

Universitas 21
Meeting No. 14 of the U21 Deans of Education Group
AERA New Orleans
Fri 8th April 2011 8.00am to 12 noon
Burgundy Room, Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel
(739 Canal Street at Bourbon, tel. 504 962 0500)

Co-chairs: Jim Conroy, Glasgow and Chris Davison, UNSW

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In attendance

Juliette Lyons-Thomas - UBC (FINE leadership team) jlt319@interchange.ubc.ca
Christine Klerian - UBC student representative

Invited Guest

Jerry Sroufe (American Educational Research Association)

REPORT

Summary of Key Events

1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies

Formal apologies were received from Professor David Clarke (University of Melbourne), Professor James Arthur (University of Birmingham) and Professor Ian Menter (University of Glasgow)

Professor Davison welcomed colleagues, extending a special welcome to our FINE representatives and Dr. Gerald Sroufe from the American Educational Association directorate

2. Key events and developments in each institution

Colleagues shared recent developments in the changing profiles of their respective institutions and (perhaps unsurprisingly in research intensive universities) what emerged were similar patterns of opportunity and challenge with the growth of international activity (student exchange and recruitment and the development of research partnerships), the rise of research accountability and the measurement of performance capability as key common issues. Also high on the agenda was the development of increasingly flexible approaches to course development. Jerry Sroufe observed that many of the issues considered central to the concerns of U21 colleagues bore strong similarities to those

emerging across Schools/Faculties of Education in the United States more generally.

3. The sustainability of the Deans' Group – developing future plans and re-visiting 'old' ones.

A substantial and fruitful conversation was had with respect to the recent communication to David Clarke from the U21 Secretariat as to the commitment and long-term sustainability of the Group. All those present agreed that the Forum presented real opportunities for the creation and development of research and teaching synergies though it was also thought that these opportunities had yet to be fully exploited. While the meetings every year surfaced matters of common interest and the shared conversations not infrequently threw up developments in one institution that were of assistance in confronting particular challenges in one or more of the other institutions it was thought that more might be done to systematise these conversations.

Further, there was recognition that early attempts by the Group to secure transferability of students had faltered because U21 Universities as a whole had not been in a position to (1) deal with the complexities of credit transfer and (2) perhaps more tellingly, find creative ways around differential credit and fee structures. Despite these early setbacks colleagues considered the benefits associated with genuine U21 student mobility (within programmes and courses) had very substantial potential benefits and would be very happy to take the lead in pursuing such initiatives if there was clear support at the level of the U21 Registry/Senate offices.

Some concern was expressed that, beyond a small core group of colleagues, membership tended to be somewhat inconsistent, which led to problems of cultivating strategic continuity. It was also recognised that the extent or scope of delegated authority of representatives (where they weren't the Dean/HoS) was not always clear and unambiguous. Consequently, if real progress were to be secured in the future it would be necessary to have clearly delegated authority where the representative was not the executive leader.

It was further agreed that Chris Davison and Jim Conroy would prepare a short briefing paper for all the U21 Deans incorporating a number of suggestions as to long term viability and sustainability. These would include proposals for a funding model, perhaps on a shared basis with the U21 Executive.

4. Update from the U21 FINE Group (see attached report)

The FINE representatives reported that their Executive remained strong and active, and that communication between doctoral students was continuing to strengthen. They did, nonetheless, express some concern that many of the leading figures in the Forum took up office and involvement towards the end of their studies, which meant that they were often involved in the Executive for a relatively short period of time. This, in turn, affected continuity, and the Representatives intimated that they would hope to encourage earlier participation in the Leadership Group. This of course impacted and reinforced the 2010 request to U21 Deans that they support participation of doctoral

students in the 'host' conferences of AERA and ECER at an earlier stage of their studies.

The Group also reported that they would be convening two breakfast meetings during the New Orleans Conference and were expecting strong participation.

The ongoing activities of the Forum continued to be well supported and valued, including:

FINE Breakfast meetings

FINE pre-conference forum that included a presentation by Jim Conroy on 'Negotiating the Tricky Corners of Educational Research'

FINE Dinner

Participation in peer review activities

The FINE Reps expressed their thanks to the Deans of Faculties for continuing to support their attendance and the endeavours of the group but also observed that some institutions were more proactive than others in this respect.

