality in Research: what is it, AUQA and what to do now?

What is quality?

- Taguchi: The loss imparted by research ...
- Loss or gain?
- To whom?
 - Society
 - Academics
 - Sponsors
 - University generally
 - Students?

Loss and Gain at LTU

- Gains are
 - deep understanding for social and economic progress
 - difficult to measure
 - growth in skills of people by being involved in research
 - easier to measure
- impact in society
 - easier to measure

Spend at LTU

- Overall \$23 million in research division in 2008
 - much more out in Faculties
- Research Investment Fund \$6.8 million for 2008
 - nearly all committed at beginning of 2008
 - over 20 separate items funded in 2007
 - most went to staff and students in Faculties
 - range from \$401 to \$1,475,852
- Research Block Grants (RIBG, RTS and IGS) \$23.5 million
 - 47% directly allocated to Faculties
 - right proportion for incentives?

AUQA Recommendations

- AUQA recommends that LTU ensure that all major research activities, centres and initiatives are brought within a single, comprehensive research strategy.
 - Strategic plan and budget
 - Operational plan
 - Use of RQF exercise for aggregation or reconfiguration
 - Centres Policy to be developed after consultation
 - Form Institutes in 2008
 - Support
 - » Where? How?
- AUQA recommends that LTU develop a comprehensive framework for explicitly linking research with teaching and curricula, and establish means for monitoring the effectiveness of this framework
 - Research informed teaching enough?
 - Development of staff capacity in both?

- Every student to get experience of learning and research?
- AUQA recommends that LTU establish monitoring systems to ensure that its policies and processes for postgraduate supervisors and supervision are implemented consistently
 - Changes in 2005
 - Ensure happening continually
- AUQA recommends that LTU review the adequacy of its resourcing of higher degree students
 - Not just regional campuses
 - Compliance with Handbook for Candidates and Supervisors
- AUQA recommends that LTU connects its Research and Development Parks more closely to the research capabilities of the University in order to maximise commercialisation opportunities and the potential of this resource to contribute to the overall research effort of the University
 - IKT and CTI
 - Review of policies on contract research, consultancies and commercialisation in 2008

Dr Julie Jackson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement) : Quality at La Trobe and the AUQA Audit

The management of quality within the University is founded on:

'Fitness for purpose' - whether we are achieving the aims articulated in the strategic plan

'Fitness of purpose' – how we stand against relevant external reference points, especially the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes

'Standards achieved' – based on selected comparisons and benchmarking

Under *fitness for purpose*, the starting point is the organisation's *mission, vision and values* through to specific *goals and objectives*.

Approach – policies and procedures, organisational structures designed to achieve these objectives

Deployment – how the approach is put into effect, including informing and preparing staff, providing resources and facilities

Results – consequence of approach and deployment activities

Improvement – actions taken as a consequence of analysing the results

There will be:

- A focus on two **themes**. One theme, chosen by AUQA will be 'Internationalisation'. A risk assessment approach will be taken to the selection of the other theme
- Explicit attention to outcome standards, and
- Auditing against a range of external reference points and specifically the new National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
- Approx 15 months from Portfolio submission: **AUQA invites LTU** to suggest possible themes. (March 2008)
- Approx 12 months from Portfolio submission: **Approval of two themes** by Chair of AUQA Board (June 2008)
- Portfolio **submission** June 2009
- Audit **visit** September 2009
- Audit **report** – early 2010

Chapter 1 – Progress on Cycle 1 audit; changes to quality systems; reviews conducted; benchmarking activities and outcomes

Chapter 2 – Internationalisation

- T&L arrangements for international students onshore and offshore
- Internationalisation of the curriculum
- Staff and student mobility
- Overall student experience
- Other international activities, such as research collaboration
- If relevant, information on transnational activities

Chapter 3 – the second theme negotiated with AUQA

1. Strategic objectives relevant to the theme. Data presented should include:
 - **Planned targets and outcomes**, with definitions
 - **Related measure(s)** (qualitative and/or quantitative)
 - **Performance outcomes** for past three years

- **Policy framework**, ie brief summary (or URLs) of policies, strategies and processes in place to support achievement of target outcome (including training and development)
 - **Brief commentary** on whether target is on track to be achieved or not
2. Main **strategies and processes** in place, including processes to achieve alignment with relevant external reference points
 3. How the **effectiveness** of processes is monitored
 4. **Benchmarking** results and effect
 5. **Review and evaluation** mechanisms used, including **risk management**, and outcomes of these
 6. Evidence of how **academic standards** related to the theme are **set, monitored and evaluated**; or, for enabling areas, evidence of **effectiveness** in supporting academic outcomes and standards
 7. Priorities for **improvement**

AUQA expects the portfolio to be prepared in line with the ADRI (Approach Deployment Results Improvement - the basic quality cycle applied by AUQA in evaluating portfolios) model and will interpret it in the light of:

- The University's strategic directions ('**fitness for purpose**')
- Relevant external reference points ('**fitness of purpose**')
- Selected comparisons and benchmarking ('**standards achieved**')
- Analysis of the last audit report and our 2006 progress report to AUQA to identify matters requiring further attention
- Desktop review of LTU operations against the National Protocols for HE Approval Processes as part of the risk analysis to determine the second audit theme
- Establishment of a representative Quality Reference Group to assist with co-ordination and communication of quality management matters (March 2008)
- Guided self review (second semester 2008)
- Trial audit early 2009

www.latrobe.edu.au/quality

Links available to:

- AUQA Frameworks for Risk Assessment Standards, Evidence and Outcomes
- Examples of External Reference Points
- Other quality resources

Professor Belinda Probert, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic): What is quality in learning and teaching?

