FROM THE PVC

At the RMIT Council meeting on 8 September, a paper was submitted by the Academic PVCs outlining the move to a Portfolio/School structure for 2004. (This paper is now available on the DSC intranet site). The paper reiterates the rationale for moving to a School-based academic structure, and the criteria underpinning successful Schools at RMIT. It also identifies the Schools which will be operationalised within this Portfolio for 2004, while indicating that some programs and groups will continue to discuss their location throughout 2004. Indeed, to some extent this is just the normal state of affairs. The SET Portfolio Schools are also identified. Business have yet to finalise their Schools review but are likely to propose co-location of all VET programs in a new VET School and the formation of a Graduate School.

Council expressed its unanimous support for the directions outlined. The proposals are expected to be finalised at the next Council meeting on 7 November. The formation of new DSC Schools can, however, proceed without delay subject to the VC's approval.

This Council paper also outlines the process by which RMIT will review the provision of services and administrative support across all levels of the University, leading to the reallocation of resources from existing Faculties to Schools or to the Portfolio level. Further details about this project are about to be released and will be placed on the DSC intranet site as soon as they become available.

We will shortly circulate a document to all staff describing in more detail the projects and activities related to the Portfolio implementation including information about processes for the transition of staff to the Portfolio structure.

In the meantime many staff have been working very hard to prepare 2004 budgets. I appreciate that this is an extremely onerous task, not made easier by the lack of clarity about the University's overall targets. It is, however, a process through which many people are becoming far better acquainted with their profile, research activities and expenditure patterns and, as such, is an important investment of effort. I have been extremely impressed with the quality of support provided by Faculty Finance Managers and School/Department financial support staff.

Portfolio office

A warm welcome to Dr Wanda Korndorffer who has commenced as the Portfolio Associate Director, TAFE (located in Building 94, Level 4). Wanda comes to us with a good deal of experience in the polytechnic system in New Zealand. Most recently she was Chief Executive of Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. Prior to this she was Deputy Chief Executive of Manawatu Polytechnic in Palmerston North. Her academic background and interests are in education and teaching and learning.

Welcome also to Libby Hess from the Business Portfolio who has taken up a secondment as Administrative Project Officer. Libby will be assisting with the management of HR issues, providing executive secretarial support to the Portfolio Executive and Portfolio Implementation Consultation group, and will support the transition of the faculties into the Portfolio structure.

I am currently working with the other Academic PVCs to determine the Portfolio Office leadership structure and roles for submission to the VC. I hope to commence advertising (through internal expressions of interest) and filling these positions as soon as possible. These senior leadership positions will have important roles in planning and implementing their functional areas and in supporting the transition to the new structure.

Following discussion with the Portfolio Executive, I am also creating temporary Portfolio Admissions Manager and Portfolio Timetable Manager positions which will be filled through internal expressions of interest. These are key areas of activity over the coming months which will benefit from Portfolio coordination and oversight. I am aware that the student services staff across the three faculty offices are working together to ensure that key student service and administration functions, such as enrolments, are effectively managed over this period.

Disciplines in the Portfolio

I now have a rather remarkable list of the disciplines that academic staff have identified within our Schools. Gretel Lamont has developed a diagram showing the external, cross-School and cross-Portfolio links that staff have identified—it would look more complex than a bowl of spaghetti if the connecting links had not been drawn as straight lines!! A copy of the discipline map is attached.

I am planning to invite the Portfolio's professoriate to join me in a discussion about the key disciplines which the Portfolio sees as integral to its academic work, and ways in which we can ensure their protection and future development.

Portfolio Implementation Consultation Group

I am also planning to bring the Portfolio Implementation Consultative Group together shortly to allow a wide-ranging discussion of issues arising from the implementation of the Academic Portfolios, and the review of services underpinning the future alignment of all Portfolios in the University.

Cheers

[Signature]

If you’d like to share your views on any of the articles in the newsletter, or on the progress of the Portfolio, write a letter to the PVC. Send to dsc-portfolionews@rmit.edu.au
FELCS SCHOOLS FORMATION

Over the past six years FELCS has progressively shifted its teaching and learning profile and built its research program around two core disciplinary groupings. These have been reflected in the two proposed schools recently endorsed by the Faculty Board and forwarded to the VC for approval. The proposed schools are:

- School of Education; and
- School of International and Community Studies.

