

The Committee of Convocation of the University of Melbourne

Preamble

Since 1923 the Committee of Convocation (C of C) has provided the graduates of The University of Melbourne with advice, assistance and representation in respect of the affairs of the University. In these functions the C of C succeeded the Senate which was established in 1867, only a dozen years since the establishment of the University itself. It was recognised, from the beginning, that the graduates form an important constituent part of the University. The membership of the C of C is representative of all Schools and Faculties. Inescapably, the influence of the C of C has waned as a more corporate style of management has developed within the University over recent decades.

The legal definition of the role of the C of C has also changed over the years. Although the University of Melbourne Act 2009 lacks any direct reference to convocation and its committee, the graduates are specifically recognised by the Act as part of the University so they retain their interest in the University and in its future. On the other hand, the University Council is to create an Alumni Council and the university statutes recognise the Committee of Convocation, as an alumni body.

The creation of a University of Melbourne Alumni Council will embrace many of the former activities of the Committee of Convocation. The Alumni Council will encourage strong active partnerships for graduates with Faculties and Schools of the University and with its Office of Advancement. Even so, the members of the C of C will continue to represent a powerful resource of expertise and commitment, able to provide independent and informed advice.

The C of C will, therefore, continue to provide informative links that will be of value to the Faculties and Schools of the University, to the central University Administration and to the graduates. The C of C will supplement and support the new Alumni Council. It will be an informed body for raising matters that are of interest to graduates with the Council of the University through the Chair of the Alumni Council. It will continue to be a definite link between the graduates and their Faculties and Schools, a link with connections beyond the University that will arch across all professional disciplines.

Goals

The Committee of Convocation will bring a graduate perspective to the policy and operations of the University of Melbourne. In particular, it will:

- ◆ Participate, as a recognised alumni body, through the Alumni Council, in enhancing the reputation and status of the University of Melbourne;
- ◆ Maintain a broad, current, understanding of the University's policies and operations;
- ◆ Provide advice and support to the University Council through the Alumni Council;
- ◆ Provide a forum for open discussion by graduates on matters affecting the University and its graduates;
- ◆ Establish links between the graduates of the University and their Faculties and Schools, and with the University as a whole;
- ◆ Provide a source of experienced graduates willing to serve on advisory committees of Faculties and Schools, and other groups seeking wider input;
- ◆ Promote collegiality amongst graduates and students and within the University;
- ◆ Develop an active partnership with the Advancement Office of the University;
- ◆ Promote the reputation of the University amongst the graduates, to professional bodies and throughout the wider community.

Function & Actions

Planned functions and actions for the C of C, to implement the Goals, are listed below.

A. Relationships

- ◆ Develop a strong connection with the Alumni Council to help enable its success in connecting with graduates to the advantage of the University;
- ◆ Develop relationships between members and the Faculties and Schools, providing a pool of experienced people available to serve on their advisory committees, and any other professional groups where assistance or external advice may be requested.
- ◆ Constitute an experienced and cross-disciplinary resource for the Advancement Office from within the graduate community;
- ◆ Act as a broad-based and informed customer, on a confidential basis, to review any plans or strategies on which Council or the Alumni Council may desire comment in advance of public announcement;
- ◆ As representatives of the graduate body, have substantial involvement in University functions and special events, such as the conferring of degrees, the Menzies Oration, openings and launches;
- ◆ Canvass and consider graduate views across all disciplines, communicating electronically via its own home page at the University web site;
- ◆ Maintain strong links to a wide range of external professional bodies;
- ◆ Collate information and comment of value to the University and provide feedback via the Advancement Office, the President of the Alumni Council and advisory committees of Faculties and Schools.

B. Organisation

The Committee of Convocation will:

- ◆ Meet regularly on the Parkville campus to reinforce strong linkage with the University;
- ◆ Conduct elections to maintain the membership, with representation of major Faculties and Schools;
- ◆ Create protocols for the conduct of its affairs;
- ◆ Actively seek other avenues by which to inform itself about University policies and operations - including regular pre-meeting visits to various parts of the campus;
- ◆ Create, as required, sub-committees which will support areas of need;
- ◆ To streamline the work of the C of C, there will be an Executive Committee consisting of the President, the Deputy President, and the Chairpersons of the Sub-committees.
- ◆ Invite a speaker from the University staff for every meeting to inform C of C members about the current affairs and future plans of the University;
- ◆ Organise post-meeting dinners for members of the C of C in order to build collegiality;
- ◆ Arrange occasionally for speakers at dinners to reflect interesting research, publications and other activities to provide a wide perspective on life and work of the University and of its graduates;
- ◆ Hold a forum each year to which all graduates will be invited. A key speaker will be arranged and an opportunity will be provided for communication and promotion and for social interaction;
- ◆ Develop a web site linked with the Advancement Office and the University website;

Organisation (cont'd)

- ◆ Issue an annual report to be available by electronic means to all graduates and interested bodies such as internal University departments.

Governance

- ◆ The name of the organisation will continue to be "The Committee of Convocation";
- ◆ Membership of the C of C will be by election for three year terms from the total graduate base with representation across all Faculties and Schools with a minimum representation of two members from each faculty. There will be a maximum membership established;
- ◆ Initial procedures will be developed to ensure that all members do not stand concurrently for possible re-election. All existing members of the C of C, from 2010, will continue as members of the Committee for 2011, unless they wish to retire; A new appointee will be sought only if any faculty becomes unrepresented due to retirement/resignations. Initially such replacements will be made by nomination.
- ◆ A quorum at a meeting of the C of C will be twelve members;
- ◆ A President and Deputy President will be elected from amongst the members and they will hold office for two year terms;
- ◆ Meetings will be held regularly from March to November.
- ◆ As a recognised Body of the University, University Statute 1.3 - Meetings will be applicable;
- ◆ Open debate will be encouraged with open voting on resolutions as required but the emphasis will be on developing a consensus position. Standing Orders of the University Council will be followed should a contentious issue, not covered by Statute 1.3, arise. Additional Standing Orders will be created as may be required;
- ◆ A Code of Conduct for members will be established that will govern the general conduct of members of the C of C, to provide protocols for interaction with other University or external bodies and specify levels of authority to represent the C of C;
- ◆ The annual report of the C of C will record all significant activities for the year and it will include a summary of any income and expenditure;
- ◆ Minutes will be taken at each meeting and published;
- ◆ A program will be established to assist the induction of new members;

A list of items to be further developed. Such matters will include:

- ◆ Secretarial. (Taking of minutes, issue of notifications, adoption of a letterhead and external communications.)
- ◆ Financial. (Petty Cash for meetings and gifts for speakers and other administrative costs and an annual budget.)
- ◆ Links to University Web sites. (Advancement Office, the University Home Site, administrations of Schools and Faculties, other universities and other graduate bodies.)

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