

Inaugural Summit of Councils of Deans Canberra, 5 March 2010

Introduction

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) saw an opportunity in the provision by Universities Australia of a venue and place in the program of its annual conference.

DASSH initiated a discussion with Universities Australia to gather Councils of Deans to share information and knowledge of the policy, programs and practice and structure.

Purpose of the Summit

To test the perception that Councils have common areas of interest and concern that transcends their disciplines and to evaluate the potential of holding future summits.

Production of the Summit

The Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) accepted the DASSH invitation to join with it in the preparation, promotion and implementation of the Summit. The Executive Officers of the two Councils prepared a letter of invitation, a database of contacts for promotion and the program. This included inviting and briefing speakers. They were also responsible for implementation and logistical requirements on the day, such as audiovisual and catering needs.

Universities Australia promoted the Summit through its conference promotions and received registrations and payments. The staff at Universities Australia is to be commended on the high standard of assistance given to the Summit.

The program

Councils of deans provide their members the opportunity to identify and progress issues of common interest within their disciplines and advocate for issues of their faculties to their universities. They also provide a vehicle for advocacy to industry, government and professional bodies. These generic roles and purposes were considered in developing the program.

The program was therefore divided into three sections:

Strategic Advocacy – within and without – a function of all councils

Disciplines setting standards – a current and common issue for all deans

State and status of Councils of Deans – testing the perception

The program is attached.

The presidents of DASSH and ACED introduced the Summit and Dr Glenn Withers, CEO, Universities Australia, welcomed participants and gave an overview of his organisation and its support for the Summit. Dr Withers referred to Deans as “the engine room of universities” and crucial to the implementation of the outcomes and recommendations arising from the federal government reviews. He advocated for a coordinated voice of the Deans as important in providing input to Deputy Vice Chancellors and finding solutions for example for TEQSA and issues around international students.

Rather than each Council speak about their organisation, delegates were asked to complete a proforma to be shared with other participants. The proforma allowed each Council to summarise specific aims, membership structure, governance, programs,

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links/partners and point of contact details. "Hot topics" were also called for in the proforma. This guided the Chairs in the last section of the Summit.

Outcomes

- 1) Well attended and represented Summit
Registrations – 47
Attendance – 35 of the registrations, 5 speakers,
Representation - 15 Councils, four other interested bodies
- 2) Profiles of 10 Councils, another received post Summit
- 3) Value adding to UA conference – 70% of the Summit participants also attended the conference
- 4) Common topics identified
 - i) Issues of inter- and cross disciplinarity with recognition that this is strong in the areas of design, mathematics and statistics, geography and psychology
 - ii) Architecture of the process of the Australian Research Council (ARC) initiative, Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) – with specific implications for inter- and cross disciplinarity research
 - iii) Implications of the national curriculum on the disciplines at university level
- 5) Identification of potential issues of common interest
 - i) Lobby together to ensure best possible outcomes for the senior secondary curricula
 - ii) The Summit as a forum for endorsement of the outcomes of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council *Learning and Teaching Standards Project*
 - iii) Collaboration for emerging issues of the implementation of ERA and the revised Australian Qualifications Framework through the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- 6) Actions identified
 - i) Professor Peter Dowd to work with representatives of councils present to prepare a response to the ARC on ERA
 - ii) The two sponsoring councils, DASSH and ACED, to work with Universities Australia on continued support for the Summit. Support could include provision of infrastructure to summit, presence at the 2011 conference, use of UA website as a central point of information on councils
 - iii) Sharing of issues papers, agenda outcomes and newsletters through council websites and their Executive Officers

Conclusion

The Summit outcomes indicate that it was a worthwhile activity. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the Summit. One participant said that listening to the speaker on advocacy and lobbying alone made his attendance worthwhile.

There was strong support for the Summit to be held again and to focus on areas of common interest where the holistic value of collaboration and lobbying is clear.

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The outcomes and comments verify the supposition on which the Summit was based, that Councils have common areas of interest and concern that transcends their disciplines.

Contacts

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Summit Program

8.00am	REGISTRATION	
9.00 am	Introduction & Welcome	Professor Anthony Cahalan President, DASSH Professor Peter Dowd President, ACED
	Opening	Dr Glenn Withers AO Universities Australia
9.15	Strategic Advocacy – within and without	Dr Michael Armitage, CEO, Australian Health Insurance Association
10.15-	MORNING TEA	
10.45	<i>Disciplines setting standards</i>	Professor Christine Ewan, Head Learning Networks Australian Learning & Teaching Council (ALTC) Discipline Scholars
11.45	State and status of Councils of Deans	Presidents, DASSH & ACED
12.30	CLOSE	

An initiative of the Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) with the Australian Council of Deans of Engineering (ACED), supported by Universities Australia.

Summit Registrations

COUNCIL OF DEANS (ABBREV)	COUNCIL OF DEANS (FULL)
DASSH	Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities (DASSH)
ACED	Australian Council of Engineering Deans
ACUADS	Australian Council of University Art & Design Schools
ABDC	Australian Business Deans Council
ADBED	Aust Deans of Built Environment & Design
ACDE	Australian Council of Deans of Education Inc
ACDICT	Australian Council of Deans of Information and Communications Technology
CDNM	Council of Deans of Nursing & Midwifery Australia & New Zealand
ACDS	Australian Council of Deans of Science
ACDA	Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture
ACPDHS	Australian Council of PVCs and Deans of Health Sciences
ANZATS	Australia and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools
CDT	The Council of Deans of Theology
CDNM	Council of Deans of Nursing & Midwifery
CDS & CDHA	Council of Deans of Science & Australian Council of PVCs and Deans of Health Sciences
CVDANZ	Council of Veterinary Deans of Australia & New Zealand
DDOGS	Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools
NZVCV	New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee