

Minutes of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 7 May 2008

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, Ms Sally Farrington, Head, Yooroang Garang, Dr Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Director, Professional Learning, Dr Christine Asmar, Senior Lecturer, Institute for Teaching and Learning, Dr Lilon Bandler, Indigenous Health Education, Faculty of Medicine, Dr Margaret Edmond, Director Student Services, Mr Shane Hearn, Senior Lecturer, School of Public Health and Ms Leona Oliver, Acting Indigenous Employment Coordinator/Policy Officer, SydneyPeople Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit. Ms Sally Paynter was in attendance.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Professor Bruce Sutton, Ms Janet Mooney, Dr Manju Sharma, Mr John Evans, Mr David Guest and Mr Colin L James.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolution 5/08

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee adopted the amended minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2008 as a true record.

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

4. Report of the Chair

4.1 Indigenous Education Review 2008

The Chair reported that he would be establishing a review panel to examine the current provision for Indigenous education and educational support services within the University. The Panel would be asked to review current policy and practice in relation to the University's specific strategies for Indigenous education. The Chair had met with a possible Chair of the Review Panel and this person had indicated that they would be interested in being involved but that they would consult the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang to make sure they were supportive before committing.

Membership of the Review Panel was still being finalised and the Chair advised that he would report further at the Committee's next meeting. The Committee agreed that members of the Review Panel would ideally work in higher education, be familiar with relevant issues relating to Indigenous education and have involvement with the Indigenous community.

It was anticipated that the Review Panel would convene in second semester for an intensive two to three day period where they would work through the terms of reference and ultimately make recommendations designed to ensure that the University meets its objectives for Indigenous education. Implementation of the recommendations would begin in 2009.

The Committee noted that the review would look at the University-wide issues surrounding Indigenous education with a view to a greater buy-in from across the University in relation to support services for Indigenous students.

The draft terms of reference were discussed and the following key issues were raised:

- The issue of establishing an Indigenous Research Centre was raised and how this would fit with the Faculty of Medicine's development of the Centre for Indigenous Health.

- The Review Panel may be asked to recommend various models for support services for Indigenous education at the University including details of any possible issues from their implementations.
- The Review Panel could also look at the community relationships that the University has formed and how these contribute to the support services for Indigenous education.
- It was important to review the allocation of external and internal funding to support Indigenous education at the University with a view to increasing the transparency of how the funding is acquired and distributed.
- Mapping the funding process may assist in making the internal processes clearer and ensure both transparency and equity.

The Chair was asked whether the review would be looking beyond support services for Indigenous students only and would also focus on support for Indigenous academic staff. The Chair said that he would look into this issue and seek advice from HR about opportunities currently offered to Indigenous academic staff at this University. Dr Asmar advised that she had completed a research project on Indigenous academics in centres and would be continuing this research and offered to circulate the report to members.

The Committee agreed upon the following terms of reference:

1. To review the current profile of educational support services for Indigenous students within the University of Sydney.
2. To review the role of the faculties in relation to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students.
3. To review the programs offered for Indigenous students at the University, specifically which faculties offer them and how they are supported and promoted both centrally and at a faculty level.
4. To consider the role of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, membership, terms of reference and reporting lines with a view to ensuring that its operations are transparent and its decisions are disseminated throughout the wider University community;
5. To review the current practices in relation to attracting prospective undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous students with a view to ensuring a University-Wide approach.
6. To consider the sources of Indigenous support funding and how this flows through to teaching and support across the University, specifically in relation to the allocation of funding to faculties and to programs which promote and support Indigenous education at the University.
7. To propose a model for the delivery of Indigenous support and education across the University.

4.2 Australian Learning and Teaching Council Associate Fellowship

The Committee noted that Dr Christine Asmar, Senior Lecturer in the Institute for Learning and Teaching has been awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Associate Fellowship for 2008.

Dr Asmar's project titled "Indigenous Teaching and Learning in NSW universities: developing research-based guidelines for good practice" aims to review good practice in the field of Indigenous Teaching and Learning, identify case studies of evidence-based good practice at NSW universities and show case these at a Forum sponsored by the University of Sydney and to produce research-based guidelines for publication and national dissemination.

Members congratulated Dr Asmar on her success and wished her luck embarking on this very worthy project.

Resolution 6/08

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report of the Chair.

5. Focus Topic – Indigenous Cadetships at the University of Sydney

Dr Ann Cheryl Armstrong and Ms Leona Oliver spoke to their report on Indigenous Cadetships at the University of Sydney and the following key issues were raised during the discussion that followed:

- Cadets benefited from adequate supervision in the workplace, ongoing mentoring and an opportunity to work amongst a team and to contribute in a meaningful way.
- The cadetship program had been confusing in the past and there had been issues with clear lines of responsibility and of ensuring payments were processed.
- To succeed the program required regular communication between the employer and the support unit organising the program.
- The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations pays for 40 weeks of the cadet's salary, based on an academic year, however the unit employing the cadet has to cover the additional 12 weeks salary.
- Clear guidelines covering the responsibility and the support offered to employers and cadets alike needed to be available.
- It was suggested that the current program be simplified to attract more employers and cadets.

Members agreed with a suggestion that a representative from the Premiers department who arranges the national program be invited to speak about the program. The event could be University-wide with a representative from each faculty and cadets could be asked to report on their own experiences of the program.

The Chair thanked both Dr Armstrong and Ms Oliver for their presentation and for their efforts in supporting such a worthwhile program.

Resolution 7/08

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on Indigenous Cadetships at the University of Sydney.

6. Indigenous Support Allocation 2008

The Committee were not quorum and therefore unable to approve the agenda item at the meeting. The final version of the Indigenous Support Allocation 2008 budget was approved via circulation after the meeting.

Resolution 8/08

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee approved the budget for the Indigenous Support Allocation for 2008 as set out in the report presented.

7. Any other business**7.1 Proposal to fund programs that promote Indigenous education and encourage and support Indigenous students**

The Chair tabled a proposal for funding programs that promote Indigenous education and encourage and support Indigenous students out of an amount set aside from the Indigenous Support Allocation budget for funding innovative programs which promote Indigenous education and encourage and support Indigenous students.

Members noted that the funding could assist programs already running and/or provide financial support for developing new programs to address relevant issues affecting Indigenous students. The initiative would be open to all staff, students, groups and

faculties at the University who would be asked to submit an application for funding which would include the aims of the program, the resources involved and a detailed budget of how the funding would be used.

The Committee agreed that by linking the selection criteria for the grant scheme to the University's strategies for supporting and promoting Indigenous Education faculties would be encouraged to engage with these broader strategies and to integrate them into their faculty objectives.

It was suggested that the Committee not be involved with the selection process for the grant scheme and would delegate this responsibility to the Chair as many members would be involved in project applying for funding.

The Committee agreed that applicants could apply for up to \$50,000 however any budgets beyond this cap would be required to match dollar for dollar the amount exceeding \$50,000.

The Chair advised that selection criteria, an overview of the grant scheme and an application form would be circulated to the Committee for approval.