



Monthly e-Newsletter – October 2009

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EDITORIAL OF SORTS

We are on short rations this month, I'm sorry to tell you. For various reasons, this edition is late, and in the end had to be turned round in under 24 hours. So it doesn't quite measure up to the content and breadth expectations I have for this little knockabout publication.

Which is not to say there aren't a few goodies – there are. But just a few this time around.

You'll have to excuse any howlers. I haven't had a chance to read it through carefully before sending it out to you.

Ordinarily, I aim to get the newsletter out 'around' the 5th of the month. That's my plan for the November edition.

If you are receiving a copy of this newsletter and would prefer not to, email me and I'll scrub you from the distribution list. My email address is: rob@sharpwords.com.au

19TH ANNUAL AAIR FORUM

11-13 November 2009

InterContinental Hotel, Adelaide

The theme for this year's AAIR Forum is:

Turning water into wine: Institutional research as an essential ingredient in strategic decision making for tertiary education.

The Forum will focus on strategic priorities in the sector, including:

- supporting strategic planning
- adding value to measuring and predicting
- responding to skills shortages
- environmental and economic sustainability.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM NOW AVAILABLE

The preliminary program is on the Conference website. Papers, SIGs and workshops in serried columns here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2009/program.php>

VENUE

The Forum will be held at the InterContinental Hotel in Adelaide. You can kip there, or at a number of other hotels offering special deals for Forum goers:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2009/accommodation.php>

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC

Dr Gavin Moodie

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/vc/ate/moodie/>

Nick Palousis

<http://www.sbpractices.com/nick-palousis>

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AAIR Annual General Meeting

There are a few formalities that demand attention, and I love a good formality as you know. As part of the Annual Forum each year, we also hold the AAIR AGM. Actually, the AGM is about as formal as St Kilda foreshore on a Sunday morning, but we have to let you know it's on in very formal terms. It goes like this...

Notice of 2009 AAIR Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the 2009 AAIR Annual General Meeting.

Date: 13th November, 2009

Time: 10.15AM

Place: Intercontinental Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia

Agenda:

1. Attendance, Apologies and Proxies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2008 AGM
3. Committee's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
5. Planning for 2010 AAIR Forum
6. Special and General Business
7. Next Meeting
8. Closure

The minutes of the previous AGM, and the Proxy Form, are available at AAIR's website.

Please direct Proxies to the Secretary, Dean Ward, via email:
d.ward@ecu.edu.au

NEWSLETTER NOTES

1. Very SEEDy

ACER has established the Student Engagement Enhancement Database (SEED) – a companion to the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement.

This will be the place to ferret out good practice in student engagement from unis in NZ & Oz.

Already on the site are some gems from ANU. La Trobe, Griffith and Macquarie.

SEED is growing here:

<http://www.acer.edu.au/ausse/seed.html>

2. Matching skills with social and economic needs

Skills Australia has released a trio of papers, each of which you'll have to find time for. (Says me, only halfway through the task. Check back with me on Friday to see if I've been too hasty.) They are:

- Workforce Futures Overview Paper
- Background Paper One: What does the future hold? Meeting Australia's skill needs
- Background Paper Two: Powering the workplace - Realising Australia's skill potential.

The titles give you a pretty good idea of what it's all about. You need to get the whole idea pretty quickly under your belt because Skills Australia wants your comments by 6 November. We can get a bit cranky about the short timelines these days for responses to so many policy proposals. But I'm prepared to let this one through without cavil because the papers are attempting to come to grips with something we've nattered and rolled our eyes about for yonks – the dots don't join so well between policy domains that have a common focus on putting the right skills and knowledge to good use.

You can find the links to each of the papers at the top of this web page, under the heading 'Australia's Workforce Futures - submissions invited':

http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications_and_Resources/Skills_Australia_public_papers.htm

3. The AQF's new clothes

The AQF Council has released *Strengthening the AQF: an architecture for Australia's qualifications* – the second of two discussion papers on how to tidy up the AQF. The deadline for response is 16 October, so you'd better sharpen your pencil. The tables at the end of the paper are probably where you want to spend your time.

I reckon the proposal does a good job at sorting out the schemozzle in the middle of the existing AQF – levels 5-7. I'm still thinking about what the proposal means for Certs I and II. I'm not really

keen on the use of duration of quals as a guide to anything much really – not a good proxy for volume of learning in my humble opinion. This may be where the AQF meets TEQSA.

Anyway, the very long url for the discussion paper is as follows:

<http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Strengthening%20the%20AQF%20-%20An%20Architecture%20for%20Australias%20Qualifications.pdf>

4. Go forth and teach the multitude

Goodness knows why I've come over all biblical. But setting aside the need for some swift psychoanalysis, I recommend you have a look at the Macquarie Uni Learning and Teaching Centre's page of links to teaching resources.

There is lots to detain the curious. If you go to Assessment for example, you'll find a link to Principles – at the end of the link is a dot point overview of 7 Principles of Assessment as Learning. But wait! There's more. Also under Assessment is a link to the Assessment Toolkit. Aladdin's Cave, I tell you. And yes, there's even more. Also under Assessment are some good practice examples of assessment from Macquarie academics in a range of disciplines – conveyed in conversational tone.

