DIGEST OF ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING

5 DECEMBER 2007

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting extending a particular welcome to Mr Peter May, Manager (Planning and Quality).

Professor McMullen paid tribute to Professor Richard Johnstone, Executive Director, The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education following his resignation as the external member of Academic Board. Members acknowledged Professor Johnstone’s contribution to the deliberations of the Board and wished him well for the future.

2. MEETING WITH MR PETER MAY, MANAGER (PLANNING AND QUALITY) – THE SELF-AUDIT OF ACADEMIC BOARD

The discussion with Mr May encompassed the importance of university governance in the context of the forthcoming audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). He made reference to one of the themes agreed with AUQA, i.e. learning outcomes, and the central role of Academic Board in terms of overseeing the quality of the University’s courses and other academic activities.

Academic Board noted that, following discussions by the Academic Board Standing Committee, Mr May had developed a survey relating to Academic Board’s effectiveness. He was requested to distribute it to members following the current meeting and to submit an analysis of the results to the next meeting of the Board on 20 February 2008.


Professor Wilson’s presentation encompassed the following:

- the development and policy framework of the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation and its integration with the University Strategic Plan (Revised) 1999-2008;
- that the Plan has been informed by the University’s Teaching and Learning and Research Plans;
- that a final draft of the Plan should be ready for consideration by Academic Board at its next meeting on 20 February 2008;
- the ongoing commitment by ACU National to the inclusion of international perspectives in all aspects of its core business, e.g. onshore degrees/awards, development of international curricula, offshore teaching and teaching partnerships, and community engagement activities offshore;
- anticipated benefits from a successful, comprehensive internationalisation strategy, e.g. enrichment of the on-campus experience for all students, cultural exchange and awareness, industry and research collaboration, and the foundation for long-term trade and business partnerships;
- the role of ACUcom in the marketing and delivery of onshore and offshore non-award courses for international students;
- international education objectives addressed by the Plan, e.g. improved support for international students, greater selectivity and focus in exchange agreements with international universities, development of research links with selected international universities.
and/or key researchers in complementary discipline areas, and the embedding of a culture of community engagement in ACU National’s international partnerships; and

- the targeted outcomes addressed in the Plan.

4. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S OBSERVATIONS**

**Senior appointments**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that Dr Michael Gaffney had been appointed as Professor of Educational Leadership.

Professor Sheehan paid tribute to the outstanding contribution to the University over some 34 years of Associate Professor Tim O’Hearn, retiring Dean of Students. Members noted that Ms Anne Cummins had been invited to commence in the Dean of Students’ role on a part-time, interim basis (three days per week) in February 2008.

**Carrick Institute funding**

Academic Board congratulated Associate Professor Paul Chesterton, Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (IATL) on receipt of $220,000 from the Carrick Institute under the Promoting Excellence Initiative 2007.

**Diversity**

Academic Board noted that an opinion piece written by the Vice-Chancellor, *The Significance of Diversity* (published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 5 November 2007) had been drawn to Senate’s attention. Professor Sheehan stated that he viewed the issue of diversity as a key one for Universities Australia in terms of the higher education sector.

**Federal election result**

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the recent change of Government and the potential implications for the higher education sector. Members discussed the possible future of the Research Quality Framework (RQF) in the context of the policies of the new Labour Government and agreed that the work undertaken thus far by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International) in relation to the RQF would stand the University in good stead whatever mechanism for the assessment of research quality might emerge in the future.

**Research awards for female academic staff**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, as part of the University’s Affirmative Action strategy, research awards for female academic staff had been established. The awards are aimed at assisting women who have experienced career interruptions due to family commitments to re-establish their research careers. The first three awards (worth $10,000 each) were made to the following staff from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences:

- Dr Robyn Horner;
- Dr Bronwen Neil; and
- Dr Marguerite Nolan.
Professorial (Level E) promotions

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the following on their promotion to Professor, Level E and personally welcomed recognition of these four distinguished women scholars:

- Associate Professor Margot Hillel OAM;
- Associate Professor Geraldine Naughton;
- Associate Professor Ruth Webber; and
- Associate Professor Elizabeth Warren.

