

## **Minutes of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 6 June 2007.**

**There were present:** The Chair of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Professor Derrick Armstrong, Acting Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro Vice-Chancellor presiding, Professor Bruce Sutton, Chair Academic Board, Ms Janet Mooney, Director Koori Centre, Ms Sally Farrington, Head, Yooroang Garang Dr Lilon Bandler, Indigenous Health Education, Faculty of Medicine, Dr Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Director Professional Learning, Faculty of Education and Social Work, Dr Margaret Edmond, Director Student Services, Dr Stuart Rosewarne, NTEU Indigenous Members Caucus, Dr Manjula Sharma, Sydney University Physics Education Research Group, Mr Colin L. James, Director I.B. Fell Housing Research Centre, Ms Jenny Leong, representative of SUPRA, Ms Leona Oliver, representative of SUPRA, Ms Sue Page, Coordinator of Undergraduate Programs, Yoorang Garang, Ms Anne Scahill, Director SydneyPeople Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit and Ms Lyn Shoemark, Assistant Director of SydneyPeople Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit.

Mr Simon French, Scholarships Office and Ms Sally Paynter were in attendance.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Ms Michelle Blanchard, Ms Lynette Riley-Mundine, and Ms Shona Kennedy.

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director of SydneyPeople Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Ms Lyn Shoemark to membership of the Committee.

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### **Resolution 3/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee adopted the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 April 2007 as a true record.

### **3. Matters arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**

#### **3.1 Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Program**

Members noted that at the April meeting a proposal to support the AIME program was tabled. The Committee agreed that the proposal would be circulated to members for comment. Members responded in support and the Director of the Koori Centre submitted a formal proposal to Professor Armstrong for approval. The Committee noted that Professor Armstrong had approved the funding for the proposal for one year at this stage and any extension of funding for a further period would be dependant upon the successful application to the Committee in the next year's competitive round.

#### **Resolution 4/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Program proposal.

### **4. Report of the Chair**

#### **4.1 Catholic Education Office Sydney and the University of Sydney Indigenous Program**

The Chair advised that he had been approached by the Catholic Education Office to establish a program where the University of Sydney would work with local high schools with high proportions of Indigenous students on careers perspectives. The potential program would see year 10, 11 and 12 students visit the University for a day and be introduced to the culture and experience on main campus. Small workshops covering different subject areas would be held and continuing Indigenous students studying at the University would be asked to share their experiences of tertiary study. The on campus visit may then be followed up with several University students visiting selected high

schools to assume a mentoring type role. Members noted that the Koori Centre was supportive of this potential program as the Chair believed that it would assist the University to recruit and retain Indigenous students.

Discussions continued and a program for the day's activities would be developed in consultation with the Catholic Education Office, the Koori Centre and the Chair's office and the Committee would be kept informed of developments regularly

The Chair asked Ms Mooney to comment on the proposal and she advised that invitations had been sent to Year 10, 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at selected high schools and that responses have been received from some students but the total number of students participating was expected to be around 20. Members noted the suggestion that the Marketing and Student Recruitment Office be involved with the program and that students who were familiar with a campus often opted to study there as they felt secure because it was familiar.

Ms Farrington suggested that as several faculties and centres were developing and running programs aimed at recruiting Indigenous high school students that a seminar be held where ideas could be shared with the aim of co-ordination these programs. The Chair agreed with the suggestion and proposed inviting key stakeholders to a Committee meeting to present their recruitment programs and to facilitate discussion about a common strategy for the University.

Members agreed to take this suggestion back to their respective faculties for consideration.

The Chair thanked Ms Leona Oliver for initiating and facilitating discussions between the Catholic Education Office Sydney and the University.

#### **Resolution 5/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the Chair's report and agreed to consult their respective faculties about presenting their Indigenous recruitment initiatives to the Committee at a future meeting.

#### **4.2 The University of Sydney response to the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) Priorities and the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) recommendations**

The Chair advised that in September 2006 the AVCC released a response on Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council Conference Report which made recommendations in response to seven priorities identified by the IHEAC. The University agreed with IHEAC's 7 Priorities and supports recommendations from the AVCC. A response had been drafted to highlight the activities currently being undertaken and planned for the future, by the University of Sydney. Members noted that in no way did this espoused as an exhaustive list but an overview of the significant headway the University had made in meeting the objectives which were described under each of the priority headings.

Ms Mooney advised that she and Ms Farrington had worked on the University's response and had found the process both interesting and rewarding and that the exercise had enabled the evaluation of the University's progress in relation to the recommendations.

The Committee noted the following statement in the forward of the Priorities and the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) recommendations

*Australia's universities will meet the needs of Australia's Indigenous peoples through education, research and community services comparable to the support provided to all Australians.*

Members suggested that the statement was meant to undermine moves towards affirmative action and queried whether it suggested a change in government thinking.

Ms Money advised that some lighthouse project funding had been distributed between the Faculty of Economics and Business, Tranby Aboriginal College and the Koori Centre. Mr Colin James expressed his disappointment at the time and effort he had put into preparing an application for the Lighthouse Project funding and had been forced to chase up the outcome himself.