5. Informal discussion Quality Assessment Exercises of Research

Chris Davison led a discussion on the impact of the recent research assessment exercise on the educational research in Australia observing that the rating of journals and citations had a largely negative outcome for the field. Similar observations were made by colleagues regarding equivalent national exercises. The groups suggested that perhaps we might collectively do three things in the future: (1) Explore ways of mitigating the more challenging features of these national exercises, (2) share in a more strategic way our institutional responses and strategies and (3) on the basis of the foregoing offer a symposium at the 2012 AERA meeting badged as a U21 Symposium. The Group also agreed to approach the AERA Executive to see if a U21 Symposium might be accorded invited status and we will raise this as a possibility with Jerry Sroufe.

6. The Group then turned to a discussion of the Millennium Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>) to end poverty by 2015. Education is deemed to be critical to the realisation of such an ambitious project. Of course, since the UN Millennium Summit that agreed the Goals the world has experienced a number of paroxysms including 9/11 and the banking default driven global recession and it is quite clear that the Goals are not going to be met in the next four years. Moreover, the likelihood of achieving the goal of universal primary education as many countries financially re-trench (which tends to hit social projects such as education hardest as a proportion of GNP/GDP expenditure) is equally remote. However, the Group wished to put to the U21 that they might support the creation of a bid to the UN to support an initiative from a Global group of research-intensive universities to support indigenous teacher development. While the Group could produce a statement for the U21 Executive it was not clear what the purpose of such a statement might be. The Group would welcome further discussion of the matter with the U21 Secretariat.

James C Conroy
Christine Davison

Report of FINE events at AERA 2011, New Orleans, LA

This year, as in the past, FINE held four networking events for U21 students: the forum, a dinner that followed, and two breakfast meetings. Participants were eager to meet other U21 students, as well as innovative in their discussions about the possibilities of FINE. As well, we were delighted to have some Deans join us at the breakfast meetings, because it enriched our conversations.

One challenge faced by FINE at AERA this year was lower participation than last year. However, the interest and enthusiasm expressed by those who did attend FINE events has left the leadership team extremely optimistic for next year. Indeed, after “learning the ropes” this year, we are confident that FINE events in Vancouver 2012 will be better than ever.

Below is a report of FINE events at AERA (attendees and highlights from each event). A list of recommendations (gathered from students and Deans at the forum, breakfast meetings, and Deans’ meeting) has been compiled and follows the review of FINE events.

FINE Forum, April 7th 1:00pm-4:15pm (New Orleans Marriott)

Attendees (7):

Professor Jim Conroy (Glasgow)

Lynne Crotts (UVa)

Christine Klerian (UBC)

David Lundie (Glasgow)

Juliette Lyons-Thomas (UBC)

Ritesh Shah (Auckland)

Whitney Wall (AERA GSC)

Key Speakers:

Jim Conroy: Negotiating tricky corners - beginning educational research

Whitney Wall: Navigating AERA: the graduate student experience

Ritesh Shah: Transitioning into the life of an academic: Support mechanisms offered by the University of Auckland

- Following the presentations, forum participants engaged in a discussion that centered around improving participation in FINE events (list of recommendations follows report)
 - One point that was raised was holding the forum during AERA rather than before. Other recommendations are presented at the end of this report.
- The forum, which was originally scheduled to end at 3:30pm, lasted until ~4:15pm

Dinner, April 7th 7:30pm- ~9:30pm (The Court of Two Sisters)

Attendees (10):

Professor Jim Conroy (Glasgow)

Jenny Arnold (Melbourne)
Lynne Crofts (UVa)
Lisa Foster (UVa)
Christine Klerian (UBC)
David Lundie (Glasgow)
Juliette Lyons-Thomas (UBC)
Dallie Sandilands (UBC)
Ritesh Shah (Auckland)
Whitney Wall (AERA GSC)

- The dinner proved to be a very positive event in which participants mingled and spoke about their research with one another. Afterward, many attendees expressed their extreme satisfaction with this event.

Sunday Breakfast, April 10th 7:00am-9:00am (Croissant D'Or Patisserie)

Attendees (8):

Professor Jim Conroy (Glasgow)
Professor Lynn McAlpine (McGill)

Lisa Foster (UVa)
Christine Klerian (UBC)
Elaine LaFlamme (McGill)
David Lundie (Glasgow)
Juliette Lyons-Thomas (UBC)
Michelle Pinard (McGill)

- Professor McAlpine distributed resource sheets before she left, which were then distributed to interested students (included information about online meeting places for students, dissertation tips, employment resources, articles/books of interest, etc.).