National Centre for Clinical Outcomes Research

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, following negotiations with the Dean of Health Sciences, he had allocated significant funding to assist with the establishment of the National Centre for Clinical Outcomes Research in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Core Planning Group (CPG)

The Vice-Chancellor reported regarding the following matters discussed at the CPG meeting on 4 December 2007:

- the recommendations from the review of Business and Informatics including creation of a national School of Business;
- input provided by CPG in relation to the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation 2008-2012; and
- that CPG had agreed that Academic Board should be the body responsible for the quality assurance and internationalisation of the University’s curricula and this should be recognised in the University’s Strategic Plan for Internationalisation (see agenda item 8*) – the International Policy Committee, which formulates the Plan, reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor, who is formally responsible for the approval of the Plan and for monitoring its implementation.

5. REVIEW OF GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Academic Board approved revised Graduate Attributes.

6. REPORT OF MEETINGS OF TEACHING DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 JUNE AND 2, 11 AND 16 OCTOBER 2007

Academic Board approved the revised procedures for:
(i) 2008 ACU Excellence in Teaching Awards; and
(ii) 2009 Teaching Development Grant Programs.


Academic Board approved the:
(i) minimum eligibility score for entry to Associate Degrees for 2008 as Rank 45 or OP 22; and
(ii) amendments to Rule 9 – Special entry, access and equity schemes.
8. **AMENDMENT OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – TERMINATION PROVISIONS**

Academic Board approved the revised wording of the following Academic Regulations:

(i) 6.2.1.2 – Students at risk;
(ii) 6.2.1.5 – Termination of enrolment (undergraduate and non-award students); and
(iii) 6.2.2.2 – Termination of enrolment (postgraduate students).

9. **REPORT FROM FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

Academic Board noted the report.

10. **REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2007**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International) reported regarding the following:

- proposed merging of the application processes for the Outside Studies Program and Institute for the Advancement of Research secondment scheme;
- definitions of *Early Career Researchers* and *Research Active Staff*;
- review of PhD and MPhil examination processes; and
- Higher Research Ethics Committee terms of reference and membership.

11. **COURSE ADMINISTRATION**

**Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

**Suspension of enrolments**

Academic Board approved the suspension of enrolments in the Graduate Certificate in Interfaith Relations for 2008.

**Faculty of Health Sciences**

**Course review proposals and curriculum plans**

Academic Board approved the:

(i) course review proposal and curriculum plan for the Master of Nursing (Research) for introduction at the Ballarat, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and North Sydney campuses from semester 1, 2009; and
(ii) course review proposal and curriculum plan for the Master of Midwifery (Research) for introduction at the Ballarat, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and North Sydney campuses from semester 1, 2009.

**Executive approval by Chair**

Academic Board endorsed the Chair's executive approval to offer the Bachelor of Nursing course to international students at the Canberra campus from semester 1, 2008.
12. COURSE CHANGES – APPROVAL OF CONSEQUENTIAL RULE CHANGES

Academic Board approved as relevant:
(i) amendment of course rules;
(ii) amendment of the Admission Rules; and
(iii) amendment of the Academic Regulations.

13. REPORTS

Academic Board noted the following reports:

- Confirmed minutes of Faculty of Education Board meeting held on 22 August 2007;
- Confirmed minutes of Faculty of Arts and Sciences Board meeting held on 24 August 2007;
- Confirmed minutes of Faculty of Health Sciences Board meeting held on 21 September 2007;
- Minutes of Teaching and Learning Committee held on 23 October 2007;
- Report of meeting of Academic Board Standing Committee held on 8 November 2007.

14. MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Teaching Development Grants and Awards Committee (TDGAC)

In the light of the recent changes to the membership of Academic Board, members considered the Faculty representation on the TDGAC for 2008.

Academic Board elected the following Faculty representatives to the Teaching Development Grants and Awards Committee for 2008:

- Professor Philip Clarkson – Faculty of Education;
- Professor Barry Fallon – Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and
- Professor Paul Fulbrook – Faculty of Health Sciences.

University Medals Committee

Academic Board determined the following Faculty representation on the University Medals Committee for 2008:

- Professor Doug Clarke – Faculty of Education (Chair);
- Dr Jan Seruga – Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and
- Professor Linda Worrall-Carter – Faculty of Health Sciences.

