



### ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the five hundred and fifteenth meeting of the Academic Board held in the Chamber, John Scott Meeting House, La Trobe University, Melbourne Campus on Wednesday 9 October 2019 at 9.30am.

- Present:** Professor Christine Bigby (Chair), Dr Brian Abbey, Dr Joanna Barbousas, Professor Paula Baron, Professor Nick Bisley, Dr Narelle Brack, Dr Kate Bridgman, Professor Lisa Brophy, Ms Elizabeth Capp, Dr Buly Cardak, Professor Shaun Collin, Ms Sarah Cox, Professor Susan Dodds, Professor Grant Drummond, Dr Jason Dutton, Professor David Edvardsson, Professor Ashley Franks, Professor Warwick Frost, Professor Paul Gastin, Dr Deborah Gleeson, Mr Damien Hamel, Professor Jane Hamilton, Professor Andrew Hill, Professor Katie Holmes, Professor Helen Irving, Ms Pam Kappelides, Dr Sejal Kendal, Professor Emmanuel Kuntsche, Professor Marc Kvensakul, Dr Karen Lawrence, Professor Helen Lee, Professor Nicki Lee, Professor Birgit Loch, Dr Kate Mai, Professor Susan Martin, Dr Clare McCausland, Professor Carol McKinstry, Dr Sarah Midford, Dr Deborah Neal, Dr Jodi Oakman, Professor Jennifer Oates, Professor Chris Pakes, Professor Paul Pigram, Dr Luke Prendergast, Professor Wenny Rahayu, Dr Tania Romano, Ms Fiona Salisbury, Mr Abd Al Rahman Shehada, Professor Richard Speed, Dr Evelien Spelten, Mr Robert Stephenson, Professor Marija Tabain, Dr Colleen Thomas, Professor Jessica Vanderlelie, Dr Suzane Vassallo, Professor Yvonne Wells, Ms Andrea Young, Professor Suzanne Young, and Professor Lawrie Zion.
- Secretariat:** Ms Sonia Nelson, Senior Executive Officer, Governance and Policy Services.
- In Attendance:** Mr Alistair Duncan, Dr Richard Frampton, Ms Robyn Harris, Mr Fotios Lampropoulos, Mr Leon Morris, Dr Swati Nagpal, Dr Paul Ramage, Ms Fiona Reed, Ms Anna Maria Schurmann, and Mr Xan West.
- Acknowledgement of Country:** The Chair of Academic Board, Professor Christine Bigby, acknowledged and paid respects to the traditional owners of the land upon which the La Trobe Campuses are situated: Dja Wurrung (Bendigo), and Wurundjeri (Bundoora). On behalf of the University Professor Bigby paid respects to the elders past and present.

#### PART A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b>515.1 Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the five hundred and fifteenth meeting of the Academic Board.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Dr Hossam Aboel Naga, Dr Julie Andrews, Professor Samar Aoun, Dr Josie Barbaro, Ms Donna Burnett, Professor Michael Clarke, Professor Jill Cook, Professor Sheila Crewther, Professor Kay Crossley, Professor John Dewar, Dr Geoff Dickson, Dr Michael Dillon, Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Professor Matthias Ernst, Professor Simon Evans, Mr Paul Farley, Dr Christopher Fisher, Dr Megan Fisher, Dr Tracy Fortune, Dr Anthony Gendall, Dr Peter Green, Dr Emma Henderson, Professor Andy Herries, Professor Russell Hoyer, Mr Greg Jamieson, Dr Jennifer Jones, Professor Petko Kalev, Professor Fiona Kelly, Professor Amanda Kenny, Professor Patrick Keyzer, Mr Mohsin Khawaja, Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, Professor Jo Lampert, Professor Karl Landorf, Professor Sandra</p>	

Leggat, Professor George Liu, Ms Natalie MacDonald, Professor Paul Mather, Professor Dennis McDermott, Professor Lisa McKenna, Ms Nicole Melitsis, Professor Noel Meyers, Dr Robyn Murphy, Professor Matthew Nicholson, Professor Suzanne O'Keefe, Mr Simon O'Mallon, Mr Peter Powell, Professor Joanna Poyago-Theotoky, Professor Chris Roche, Professor Miranda Rose, Professor Terri Seddon, Professor Jill Slay, Ms Bridget Soulsby, Dr Kerstin Steiner, Mrs Emma Stirling, Dr Rwth Stuckey, Dr Terrie Waddell, Professor James Walker, Professor Karen Willis, Professor Carlene Wilson, and Mr David Wishart.