Monday Breakfast, April 10th 7:00am-8:30am (Croissant D'Or Patisserie)

Attendees (9):

Professor John Hope (Auckland)

Jenny Arnold (Melbourne)
Beck Collie (UBC)
Christine Klerian (UBC)
Elaine LaFlamme (McGill)
Megan Lourie (Auckland)
Juliette Lyons-Thomas (UBC)
Nancy Norman (UBC)
Ritesh Shah (Auckland)

- Discussion at this breakfast focused on how to increase FINE participation among U21 students.
- A number of participants who had indicated that they would be present at the breakfasts did not attend.

- One possibility raised by participants is that the breakfasts were held too early, and it was recommended that breakfasts be moved an hour later (8am).
 - However, breakfasts in Denver were also held at 7am and had higher participation. Additionally, if participants want to attend the first AERA session of the day (typically at 8:15am), a 7am breakfast would allow them to do this.
- As well, reminder emails should be sent once AERA has begun.

Discussion and Recommendations:

Students participating at the forum and the breakfasts discussed the following issues and made a series of recommendations to the FINE leadership team and Deans.

- 1) **Defining Universities' expectations and goals as U21 members.** Students discussed the need for Deans and Faculties of Education to make clear what their expectations are as U21 members. Leadership team, university representatives, and students' efforts should stem from those goals. If the purpose of the group is to promote collaboration as stated on the website, students should be supported by their Faculties to engage in activities such as building an actual network and working collaboratively to publish, present, or organize a symposium together.

The pertinence of sending students from overseas to conferences such as AERA, where contents are relevant regionally, was also discussed. It was noted, however, that these conferences provide ideal opportunities to create international connections among students. The group made a suggestion to establish regional groups with one student representative as a leader to help the group stay connected.

- 2) **Joint supervision among Faculties of Education who are members of Universitas 21.** Students learned that universities have different ways of promoting and supporting coordinated supervision at the dissertation level from professors across the U21 network. Students would like to know if they can have an external supervisor from one of the U21 universities to benefit from this partnership. It was suggested that this be discussed at the Faculty of Graduate Studies level within each university.

It was also noted that graduate students at different universities have pressure to meet deadlines and to graduate within a certain number of years. Therefore, student interest in making use of these international resources is varied.

- 3) **Universitas 21 Faculties of Education to create awareness among students, staff, and faculty.** The FINE leadership team has created connections with universities by asking Deans to appoint a representative. This student's role is to serve as communication link between the leadership team and the student body about FINE events and benefits. However, only nine U21 Faculties of Education have a representative. Awareness of U21 membership — and of FINE membership for research students—can be promoted by having a small blurb on the Faculties' websites. It was suggested

that the representatives create awareness of these opportunities for students to think about working with other institutions early in their degrees.

It was discussed also that the FINE Forum and breakfasts be scheduled once the Conference started and later in the day so that attendance can increase. A suggestion was to hold the Forum and the Deans' meeting in parallel in adjacent rooms and then have a joint lunch, to allow for more efficient student-dean interaction and communication.

Lastly, it was brought up that communication within Faculties should be mainstreamed to promote student participation in FINE events. This could be achieved by following-up with participants about the FINE events, and reminding them about the database and about establishing connections among members. Continuity and follow-up are required from University representatives, and word of mouth is key in inviting new students.

- 4) **FINE to be open to graduate students doing research at all levels.** Students discussed whether FINE members should only be Doctoral students, or if Masters students should also be invited to participate. Students and Deans agreed that the group would benefit from having students at both the Masters and Doctoral levels because it would allow for different learning processes to take place
- 5) **FINE leadership team to be funded to attend events.** It was noted that several student representatives had received funding from their institutions to attend the FINE events. However, FINE leadership team members lacked financial support. Students encouraged Deans to discuss ways in which this funding can take place, whether it is through their home university or through a common fund put together by all U21 Education members.
- 6) **FINE communication, image and presence.** Students agreed that the best way for them to get information from FINE is the website. However, the website is outdated. A recommendation for the leadership team was to update the website, follow-up on the Facebook group, and perhaps create a wiki where FINE members can collaborate with each other.

Lastly, students suggested the FINE leadership team to establish clear roles among its members so that continuity and growth can be sustained. It was recommended to have senior and junior positions for new leadership team members to benefit from the more experienced ones. Suggested positions were: Technology (to update the website, the FB group, and other online platforms), Liaison with university representatives, Liaison with Deans, Event organizer, and Membership development (to increase collaboration among members).

Juliette Lyons-Thomas (UBC)