15. TRIBUTE TO OUTGOING VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Chair paid tribute to Professor Peter Sheehan AO, the outgoing Vice-Chancellor (see Attachment A).

16. RECORD OF APPRECIATION

Academic Board also recorded its appreciation to the following members:

- Associate Professor Paul Chesterton, retiring Director, IATL;
- Ms Teresa Georges, outgoing Student Senate representative;
- Associate Professor Tim O’Hearn, retiring Dean of Students; and
• Professor Patrick Duignan, former long-standing Academic Board member and retiring Professor of Educational Leadership.

17. MEETING CONCLUSION

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the deliberations of Academic Board during 2007 and the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the effectiveness of the Academic Board at Australian Catholic University.

Professor Gabrielle McMullen
Chair, Academic Board
Tribute to the Vice-Chancellor by the Academic Board

Introduction

In mid-1997 the University was informed that Professor Peter Sheehan AO had been appointed as the second Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University. Professor Sheehan, an internationally renowned scholar and a significant figure in Australian public life, was at that time Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Queensland, at which University he had served in a range of senior positions commencing with his appointment there as Professor of Psychology in the early 1970s.

In the past decade Professor Sheehan has led the University as Vice-Chancellor through a period of remarkable change and development. In many important respects Australian Catholic University is a very different institution in 2007 than it was in early 1998 when the Vice-Chancellor commenced his period of leadership. In this tribute, on behalf of Academic Board, I wish to mention some highlights of a decade of extraordinary achievement.

Firstly, the University now operates at a number of different locations, its enrolment profile has changed quite fundamentally, its academic profile has undergone notable expansion, the academic structure has altered to facilitate the University's national character, and a culture of evaluative reviews has come to characterise the way the University ensures that its many activities fit with its Strategic Plan.

Location

In 1997 the University, having decided to close its Castle Hill Campus, was distributing staff, students and courses to the existing campuses at Strathfield and North Sydney. By 2003 the University operated on six campuses, having merged its two Melbourne campuses at a new location, St Patrick's Campus in Fitzroy in 2000, and relocated its Queensland campus from Mitchelton to Banyo in 2003 renaming it McAuley at Banyo. By 2005 the University had expanded its Canberra campus significantly by renovating the Dominican Order's Blackfriars complex and incorporating it into the University's Signadou Campus. As well, the University has expanded its Strathfield campus through the purchase of the Loreto facility and the North Sydney campus through both the purchase of particular properties and the leasing of others. This is an exceptional record of development in a decade.

Enrolments

On 25 February 1998 the University had actual enrolments of 7,647 EFTSL, comprising 7,380 Commonwealth-supported EFTSL, 177 domestic fee-paying EFTSL and 90 international fee-paying EFTSL. On 31 July 2007 the University had 11,100 EFTSL, including 1,215 domestic fee-paying EFTSL and 2,189 international fee-paying EFTSL.

If we compare simply the growth in total enrolments during this decade, the University, under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, has experienced an overall growth in enrolments in excess of 45 percent. The growth in domestic fee-payers has been startlingly, from 177 to some 1,200+ EFTSL, and in international fee-payers even greater from 90 to almost 2,200 EFTSL. None of this growth has occurred without the tireless work of a large number of people but it is the Vice-Chancellor who has led the University to such enviable outcomes.

Academic Profile

The course profile of the University has also changed. The 2007 Handbook of Australian Catholic University reveals an academic profile quite different from that presented in the 1998 Handbook. The University has introduced new undergraduate degree programs in a range of fields, professionally relevant dual degrees, and extended its offerings of existing undergraduate programs across the University's campuses. Some existing programs have been retitled to reflect the development of the relevant profession. A large number of new postgraduate programs in a wide array of fields have been introduced as well as a number of higher degrees either solely by research thesis or by a combination of coursework and
research thesis. By his encouragement of research and scholarship and his ensuring structural support for research the Vice-Chancellor has highlighted the strategic nexus of research and scholarship, and teaching and learning.

**Academic Structure**

From its foundation the University has operated national Faculties. During Professor Sheehan's term a significant number of Schools within the Faculties have also become national. The Vice-Chancellor has also overseen the appointment of Associate Deans to national roles, the institution of carefully selected Centres, Flagships and Institutes across the University, and the development in the Faculties of academic courses and their component units by national course and unit-writing teams all of which has been designed to integrate the academic staff of the University and to foster a national, collaborative approach.