The President of SUPRA Ms Jenny Leong called for the development of programs for Indigenous postgraduate student recruitment and retention. Ms Mooney agreed with the suggestion and advised that the Koori Centre had been working on initiatives to do this and that she would be working with the scholarships office to develop a proposal for postgraduate Indigenous scholarships. Ms Leong advised that SUPRA would be willing to assist the Koori Centre in developing strategies similar to the programs being developed for the recruitment of undergraduate students.

The Chair thanked Ms Mooney and Ms Farrington for their work on drafting the University's response to the AVCC recommendations and was pleased that it had highlighted the ongoing work of both the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang.

#### **Resolution 6/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the University of Sydney response to the IHEAC Priorities and the AVCC recommendations.

### **5. Indigenous Scholarships**

The Chair welcomed Mr Simon French from the Scholarship Office to the Committee and advised that he would be speaking to the report on a new proposal for the allocation of Indigenous Scholarships at the University of Sydney which had been drafted with the assistance of Ms Mooney, Ms Farrington and Ms Sue Page.

Ms Mooney informed the Committee that 30 undergraduate and 5 postgraduate Indigenous scholarships had been awarded for 2007 along with the allocation of 10 laptop computers. All the scholarships had been allocated on a merit basis. Discussions had been held about proposing a more straight forward method of allocation and Mr French had been asked to provide guidance about drafting such a proposal. Members noted that at this stage only a proposal for the allocation of Indigenous scholarships for undergraduates had been developed.

Mr French advised that the new proposal covered three areas of scholarship distribution; all three would be criteria based and hoped to offer a more streamlined and simpler solution to the distribution of Indigenous scholarships.

The first category of scholarship would be for first year Indigenous students who had achieved a UAI of 85 or above. These students would be given a \$5000 scholarship without application.

The second category of scholarship would be for continuing Indigenous students who were making appropriate progress with an AAM of 60 or above or where this was not applicable where a student was satisfying all requirements for a unit of study. The student would receive \$2000 for each year that their progress met the above criteria.

The third category of scholarship would be equity based run by the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang and cover those students who may not be progressing satisfactorily due to unforeseen circumstances and needed financial assistance. These scholarships would be worth \$2000 each.

Members noted the proposal and raised the following issues in discussion:

- The AAM outcomes needed to be studied to ensure that the cut-off number relevant to the allocation of scholarship funds to continuing students was accurate;
- Students would be identified using FlexSIS where they were identified as Indigenous;
- It had been suggested that equity scholarships be reduced to \$1000 to enable more students to receive them, however the centres had agreed that this would effect their impact and that the University had several other scholarships schemes for Indigenous students to apply for;
- If students received a scholarship as a continuing student they would not be eligible to receive an equity scholarship;
- Concern was raised that the scholarships would not be accessible to students studying part-time and that this may be seen as discriminatory;
- The proposal needed to be amended to ensure students knew that there was an opportunity to apply if they were studying part-time subject to approval by the centres;
- The amount of funding allocated to continuing students was equivalent to that allocated to mainstream students;
- Students should be advised of the total amount of funding that these scholarships would provide them if they completed a degree;
- A statement about refunding the scholarship money if a student withdrew from study should remain to discourage students from enrolling receiving funds and then withdrawing from study; and
- It was best to leave the scholarships as a sum of money allocated in two instalments and not as accommodation allowances or fee waiver as this would be of greater assistance to students.

Members noted that if they had any further comments to provide the feedback to the Committee Secretary and Mr French for consideration.

The Chair thanked Ms Mooney, Ms Farrington, Ms Page and Mr French for their work on the Indigenous Scholarship proposal.

#### **Resolution 7/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on a new proposal for the allocation of Indigenous Scholarships at the University of Sydney.

#### **6. Update on the development of a new entity for Indigenous Support Services**

Ms Mooney advised that since the Committee's last meeting there had been efforts made to establish a Working Group with representatives from the faculties of Science, Arts and Education along with relevant representation from the Koori Centre, Yooroang Garang and from the Change Management Group. The Working Group would provide a balance representation from across the University whilst limiting numbers to ensure effective operation. Ms Farrington advised that both centres were currently evaluating their administrative services and attempting to establish shared services where possible.

Ms Leong suggested a student representative participate on the Working Group. The Committee agreed and noted that Ms Leong would find a suitable person.

#### **Resolution 8/07**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the update on the development of a new entity for Indigenous Support Services.

**7. Any other Business**

**“Proud People Re-born”**

The Chair of the Academic Board, Professor Sutton tabled an article entitled “Proud People Re-born” which discussed the lack of Indigenous professionals in rural areas. Professor Sutton asked if the Committee knew of any initiatives being undertaken to address this issue. Ms Mooney advised that there were effective programs being run in Dubbo encouraging trainees from different high schools and that these schemes were also being supported by government funding.

**8. Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Indigenous Advisory Committee would be held on Wednesday 26 September 2007.