#### **515.2 Approval of the Agenda**

The Board **resolved to approve** the agenda, as circulated (AB19/80(A)).

#### **515.3 Report of the Chair**

The Chair, Professor Christine Bigby, provided the following updates:

- During the recent election process for membership of Academic Board, 85 nominations were received for the 45 positions for elected members. The Chair thanked those who nominated and noted that a significant number of new members had been elected for 2020/2021.
- The nomination period for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair had closed. An election will be held to elect the Chair of Academic Board.

The Chair acknowledged this was the last meeting for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, recognising the tremendous work and contribution Professor Krause had made to the Academic Portfolio during her tenure.

#### **515.4 Report of the Vice-Chancellor**

The Board received and noted paper AB19/81, the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, which is available from the following link:

<https://unite.latrobe.edu.au/sites/sc/sgc/abc/abmeeting2019/Paper/8/81%20-%20Academic%20Board%20VC's%20report%20October%202019.pdf>

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement), Professor Susan Dodds, spoke to the report. The items highlighted included:

- The Commonwealth's Performance Based Funding model has been finalised. University performance will be assessed across four measures - student employability (weighted at 40%), student success (weighted at 20%), student experience (weighted at 20%), and student equity (weighted at 20%). Members were reminded that post-graduation employment is quite high among La Trobe graduates. It is estimated that the amount of La Trobe University funding to be assessed through the program will be \$2.9m.
- The University achieved 291<sup>st</sup> place in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, and Arts and Humanities ranked 183<sup>rd</sup> in the World Rankings by Subject.
- Several La Trobe University researchers were included in the list of top researchers published in a supplement in The Australian on 26 September 2019. Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Dr Lindsay Carey, Associate Professor Raelene Wilding, Dr Jennie Pryce and Professor Kate Webster were named as leaders in their research fields.
- The Northern Football Netball League has relocated to the Sports Park on the University's Melbourne campus.

- The University's Graduate Outcomes Survey results have improved for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and higher degree by research candidates. Professor Dodds noted the improvement reflected the University's response to previous survey results.
- Associate Professor Clare Wright has been shortlisted for the 2019 Australian Prime Minister's Literary Awards in the Australian History category for her book *You Daughters of Freedom: The Australians Who Won the Vote and Inspired the World*.

## PART B – MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

### 515.5 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Academic Board **confirmed** the minutes of the 514<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 11 September 2019 were a true and accurate record (AB19/79(M)).

### 515.6 Award of Degrees and Diplomas

The Board received paper AB19/82 and **resolved to approve** the conferring of awards and the award of research degrees, as detailed therein.

AEGTO  
GRS

### 515.7 Standing Committees of Academic Board

#### 515.7.1 Report of the Admissions Committee: 22 August 2019

The Board received report AB19/83 and **noted** that the Admissions Committee had considered the following items at a meeting on 5 August 2019:

EO(AC)

- a) Articulation Tables from the College of Arts, Social Science and Commerce
- b) Articulation Tables from the College of Science, Health and Engineering
- c) Discussion on approving Articulation Tables
- d) Workshop for Reporting by PIPU
- e) WAM
- f) Smoothing the Pathways.

The Chair of the Admissions Committee, Professor Suzanne Young, spoke to the report. Professor Young indicated that the development of articulation tables demonstrates the work being done by the University and the Colleges to develop pathways for international students. Members were advised that the Committee is considering its Terms of Reference and the development of a strategic framework for reporting in November 2019 and during 2020. That reporting will include: ATAR and student success; pathways; student outcomes, and; student equity.

#### 515.7.2 Report of Coursework Committee: 19 September 2019

The Board received report AB19/84 and **noted** that the Coursework Committee had considered the following items at the meeting held on 19 September 2019:

- Course Submissions from the College of Science, Health and Engineering.
- Course Closures from the College of Science, Health and Engineering.
- Course Closure from the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce.