**A Culture of Reviews**

Shortly after taking office the Vice-Chancellor signalled that, in his term, the University would examine its activities through focussed evaluative reviews, which commenced early in 1998 with the development of the University’s Strategic Plan 1999-2008. This review involved the Faculties, Directorates, Academic Board and the University Senate in an exhaustive process that produced the new Strategic Plan. This has guided the University through a decade of continuing change within the higher education sector in an environment marked by increasing competition among higher education institutions for both students and financial support. As the Vice-Chancellor leaves the University, he has been engaged in preparations for the development of the next strategic plan to guide the University through its next phase.

Professor Sheehan instituted a program of evaluative reviews to assist the process of refining and strengthening the University's activities in order to ensure their fit with its Strategic Plan. In this program the Vice-Chancellor put in place reviews of the academic structure of the University, reviews of the Faculties, a later review of their discipline profiles, and reviews of the University's Directorates. The wisdom and foresight of this approach was in evidence in the strength of the University's portfolio submitted to the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) for the audit of the University in 2002 and will underpin the submission of the portfolio for the next AUQA audit in 2008.

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Secondly, in three other key areas, at the very heart of the University's identity, the Vice-Chancellor has shown great leadership and significantly changed and enhanced the University:

- the expression of the Catholic nature of the University, as set out in the Constitution of the University;
- the development of community engagement as a fundamental principle for the operation of the University's activities; and
- a commitment to equity.

Let me comment very briefly upon each of these key areas.

**Catholicity**

By means of graduation addresses, occasional papers and presentations to members of the Company, University Senate, Academic Board and students and staff on all six campuses, through refereed publications, and by public forums and public lectures, the Vice-Chancellor has sought to explicate the nature of the University as both a publicly funded Catholic university and a public company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act whose constituent members are its various founding archdioceses, dioceses and religious institutes throughout Australia.

Further, Professor Sheehan has demonstrated constant vigilance in ensuring the Catholicity of the University’s academic programs as a key contribution to faith education within each of the archdioceses and dioceses in which the University operates. He has provided critical
leadership to the University as it seeks to accomplish this by ensuring students undertake specific units in theology, philosophy and religious education relevant to their courses, and by integrating these disciplines into specifically mission-focused professional units as part of students’ preparation to enter particular professions.

He has ensured that the University is committed to events at its campuses focusing upon theological, liturgical and social issues as part of its evangelising mission, thereby enhancing its Catholic identity in the minds of the participants at such events and in the wider community. The Vice-Chancellor, by supporting the involvement of students in voluntary social justice activities with Catholic agencies and other charitable institutions as part of their courses, has ensured the University promotes in its courses the rich tradition of the Catholic Church’s social teaching.

Community Engagement

In his term as Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sheehan has embedded community engagement as an integral, strategic, scholarship-related activity of learning and research. The establishment of the Institute for Advancing Community Engagement, the development of performance indicators for community engagement, and the encouragement of staff commitment to community engagement programs in Australia and overseas, for example in Timor-Leste, Pakistan and Hong Kong, have all been led by the Vice-Chancellor.

In short, the Vice-Chancellor has brought about the situation whereby the University’s scholarship and engagement are directed consciously to inform and to influence public knowledge and policy for advancing the common good.

Equity

The Mission-focused nature of the University has been informed by the traditions of the founding religious institutes and dioceses. In the way the Vice-Chancellor conceptualised and formulated the Strategic Plan, he has ensured an emphasis on the University being open to all irrespective of religious belief or practice, particularly open to the marginalised, continuing that strong sense of justice and ethical practice derived from the founding congregations. Professor Sheehan, in his commitment to specific programs, like those in Indigenous education and the Clemente/Catalyst Program, has led the members of the University in embracing this fundamental choice for the marginalised in our society.

Conclusion

In these remarks I realise that I have only sketched the achievements of the Vice-Chancellor in the past decade. May I conclude this tribute by highlighting that, in all these accomplishments, he has walked graciously with us through challenging times, always slightly ahead, leading and inspiring us.

Gabrielle McMullen
Chair, Academic Board