

Covering memorandum to Council

We have now completed the process of consultation with staff, students and other stakeholders on the Campus Development Proposals and have considered carefully the feedback that was received as a result of that process. The attached document summarises that feedback and provides a list of those individuals and organisations who commented on the principles and proposals that were made available to interested parties via a number of presentations, meetings and the University website.

In considering this matter and coming to the recommendations below, we have been conscious not only of the consultation process, but also of the several discussions held with Council on this matter over the last two years and, of course, the University Strategic Plan.

The "Principles" that were advanced for discussion attracted relatively little comment (these principles are reproduced below in summary form as part of the recommendations). Generally speaking, there was support for the University moving to take a longer term and more strategic view of its Campus Development planning. Most comments about the principles highlighted the inevitable tension between the principles as they applied to the University overall and the impact they might have on particular campuses or parts of the University. We conclude that while careful attention must be paid to the interests of all parts of the University, it is appropriate for Council to adopt these principles as a guide to future campus planning.

With respect to the specific Proposals, there were few comments concerning those proposals relating to the location of the Faculty of Law, the consolidation of Arts in the 200 sector, the consolidation of Engineering, the Faculty of Science or student accommodation. Within this group of proposals, the main concerns were issues to do with: relocation of SGGES (reflecting the fact that staff in this school have affiliations to both the Arts and Science Faculties); the issue of how Psychology should be distributed between the City and Tamaki Campuses; and more general issues concerning the impact of these relocations on traffic-related matters in Symonds St.

With respect to the NICAI proposals, the few responses that were received were supportive of the proposal to relocate Elam to the 400N sector. Most submissions express dissatisfaction with the current arrangements for the School of Music and concern that those needs were not specifically addressed in the consultation documents. There was a view among some respondents that the School of Music should be co-located with the balance of NICAI in the 400N sector. This is a matter that we will be able to address during the detailed planning phase although it has to be acknowledged that the present Music School building is a highly specialised facility viewed as being of particularly high architectural merit and has a limited range of alternate uses. Music facilities are expensive to construct, and this would be a significant barrier to abandoning and recreating the existing School.

There was little comment about the proposals with respect to the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences and the Liggins Institute. Most of the submissions were concerned with the need to enhance facilities at the Grafton site. There was also concern expressed that the first principle (concentration of teaching and research activities on the City/Grafton Campus), if taken too literally, would weaken the position of the School of Population Health at Tamaki.

Submissions in relation to the Tamaki Campus were divided between those concerned about the possible relocation of Physical Education from the Epsom Campus and those expressing concerns about the impact of the principles (particularly the first principle) on the Tamaki Campus. This is understandable since the principles, if accepted, would mean a much smaller population at Tamaki than has been envisaged in the past.

About half the submissions were concerned with one proposal, the relocation of the Faculty of Education to the City Campus. There were strong opinions expressed both in favour of and against this proposal. Those who favoured the proposal generally did so on the basis that they could see educational advantages in having teacher education and research co-located with most of the other Faculties of the University. A number of supporters of the proposal also saw advantages in the University creating purpose-built facilities for the Faculty of Education on the City Campus in contrast to the facilities presently available at Epsom. Those against the proposal voiced a number of concerns including the need to have regard for the history and cultural aspects of the Epsom site, the advantages of the Epsom location (e.g. in regard to parking and transportation) and the atmosphere of the current location as it was seen to be particularly suited to a Faculty of Education.

Conclusions

Overall, we conclude that the principles that were proposed to inform Campus Development are valuable and that they should be confirmed by the University Council. In making this recommendation, we note that they are principles rather than “absolutes”. Thus the principle that “As far as possible, teaching and research activities should be concentrated on the City/Grafton Campus” is not an absolute statement that all activities must be at the City and Grafton. Rather, the principle enunciates a view that there must be a good reason for activities to be located elsewhere, while acknowledging that in some cases such good reasons may exist.

With respect to the various specific proposals, other than Education, we believe it is appropriate that they be adopted as a guide to future planning of our Campuses. Although there have been many issues raised in regard to those proposals, they are mostly matters that will come to the fore during the planning of specific sectors or facilities within those sectors. A number of submissions made constructive points that will helpfully inform further refinement and implementation of the campus development strategy.

With respect to the proposal that the Faculty of Education be relocated to the City Campus, our view is that the strategic and educational advantages of such a move would considerably outweigh the historical and locational disadvantages. To put it simply, were we designing the University *de novo* it is most unlikely that we would place Education (or indeed any faculty) at Epsom. However, it is not possible to form a final view on that matter without a great deal more work and consultation. Accordingly, we are recommending that Council agree to management undertaking further consultation and work in this area before coming back with a final recommendation, but noting that, based on information and analysis available to date, a recommendation to relocate the Faculty in whole or in part is the likely outcome.

Stuart McCutcheon
Vice-Chancellor

Jonathan Blakeman
Director of Administration