Yeah – go on. Drop in:
<http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/resources/index.htm>

5. But who shall teach the multitude?

Well that's a very good question. We are running out academics, the VET workforce is going grey and the baby boomers loom large in schools. It's probably the higher ed workforce that's the biggest challenge. We are spending a lot of energy on how to manage the expansion in higher ed student numbers in order to hit those targets. But arguably the bigger question is how we are going to find academics to teach them. Big issue. Takes a long time solve the problem. Better start about five years ago, but now will have to do.

For those of you who have access to Campus Review, there's an article in the 12 October edition on this: 'Untapped PhDs: solution to the workforce woes?' The article taps into the work produced by the LH Martin Institute at Melbourne Uni titled *The Australian academic profession in 2007 – a first analysis of results*. Just a shortie at 36 pages it unpicks some of the knotty issues before

us, and not least the use of casual/sessional teachers as a holding operation we don't properly understand yet:

http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/conference_events/2009/research_briefing.pdf

I thought Ross Guest's article in *The Australian Higher Education* supplement was pretty neat, too: 'Reform academe to attract talent'. Guest suggests de-emphasising the PhD as the ticket to an academic job and getting serious about pay scales: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,26173421-25192,00.html>

FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

Does College Really Matter?

I've had a few good listening experiences over the past few weeks, but this is the standout. You could justifiably skip *Australian Idol* for three weeks in a row and settle into the three lecture series by Andrew Delbanco, Professor of American Studies at Columbia University.

They're probably all accessible on one page from Princeton's website, where he delivered them. But as time is agin me, I can steer you to them one by one from the UChannel website.

The first lecture is a terrific overview of how higher ed evolved in the US from its British roots. If you ever wondered what the difference is between college and university in the US, this is the easy way to find out:

<http://uc.princeton.edu/main/index.php/component/content/article/4912>

The second lecture is the pearl. Delbanco treats us to his views about why higher education has hit a few snags. It comes with a nice reminder of why the humanities matter as much as the sciences:

<http://uc.princeton.edu/main/index.php/component/content/article/4910>

The final lecture is a bit tedious if you aren't much interested in US higher ed financing. That aside, Delbanco digs into questions of equity and access: <http://uc.princeton.edu/main/index.php/component/content/article/4909>

These lectures were delivered in December 2008, so I'm late in getting to them. But good wine lasts.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE 2009 AAIR DATA WAREHOUSING FORUM?

Rob Hayne from Griffith Uni wants you to know that it went like this...

Griffith University hosted the 2009 AAIR Data Warehousing Special Interest Group forum on the 27 and 28 August 2009 at its Eco Centre on the Nathan campus. The forum was attended by approximately 90 delegates from 24 universities ranging geographically from Perth, across the country and over The Ditch to Wellington. The forum offered the opportunity for delegates to meet each other, view presentations on relevant topics from both within and outside the tertiary sector and discuss informally common issues faced in the collection, storage and reporting of information in university environments.

Two parallel streams were conducted:

- Data Warehousing /Data Quality
- Business Intelligence/Performance Management.

Topics ranged through issues such as: standardising organisational structure data for best effect; using the right methodology for building Data Warehouses and Business Intelligence; and establishing appropriate coordination, governance and strategy for Business Intelligence. There were practically oriented sessions on implementations of Load Management and KPI reporting. A lively panel discussion was also held on day two. Best presentation award went to Rob Hale of UNE for his session on 'Getting agile – doing what the customer wants, when they want it'.

The forum dinner was held on the first evening. Fine views from the top floor of Rydges, overlooking South Bank, the river and the city, were enjoyed by all, as was the sumptuous dinner. Delegates were kept entertained by the skills of the roving caricaturist.

In closing the forum, MC Rob Payne, channelling Juan Antonio Samaranch, described the two days as 'the best forum ever'. Feedback from delegates has backed up this outrageous claim, with forum evaluations returning around 86% overall satisfaction with cost, venues, program and presentation quality, and the support and organisation of the Griffith staff.

Enquiries about the opportunity to enjoy the rewarding experience of hosting the 2010 forum can be made to the AAIR executive.

PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

This little entry is usually the last thing I do every month. But the clock has beaten this time around. I just don't have the time to tell you where to go. With one exception. You really should go to the AAIR Forum – that's 11-13 November.

The Forum really starts before it starts. On Tuesday 10 November we have two consecutive events on the go:

- DEEWR Advanced HEPCAT Training Session
- Workshop: Overview of Institutional Research.

That sets you up for the Forum proper which rolls up its sleeves with a full day on Wednesday 11 November and goes like the clappers until mid-afternoon on Friday the 13th.

Among the delights in store are these:

- Denise Bradley's keynote on 'Convergence, competition and collaboration – planning in the emerging tertiary environment'
- 'Measuring and improving participation and success of students in equity groups at Go8 universities' – a paper presented by Helen Montesin and Jo Ashley, Group of Eight
- ACER AUSSE workshop
- 'Using a network of Program Heads to enact successful change in a higher education institution' – paper presented by Leonid Grebennikov and Kim Jarvis, UWS
- 'Building Institutional Capability through the Mining of Student Support Data' – paper presented by Alexandra Greene and Stella Birve, UniSA
- 'The relationship between study and work: perspectives from the Australian Graduate Survey' – paper presented by Anton Griffith, GCA
- 'Course Assessment Profiling for enhanced educational and employment outcomes' – paper presented by Sonia Ferns, Curtin Uni.

And that doesn't scratch the surface.

Looking forward to seeing you there.