Before we go any further with this discussion about 'quality' I would just like to clarify one fundamental point. For me, quality is a noun – meaning the 'degree of excellence, relative nature or kind or character' – and it is the opposite of quantity. According to my admittedly old dictionary, it is not an adjective. We should not, therefore, be talking about 'quality teaching' or 'quality students' or 'quality learning'. And if we do, we can expect to find ourselves in Don Watson's book of Weasel Words. Things can be of high quality or low quality, but to speak of quality teaching or quality learning is meaningless. In fact, were it not for the looming AUQA exercise it would be probably good if we all took a vow of abstinence in relation to both the word excellence and the word quality.

But that is asking too much and doesn't get us to the point, I admit, which is how do we know whether our teaching is excellent – or even just of high quality? Because I do think we should be testing our assumptions about the quality of teaching and learning; that we should make explicit what we think our teaching is intended to achieve, how we think our teaching results in high quality learning, and to follow this up by seeing if the students in fact learn what we intend.

The first problem, after the grammatical one, is that we need to acknowledge that the proof of the teaching is in the learning, or in what students can do as a result of being our undergraduates. That is, there can be no evaluation of teaching that does not focus on what is learned as a result of that teaching, and on the capabilities of students. And this is something that many university teachers still do not accept. Late last year an academic wrote a column in The Australian Higher Education section arguing that, unlike a school teacher, he should not have to think about pedagogy. University students should know how to learn from great minds – and if they didn't, by implication, they should not be at university.

This is not a view widely shared in the newer universities, but not uncommon in the oldest, where students often arrive with large amounts of cultural capital and academic competence. Indeed one perennial question that is asked about the quality of teaching in universities is how do we know what difference university makes? Most of us do not engage in any kind of testing at entrance and testing on leaving which might help answer this question. Where it has been done, the answers have been slightly alarming. Our disinterest in skills means that in some courses, students end up with lower literacy skills than when they started out.

But what IS the relationship was between the teaching and the learning?

In the lead up to the establishment of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF), which we must remember has injected about \$200m into universities over the last three years, there was general agreement in the sector that we did not have the indicators to allocate such sums with any credibility. It is something on which the sector is, uncharacteristically, totally united. Within universities the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) in particular has been a source of great contention because it clearly does not measure what students have learned – though it does measure some things which are known to be factors in improved student learning.

The danger is that academic staff fall upon the inadequacies of the CEQ and the LTPF as reason for excluding any consideration of evidence about good teaching, and revert to thinking that good teaching is an art – or that university students are old enough not to need good teaching. And it is relevant to note that most academics do not feel at ease in evaluating a staff member's teaching portfolio when going for promotion, being rightly sceptical about the value of student evaluations on their own.

Academics like to say that good student feedback depends on being a soft-marker, or setting easy work-loads – when there is in fact plenty of evidence which shows that there is no link between pass rates or workloads and student feedback. Or they will tell you that very big enrolments or compulsory subjects lead to lower student satisfaction, and that it is easier to get good feedback in small, higher level subjects. Again, there is no evidence to support these hypotheses. Indeed, the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Melbourne studied the relationship between different kinds of subjects and positive feedback and found none. For example, Professor Jeff Borland teaches compulsory Introduction to Microeconomics to about 600 first year students in that Faculty, and at the end of the semester they regularly burst into spontaneous applause. And Jeff is NOT a showman. They applaud because of his skill in helping them to understand material that is far from easy.

In fact the biggest issue really is that most academics do not think that quality can be measured and improved systematically; or that they can learn how to be better teachers – nor are they familiar with the large body of research on what things maximise what students will get out of being at university. As Derek Bok, a previous President of Harvard has written: 'Throughout undergraduate education, a great wall separates the world of research from the world of practice – even though the practitioners involved are professors, trained in research, who would seem ideally prepared to take full advantage of whatever findings empirical investigators have to offer' (*Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton University Press, 2006, p.9).

An ideal system of evaluating the quality of what students learn would need to include a lot of elements. It would have to begin by acknowledging that research also tells that engagement is the key to learning and this is the result of things like students social lives, their informal interaction with academics, their becoming part of a learning community. As John Tagg concludes, the 'single most powerful influence on college students, in their cognitive as well as social development, is other students' (*The Learning College Paradigm* p. 253). And you probably are unaware that we now have some benchmark data on some of these questions following the introduction of the Australian Survey of Student Engagement last year.

Our evaluation of the quality of our teaching would need to cover questions such as are the goals of the teaching clearly identified? Is the curriculum appropriate, not just in terms of a subject or unit content, but in relation to the course structure? (And we have feedback on student perceptions of our course structure in the CEQuery data for this university.) Is the method of delivery appropriate and based on sound teaching principles; and finally, what evidence is there that the students learned what we wanted them to learn and what new capabilities do they have? So an ideal quality assurance system would include a team reviewing the curriculum and its purpose, watching our teaching, and finally looking at the work produced by students.

But leaving aside an ideal approach, the key to assessing the quality of our teaching (and to improving it) is to talk about its effectiveness (not just its content), to be familiar with some of the literature, to experiment, and to evaluate. And we don't all have to be innovative. It is probably more important that more of us simply know what has been shown to be effective, and that we talk about this with our colleagues, and that we make explicit what we are doing and why, and look for evidence about what works and what does not. This should come naturally to academics.

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

NEXT MEETING: **9.30am**
 Wednesday 19 March 2008
 Council Chamber
 John Scott Meeting House
 Bundoora Campus

CONFIRMED BY CHAIR _____ **DATE** _____