

Universitas 21

Heads of Administration Meeting

Melbourne October 2002

Representatives

Lund University	Hans Modig	University Secretary
McGill University	Ian Butler	Associate Vice-Principal (Research)
	Morty Yalovsky	Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance)
National University of Singapore	N Varaprasad	Deputy President
University of Auckland	Warwick Nicoll	Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar
University of Birmingham	David Allen	Registrar and Secretary
University of British Columbia	Byron Braley	Treasurer
University of Edinburgh	Melvyn Cornish	University Secretary
University of Glasgow	Dugald Mackie	Secretary of Court
University of Hong Kong	Henry Wai	Registrar
	Yvonne Koo	Head, Research Services
	Julita Kwan	Head, Strategic Planning Unit
University of Melbourne	Ian Marshman	Senior Vice-Principal
University of New South Wales	Crystal Condous	Registrar and Deputy Principal
University of Virginia	Peter Low	Hardy Cross Dillard Prof of Law

Matters Discussed

In preparation for the meeting members provided papers on a range of key issues including:

- Governance and Organisational arrangements
- Planning and Resource allocation
- Benchmarking
- Commercialisation of Research
- Facilitating Student and Staff Exchange
- Identifying and Managing Risk
- Customer-related student services
- Developing and improving new administrative systems

Discussion of Issues

As an initial meeting, time was devoted to a profiling of institutions and a discussion of issues on which members saw value in collaboration. This provided the opportunity for cross-institutional perspectives to be shared on many issues that Universitas 21 universities were currently facing.

Key themes identified for potential future consideration included:

- Human Resource Management
- Attraction and retention of quality staff
- Space Management
- Planning and Resource Allocations
- Communication and implementation of policy
- Strategies for achieving effective business process change
- Commercialisation of research and technology transfer
- E-business and capitalising on its potential impact
- Managing institutional risk including risk associated with application of new technology

Universitas 21 Global

- Alan Gilbert (Vice-Chancellor, the University of Melbourne) presented on a range of issues associated with the development of *Universitas 21 Global* including arrangements for the awarding degrees, processes for continuing to enhance communication between *Universitas 21 Global* and member institutions and recent collaboration initiatives between *Universitas 21 Global* and members on the development of e-learning initiatives. Leveraging the benefits of new administrative systems was also a focus of this session.

- Members identified the need for a joint communication strategy to be developed and implemented as soon as possible between Universitas 21 Global and U21 institutions to promote increased understanding within institutions of current joint venture developments. Members noted that institutions would be consulted in the near future on the use of their logos/crests on testamurs for the award of Universitas 21 Global degrees.

Actions

The meeting resolved to take action on the following issues:

Benchmarking and sharing of best practice

Members agreed that previous quantitative approaches to benchmarking have proved problematic due to definitional and comparative difficulties.

The group agreed there would be greater value in exploring an approach focused around modeling of key administrative and management processes with the aim of identifying opportunities for improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Action : Members agreed to identify a select number of issues and provide, by 31 March 2003, a 2-3 page summary of current practice for sharing within the group.

Issues identified:

1. Applying for a research grant.
2. Accounting for research grant expenditure.
3. Selection and appointment of a tenure-track academic staff member.
4. Enrolment of a new (domestic) undergraduate student.
5. Accepting and processing an international student application.

Information Sharing

Other issues were identified on which members would appreciate receiving a brief outline of approaches taken by other institutions

1. Listing of processes/business-activities that have been e-enabled.
2. The extent to which non-core services are outsourced and levels of financial return/ cost to the University and, as a concrete example, a description of the arrangements in place for on-campus health services for students and staff.

3. Impact (and implications for University operations) of enabling legislation (University Acts) on University operations, and measures taken to influence change, particularly in relation to commercial activities, acquisition and disposal of assets and land management.
4. Website development – organisational arrangements and approaches to content management, currency and compliance.
5. Management and executive information systems – how information is provided to senior managers to aid decision-making

Sharing of profile data

The group also agreed that, for some institutions, there would be value in having a better understanding of the profile of other U21 members for internal purposes. Members are encouraged to facilitate access to other members to copies of institutional profile data already produced internally in areas such as:

- Student enrolment numbers (eg. undergraduate/ postgraduate, fee type);
- Staff numbers and student-staff ratios;
- Research Performance; and
- Income sources and expenditure allocations.

Website development

Members noted that it might be possible to develop a website to facilitate the exchange of relevant reports and data.

Members are asked to nominate a contact person through whom the exchange of this information can be facilitated and provide a list of key publications that could be provided for sharing within the group, by 31 March 2003.

Action : David Allen has agreed to take a lead role in coordinating these activities.

Space Management

Strong interest was expressed in developing increased collaboration in the area of space planning and utilisation and a range of other issues relating to capital development and asset management.

Members will be asked to nominate a contact officer who would facilitate information sharing and the possible development of a network of key people in this area. Initially a draft list of key issues is to be circulated to members to confirm priority areas. Institutions will then be asked to advise how these have been addressed in their universities.

Action : Byron Braley to take a lead role in coordinating this program.

Staff Exchange

Members endorsed the concept of further developing opportunities for administrative staff exchange with a focus on the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge and facilitating good practice in University administration. Members agreed that this approach involved a strategic realignment of traditional staff exchange arrangements. Members agreed that the following steps should be taken:

- **By June 2004, each member would have at least one incoming staff member from another U21 institution and one outgoing member of staff at another U21 institution.**

- There should be a focus on short-term exchange arrangements ie. 1-2 months
- That, in the interests of communicating good practice across U21 members, reports should be provided following the period of exchange and distributed to all member institutions by the Secretariat.

Action : N Varaprasad to take a lead role in further development of this initiative.

Student Exchange

The meeting recognised the importance of further developing student exchange activities and of developing within individual institutions appropriate policy and strategies for giving effect to the commitment of U21 Presidents to an increased level of student exchanges. Members recognised that the development of tailored institution-specific strategies may involve a consideration of resourcing issues.

Members noted that the need for an equal focus on both incoming and outgoing aspects of student exchange.

Members who have strengths in certain areas e.g. Lund's orientation program could assist and advise other members who are less developed in those areas.

Members noted that, at the operational level, there continued to be a number of administrative impediments that militated against the achievement of an increased level of U21 student exchange activity.

Resources need to be generated within the U21 group to assist with student exchange activities. At an appropriate time Thompson Learning should be approached to ascertain its interest in assisting with such support.

Each member to aim to increase the number of student exchanges with U21 partners by 10% by June 2004 and a further 10% by June 2005.

Each member to nominate one senior person to work with Melbourne in developing strategies to overcome impediments to student exchanges.

Action : Ian Marshman to coordinate.

Further collaboration

The group noted there was benefit to be gained from meetings of this type and agreed that

- A further meeting will be held in October 2003, possibly in tandem with the October meeting of U21 contact managers. Hong Kong has indicated a willingness to host this session.
- During the period up to the next meeting, the University of Melbourne will take on a coordinating role in relation to any issues of common interest.