Education brings together staff, students and programs of the Departments of School and Early Childhood Education, Access and Preparatory Studies and Industry, Professional and Adult Education.

International and Community Studies brings together staff, students and programs of the Departments of Language and International Studies and Social and Community Services, the Criminal Justice Administration program, the Globalism Institute and the Greek Learning and Resource Centre.

The two-school structure aims to maximise the benefits of diversity and critical mass, maximising choice of offerings without duplication of effort.

[Ellen-Jane Browne]

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

A draft of Design and Social Context’s policy Investing in Research was presented to the Portfolio Executive on 4 September for comment. A copy of this is available on the intranet.

As we move towards a Portfolio structure, Faculty Boards need to be replaced with new structures that ensure processes are more efficient without compromising quality. DSC has three contrasting Faculty Board models.

I have been working on these Governance issues with Business, SET and the University Secretariat. We are in the process of reviewing current Faculty Board practices, in particular the use of committees for dealing with T&L and HE issues. Please let me know if you would like to contribute to the review.

[Gretel Lamont]

PORTFOLIO TEACHING AWARDS

We are extremely pleased to announce the outcome of the 2003 Portfolio Design and Social Context Teaching Awards.

Category A—Student Centred HE Teaching
- Jo Lang, School and Early Childhood Education
- Kim Leong, Social Science and Planning
- Prof. Rob Watts, Social Science and Planning

Category A—Student Centred TAFE Teaching
- Dinah Barton, Built Environment
- Barbara Morgan and Meaghan Botterill, Learning Skills Unit
- Grant Emerson and team (Lorraine Bridgier, Barbara Bajraszewski, Hector Gauci, Nadia Robertson, Angelo Pantalone, Anna Cavalieri, Ben Strineri, Russell Eades, Cathy Chen, Lee Yu Ping), Fashion and Textiles

Category C—Research Supervision
- Mike Brown and team (Robert Bain, David Hodges, Veronica Luk, Heather Meyer, Bill Vistari, Laurene Vaughan), Industry, Professional and Adult Education
- Assoc. Prof. Shane Murray and Nigel Bertram, Architecture and Design

The above-mentioned prize winners will now progress to the RMIT Teaching Awards.

A major highlight of this year’s Portfolio Awards is that, in many instances, students recognised the good teaching practices of their lecturers/teachers and nominated them for the awards. This is testimonial to the teaching excellence of many of our staff.

Many thanks to all participants for taking the time to submit an application and congratulations to the prize winners. [Barbara de la Harpe, Annie Holdsworth, Greg Heath]

SERVICE GROUP—STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND ACADEMIC FUNCTION

The Student Administration and Academic Support focus group has continued its work of bringing together Portfolio staff, functions and expertise.

Building on networks established over the last few months, the Group has achieved a number of significant outcomes. These include mapping student administration functions and resources, identifying issues and pathways forward and, of critical importance, sharing resources, knowledge and expertise around the enrolment process.

One of their key tasks has been participating in the University’s Enrolment Simplification Project (ESP) to assist with the development of the enrolment process. Group members have also developed a Portfolio enrolment plan.

As a result of their involvement the Group has also been asked to participate in the University-wide project on transition planning. Staff are working alongside SET and Business to assist in planning the transition arrangements to the interim Portfolio structure in January 2004. This is a sub-project of the longer-term Portfolio Services Integration Project.

The transition planning will focus on implementing a Portfolio student administration model for January 2004. The first phase will be to develop a conceptual model of the student administration function. The second and third phases will involve reviewing and mapping the model, respectively.

Further information will be conveyed to staff via Portfolio News and the intranet as it becomes available. In the meantime, if you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact one of the Group members.

- Philip Craig (x57981)
- Lisa Negri (x53957)
- Barbara Russell (x54746)
- Lesley Pullen (x54312)

[Philip Craig]

Would you like to contribute to Portfolio News? E-mail dsc-portfolionews@rmit.edu.au