EO(CC)  
GenMgrs  
DD SSA  
APVC(CW)

The Board **resolved to approve:**

- a) *College of Science, Health and Engineering Course Revisions*, as detailed in Attachment A to AB19/84
- Bachelor of Psychological Science with Honours
  - Master of Chemical Science
  - Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science
  - Bachelor of Applied Science and Master of Dietetic Practice
  - Bachelor of Health Sciences
  - Diploma of Sport Coaching and Development / Bachelor of Sport Coaching and Development
  - Bachelor of Human Nutrition
  - Bachelor of Biomedicine.
- b) *Course Closure proposals from the College of Science, Health and Engineering*, as detailed in Attachment A to AB19/84
- Master of Science in Physical Science
  - Master of Nanotechnology
  - Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Classification) / Bachelor of Health Information Management (Sydney).
- c) *Course Closure proposal from the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce*, as detailed in Attachment B to AB19/84
- Master of International Business – Foreign Trade University.

The Acting Chair of the Coursework Committee, Professor Nicolette Lee, advised that the College of Science, Health and Engineering course revisions involved a small number of changes that then had flow on effects to other courses.

#### **515.8 Report of the Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom Working Group**

The Board received paper AB19/85.

As co-convener of the Working Group, the Chair of Academic Board, Professor Christine Bigby, spoke to the paper. Members were reminded of the origins of the Working Party and the reasons for its establishment. The Working Group involves two phases of activity: the implementation of the French Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers, and; deeper consideration of academic freedom at La Trobe University.

Professor Bigby advised that three new, joint academic and administrative policies have been developed and outlined their scope and purpose. The policies will be available for consultation on the University's internal policy site for a two-week period from 14 October 2019 to 25 October 2019. In addition, the Working Group recommends that revisions be made to six existing policies and a further three existing policies be rescinded. It was noted that staff would be advised of consultation on the policies in the usual manner through the all staff news and through the Minutes of the meeting.

#### **515.9 Panel Discussion: The University's Response to the Climate Crisis**

The Board received paper AB19/86.

Professor Lawrie Zion, co-leader of the Climate Network and Director of Transforming Human Societies Research Focus Area, noted the significant

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institutional commitment to sustainability through its recently announced Net Zero initiative which will see La Trobe becoming carbon neutral by 2029.

Professor Zion indicated that the initiative raises a number of questions:

- Where do our academics fit into the challenge of addressing the many problems associated with climate change in our research and teaching?
- How do we connect to this ‘wicked cluster’ of problems that have become embedded in so many of the disciplines?
- How can we take the interdisciplinary steps required to address the challenges?

Professor Zion advised that recently a number of staff took the first steps towards mapping the research and teaching being undertaken across La Trobe University that connects to climate change through setting up an informal “climate network” of academics from across the university. The Network has held a number of meetings to identify how we can best work together to position the work that we are doing as it relates to the many problems that connect to climate change. The aim is not only to improve the visibility of that work both internally and externally, but also explore what climate leadership means in an academic context.

Professor Katie Holmes, co-leader of the Climate Network and Director of the Centre for Study of the Inland, suggested that the challenge of how we respond as a university to climate change goes to the heart of what it means for the university to be a climate leader. She talked about climate change as not a problem that needs a solution, but a matrix of ecological impacts, power relationships, economic processes, cultural discourses and material flows (Hulme 2009: 362). It connects the political, social, scientific, economic and cultural realms of our world. Further, it connects – and affects – all the disparate parts of our university.

Professor Holmes indicated that as a university we have an extraordinary opportunity that goes well beyond ‘mapping’ what we are doing in research and teaching, or aligning our activities more closely with the ambitious net zero target, important as those are. It means thinking about what we do, the conversations we have, the way we teach, how we operate as a university, through a different lens.

Professor Holmes encouraged Academic Board members to imagine if we took the four values that we have agreed we stand for – inclusiveness, diversity, equity and social justice, and interpreted these through a climate lens. For indeed their neglect goes to the heart of understanding how we came to be in this moment of ‘everything breakdown’ as Margaret Atwood has called it, and the implications of this moment for our world, our communities, our students, ourselves.

Similarly, Academic Board members were encouraged to imagine if we took our cultural values – being accountable, connected, innovative and caring – and looked at these through a climate lens.

Professor Holmes noted that the British geographer Professor Mike Hulme writes of climate change as being both a mirror and a magnifying glass. Further, that he uses this in both a social sense – reflecting back rapidly increasing inequality for example – but also in a personal sense.

