

Minutes of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 18 February 2009

There were present: The Chair of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, Professor Derrick Armstrong, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) presiding, Ms Janet Money, Director, Koori Centre, Ms Sally Farrington, Head, Yooroang Garang, Dr Lilon Bandler, Indigenous Health Education, Faculty of Medicine, Dr Margaret Edmond, Director, Student Administration and Support, Dr Maree Murray, Assistant Director, SydneyPeople, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Dr Manju Sharma, Sydney University Physics Education Research Group, Ms Vicki Bradford, Sub Dean, Indigenous Strategy and Undergraduate, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Ms Rashmi Kumar, President of SUPRA, Mr Colin L James, Director I.B Fell Housing Research Council. Ms Sally Paynter was in attendance.

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies have been received from: Dr Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Dr Gaynor McDonald, Mr Stuart Rosewarne and Mr Vladamir Williams.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Resolution 1/09

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee adopted the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 October 2008 as a true record.

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

Ms Mooney reported that as Professor Dianne Day had resigned from the Koori Centre the development of a new degree in water management had been stopped. The Koori Centre would be reviewing the position left by Professor Day.

4. Report of the Chair

4.1 Indigenous Education Review update

The Chair was pleased to report that the Chair of the Indigenous Review Panel, Professor Michael McDaniel, had returned to work and was ready to continue with the second phase of the Review which would take place on the 23rd, 24th and 25th March 2009. All those participants scheduled to meet with the Panel late last year would once again be invited to participate in the second phase of the Review and the Committee would be kept informed of all developments relating to the Review.

4.2 AIME Liaison Group

As part of the Program Funding Agreement between the University and AIME a Liaison Group had been established comprising representatives from the University, AIME and University's students to support the Program. Professor Armstrong advised that he had asked Dr Lindsey Napier, Pro-Dean, Faculty of Education and Social Work to chair the Liaison Group which would endeavour to meet every three months. Membership of the Liaison Group was currently being negotiated.

The Committee discussed the overlap between the work of AIME and the newly established Social Inclusion Project and it was noted that the Head of Equity and Disability Services, Annett Cairnduff would be liaising with AIME to discuss the broader cohesion of the two programs.

Resolution 2/09

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

5. Report from the Indigenous Scholarship Working Group

At the Committee's last meeting a Working Group was established to review the current raft of scholarships, prizes and cadetships available to Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University with the view to making recommendations about future scholarship

provision. The convenor of the Working Group, Ms Sally Farrington, tabled a report on the Group's findings. Ms Farrington spoke to the report, noting the following key issues:

- The Working Group had collected information from faculties about the scholarships and prizes they offered, recommending that this information be retained and updated regularly and that the information to be accessible to students and staff.
- Data on the number of scholarships and prizes distributed annually to be retained centrally
- The University should be using scholarships more strategically to entice more Indigenous students to study at Sydney.
- Gap in scholarship provision for postgraduate students, for both coursework and research students and graduate entry students are not currently provided for under the current raft of scholarships.
- Requirements for entry scholarships for Indigenous students could be modified to lower the UAI requirement for school leavers.
- Process for accessing Commonwealth scholarships needed to be reviewed in terms of the application due dates and the application process.

The Committee agreed that the broader issue was whether the current scholarships on offer were meeting the needs of Indigenous students. It was noted that as well as the identified gap in postgraduate scholarships, accommodation scholarships were also in demand beyond those offered by the residential colleges. Accommodation was a key issue for Indigenous students as there were currently more students than places available and that this would be addressed in the Work Slate project on student housing, specifically in relation to Indigenous students and how accommodation assistance could be provided without effecting the Abstudy payment.

The Committee resolved to recommend that a workshop on Indigenous student housing and accommodation be held with representatives from faculties, CIS and the accommodation service be invited to attend.

Members agreed that the recommendations made by the Working Group were valuable and needed to be unpacked and discussed at length and that this could be done at a future meeting.

After lengthy discussion on whether the Indigenous Support Allocation funding should continue to be used to fund the Indigenous Scholarships in 2009, the Committee resolved to fund the scholarships as set out in the scholarships and events budget tabled by the Director of the Koori Centre. It was agreed that the issue of supporting postgraduate students who were unable to access ITAS funding needed to be explored and that part of the Indigenous Support Allocation funding could be ring-fenced for this purpose. Members recommended that any funding distributed to faculties for Indigenous students would be done so only if faculties submitted a strategic plan for recruiting and supporting Indigenous students in their faculties.

Resolution 3/09

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee resolved to recommend that:

- (i) The Indigenous scholarships for 2009 be funded as per the existing arrangements as outlined in the budget for 2009 provided by the Koori Centre.
- (ii) The recommendations highlighted in the Indigenous Scholarship Working Group report be explored further by the Committee in future meetings.
- (iii) The Scholarships and Prizes Office be requested to explore the possibility of increasing the number of entry scholarships for Indigenous students eg. Using another means of assessment other than a UAI.
- (iv) Postgraduate students and graduate entry students be considered under the provision for scholarships and support awards for Indigenous students.
- (v) Postgraduate students that are unable to access ITAS funding be provided for through specific funding from the Indigenous Support Allocation fund.

6. Report from the Koori Centre

Ms Janet Mooney tabled a budget to fund scholarships and events for 2009. See item 5 above.

Resolution 4/09

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report.

7. Report from Yooroang Garang

Ms Farrington advised she did not have anything additional to report. See item 5 above.

Resolution 5/09

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

9. Next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee would be held on Wednesday 22 April at 2pm in the Western Tower Board Room A14.