Questions from PVC Forum City campus Wednesday April 15th

Q: What feedback has been received from AUQA and AQTF audits last month?

A: There has been no formal debrief from the panel as yet. The VC and DVC were given a short informal debrief and were generally happy with the outcome. The panel are currently compiling the report which will be returned to RMIT for comment prior to the final release. The time and effort contributed by staff was acknowledged. The focus of the audit was on documented policies and procedures and compliance to these across the University. Good results from the AUQA audit contribute the University’s reputation.

Sherridan Maxwell added that the results of the AQTF audit are forwarded for assessment to the VRQA and the outcome is not expected for a few months. The VET committee reported that the focus of the audit was on assessment and staff competency.

Q: When will the food pilot plant be built at Bundoora, it wasn’t listed in the infrastructure works slides?

A: This work has been delayed and will not commence in 2009. This project is bigger than first thought, and an opportunity to bid for external funding to assist with the project has been identified. If no external funding is available then it is unlikely that this project will commence before 2012. The works listed on the slides are those which will commence in 2009.

Questions from PVC Forum Bundoora West campus Friday April 17th

Q: The policy framework affecting the tertiary education sector includes both State and Federal policies. What is the connectivity and who is leading the implementation of these policies within RMIT?

A: The Vice Chancellor is leading the Federal linkages and the Director, TAFE, is leading the matters determined by State Government. Dialogue between the University, which includes the VC’s Executive and the relevant government agencies constitutes the political linkages. Government panels in relevant discipline areas will also be involved in the implementation of the new policy.

Q: If PACE grants have been allocated to Schools, are there any restrictions on how they are used?

A: PACE grant funding must be used for improving Teaching and Learning. They cannot be used, for example, on equipment or infrastructure. High
quality projects will be supported with an allocation of roughly $30,000 per School. The Head of School is required to submit a plan on how these funds will be used to improve Teaching and Learning. The outcomes of the increased funding will be shared via the College Executive.

Q: What will be the preferred abbreviation of the new College name?

A: The preference is to use ‘Science, Engineering and Health’ rather than using the SEH acronym. The use of acronyms becomes quite meaningless outside the organisation.

Q: Is the future target of 20 per cent low socio-economic students for higher education, likely to be a standard target across the sector?

A: It will be an aspirational target across the sector as details become more clearly defined by Government, RMIT will be addressing these targets.

Q: In regards to program quality and also retention rates, is there a risk that increased numbers of students including a higher proportion of equity students entering some programs could undermine teaching quality outcomes?

A: Program performance is directly affected by high attrition, so it is very important to avoid poor retention rates under all circumstances. There is a need to support equity students with transition and appropriate learning supports in the face of increased targets.

Q: Is there a need to support learning in mathematics in secondary schools, if not earlier? How can this be addressed?

A: There are issues around numeracy and the early learning of maths and science which affect our efforts in the tertiary sector. Solutions to these issues are very dependent on budget allocations to education. The education sector has been suffering from a prolonged lack of investment over some time. More funds (if available) will have a significant effect on raising education standards.