Professor Holmes suggested that La Trobe University might consider this in terms of the University: a way of looking at where and how our values are reflected in all the areas of what we do. In addition, that we 'focus on the long-term implications of our short-term choices, that we recognise the global reach of our actions, and that we are alert both to material realities and to cultural values.' (Hulme 2009:363)

Given the nature of climate change as a 'wicked problem', Professor Holmes noted it also offers an opportunity to extend the really difficult interdisciplinary conversations that happen in pockets across the University and focus our discussions on climate change. Professor Holmes explained her belief that this is what being 'climate clever' means: it means understanding the complexity of climate change (and not reducing it to a set of numbers or a target); it means working out ways of thinking about and adapting to climate change in new, multidisciplinary ways; it means equipping our students to understand that complexity, offering them pathways through a range of subjects that help them think beyond the scope of their chosen discipline; it means being reflexive about the language we use when talking about climate change; it means supporting our staff and students to cope with the physical and psychological realities of a warming world, and; it means researching, teaching, thinking and acting for the sake of a livable world.

Mr Xan West, a third-year engineering student, highlighted the opportunity for the University to incorporate locally focused projects into the curriculum. This would increase relevance for students and have greater impact. Mr West added that while students can feel siloed within their degrees, climate change was an opportunity to use collective expertise to work on local issues.

Professor Ashley Franks, Director of the Securing Food, Water and Environment Research Focus Area, noted climate change is impacting all research in all areas. The changes we are observing are leading to requirements for understanding, adaptation, change and response. This occurs in obvious but also subtle ways across both colleges. La Trobe is a leader in many aspects of this research and producing international leading research. Professor Franks outlined a number of projects as examples:

- Health of the Murray Darling system: Centre for Freshwater Ecology, School of Life Sciences
  - Major disturbances, water, ecosystem collapse.
  - Occurring at unprecedented rates and levels.
  - Working on flow rates, resilience, having major input into government policy with benefits from Wodonga to Mildura and beyond.
- Soil health: Professor Tang, Animal Plant and Social Sciences, School of Life Sciences
  - Plant growth and microbial response to elevated CO<sub>2</sub>.
  - Soil contains huge storage of carbon as organics.
  - As CO<sub>2</sub> levels increase, plants are also increasing photosynthesis.
  - Increased photosynthesis was thought to be good as it was capturing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere as plant material.
  - The plants use CO<sub>2</sub> to feed microbes in the soil.
  - This increased plant carbon increased plant growth.

- Overall, the plants increased bacterial growth greater than the carbon they put in – negative feedback loop making the situation worse.
- Adding carbon back into soils - Centre for Future Landscapes
  - Soil is the biggest carbon sink, how can we get it back into the ground without causing negative feedback loops.
  - Use composting in agricultural systems, returns waste to the soil, benefits production.
  - Improving balance so that more carbon is returned to the soil and not released back as CO<sub>2</sub>.
  - Farming inputs reduced, better food and crops, reduce waste and the environment is a winner.
- Rain forest diversity and resilience - Dr Peter Green in Ecology, Environment and Evolution Research.
  - Rainforests are the most diverse ecosystems on the planet.
  - Dr Green is the custodian of an important site in Queensland, 80 years of history of every tree on the site.
  - Very slow growing trees are being affected by climate change.
  - Rainforests are burning for the first time due to climate change.
  - Using microbes in the soil to track changes that won't emerge for decades.
- Changes in concrete corrosion with Professor Paul Pigrim, Centre for Materials and Surface Science
  - Concrete is essential for humans but climate change is shortening its life.
  - Replacing concrete sewer pipes cost up to \$10k per metre.
  - Through understanding changes in microbes in the sewers we can start to prevent or mitigate bacterial acid production.
  - CRC for smart concrete is looking to answer these in a hotter and dryer future where people will be eating different food sources.
- Change in diets to be more sustainable, but what do Vegan diets do to our cognition and emotion changes in the microbiome? - Dr Brooke Devlin Dietetics & Human Nutrition
  - As climate changes so does our diet.
  - How do plant based diets affect our physiology, decision making processes and microbiome.
  - Is there a fatty acid, protein, fibre link that needs to be maintained.
  - What changes can be made.
- How it has changed poetry and scientific writing - Professor Sue Martin, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce
  - Poetry and Soil Science literature has changed over time.
  - Initially both described Australia as a Garden of Eden but have developed into alarm and catastrophe
  - As climate has changed so has our writing across society.
  - Our writing does offer us hope though, we can still have an effect.

Dr Swati Nagpal, La Trobe Business School, outlined an approach to embedding sustainability in the curriculum. Dr Nagpal explained that since 2015, the Business School has been trying to work with students in the business school to develop their capacity to be change agents for sustainability.

Dr Nagpal advised that 'Sustainability', is a second-year compulsory core subject in the School's business degrees. The subject has approximately 2000 enrolments a year across all campuses including Sydney and our international partners. Although climate change is a central theme in this subject, it also explores the social, environmental and economic dimensions of the issue, and considers the inter-generational implications of business decision making.

The design of the pedagogy, assessment and content of the subject has been informed by three key things:

1. The sustainability thinking essential at the school.
2. The business school has been a signatory to the United Nations principles for responsible management education (PRME) and the UN global compact since 2008.
3. Involvement in two working parties affiliated with PRME; the sustainability mindset, and climate change working groups.

Dr Nagpal noted that research indicates that sustainability is not necessarily a graduate capability but rather a disposition or a lens through which we view the world. The University can develop skills in systems thinking, complexity modelling, advocacy and wicked problem-solving in our students but content isn't enough.

Dr Nagpal explained that the School also relies on a pedagogical approach that draws out students' underlying values and creates a safe space where difficult conversations about climate change, social displacement and questioning of market models can take place. Dr Nagpal added that this is as much art as it is science.

The School has learnt and continues to learn some important and sometimes difficult lessons:

1. Students don't see climate change as a priority, and certainly not as an emergency.
2. This subject and content can be quite polarizing for business students. Especially in a world that celebrates and encourages unending economic growth.
3. Getting the right skilled teachers and facilitators to bring the content to life is critical.
4. There are challenges in managing the trade-off between the scale of a subject versus its depth. Creating authentic assessments in large subjects is very difficult but the School is happy that the subject has the reach it does.

Academic Board members were encouraged to consider how climate change and sustainability can be incorporated into their teaching.

In drawing the presentations to a close, Professor Zion explained that stage one of the project involves mapping climate related research and teaching. A website will be established to increase awareness of the outcomes of the mapping exercise and facilitate cross-disciplinary research.

General discussion centred on:

- The variable interest of students in climate change as an issue.
- The incorporation of relevant authentic assessment.
- The complexity of climate change as a problem and the need to focus on, not just targets and emissions reduction, but also the consequences of climate change and its root causes.
- The opportunity for open subjects in the area for students to choose. It was noted that the mapping exercise will increase visibility of the many existing relevant subjects.
- The opportunity to link to discussions regarding primary school level curriculum where sustainability is being embedded in domain curriculum areas.
- The importance of drawing together in a narrative the multiple and different disciplines that can potentially contribute to research on climate change.
- The benefits of collaboration between academic and professional portfolios around climate changes issues.

In considering the proposed Climate Change Position Statement, members suggested:

- An increased emphasis on climate justice (i.e. recognising the differing impacts across sectors, nations, and generations)
- Broadening the focus (“We will develop their capacity to create climate resilient lives and communities, *in Australia and internationally*, and to respond to the challenges within the social, cultural and physical systems that sustain them.”).

Academic Board members were encouraged to email [Climate.Network@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Climate.Network@latrobe.edu.au) to report climate related research and teaching, or to provide feedback on the proposed Climate Change Position Statement. Academic Board members who would like to be involved in this network are also welcomed.

Professor Zion noted that the Network’s immediate aim is to set up a web presence for the Network that explains the work the University is already doing in teaching and research. The broader aim is to develop new opportunities that build on our existing strengths and further articulate the themes explored during the discussion.

## PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

### 515.10 Elected Membership of Academic Board

The Board **received** and **noted** paper AB19/87, the report on Academic Board Elections for 2020/21.

### 515.11 Next Meeting

The next meeting of Academic Board will be held at 9.30am on Wednesday 13 November 2019 in the Chamber, John Scott Meeting House, Melbourne Campus.

The meeting closed at 11.00am.