UCA President’s Report

2014 Annual General Meeting

The UCA year began with a successful mini-conference held at the Broadbeach Surf Lifesaving Club on the Gold Coast. An interactive and engaging workshop presentation by Dr James Scott, a clinical and research psychiatrist on ‘Youth Mental Health’ was a feature of the event. James was highly recommended to UCA by Professor Pat McGorry and he did not disappoint us. The theme selected was, the well-being of our students and mental health issues, which addressed concerns raised regularly at our meetings with members. The annual get-togethers remain an invaluable and joyful way to network with peers.

Executive Meetings

As the National Executive Committee members are located around the country in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide and Brisbane our monthly Executive Committee meetings are held by teleconference. Our local chapter visits also provide an opportunity for face to face meetings. The Association membership has remained constant since 2013, due to the continuing efforts of the executive committee and our part-time Executive Officer. The Executive continues to work actively and collaboratively to support and represent our members. Our meetings continue to focus upon the key themes: collegiality, leadership, communication and advocacy.

2014 Chapter Visit – UNSW and Macquarie University

The Executive Committee travelled to NSW to meet with the Heads of Colleges and Halls at the University of NSW and Macquarie University on 5th and 6th August, 2014. Local members, Trevor Cairney OAM and Dr Alasdair Murrie-West, assisted with the organisation and planning for the visits. The Committee also had an opportunity to discuss residential issues with senior Macquarie University staff, Deirdre Anderson (DVC - Students and Registrar) and Craig Oliver (Director - Campus Life).

An informal networking dinner with Sydney University Heads was also kindly hosted by Dr Marie Leech at Sancta Sophia.

As a result of the visits to Western Australia in 2013 and Sydney in 2014, a number of areas of member interest were raised. The program for the 2014 Adelaide Conference has been devised with the intention of addressing these important issues: for example, the need for more information and professional development on governance issues, the increasing costs
of higher education, alcohol use and the manner in which the collegiate experience can support and retain indigenous students.

The collaboration with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), a leading national organisation that specialises in this field of governance, has ensured that a high quality program was developed.

**Branding Strategy for website and e-newsletter**

Our website and e-newsletters provide the primary method of communication to all members. The Association’s name change was an important development and needed to be supported by updated marketing and communication material. A small Branding Strategy procedure was entered into with the firm Backtobasics to better communicate our mission to both members and other stakeholders in the sector. The key communication messages and the new tag-line Better Leaders, Better Collegiate Life have received positive feedback. Significant work has also been done on the UCA website to make it more functional and increase the content available. If you haven’t looked at our website recently, please revisit it soon.

**Resident Assistants Employment Status**

The Executive requested the consultant, Peter McDonald of Tertiary Balance, to provide a general research paper for members on this complex issue. It has been 16 years since the Association previously commissioned advice on this issue from Clayton Utz in Sydney.

The 2014 paper is available upon request and provides a sound summary of the general legal context. It is a good starting point for developing policies and procedures in an individual college or hall.

**National Census of Colleges and Halls**

The last major census for our sector was conducted over 15 years ago and there have been many changes since that time. The Executive, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Department of Education and ACCUHO, has commissioned Tertiary Balance to conduct a new census. Hopefully, your college or hall has already received a survey instrument and completed it. The general results will prove a valuable strategic and planning resource to UCA and will be shared with members.

**Relationships with other Associations**

Our Immediate Past President, Mrs Barbara Green represented UCA and delivered a report at the annual AACUHO Conference in Melbourne. You may recall that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by UCA with AACUHO in 2012. We agreed to work together collaboratively on projects of mutual interest. In accordance with this MOU, a meeting with AACUHO executive members is scheduled for Adelaide on the 30th September.
Appreciation

As you will be aware, almost all of the work we do is provided by volunteers. Special thanks to our Executive Committee members, Dr Ian Walker, Ms Rose Alwyn, Dr Marie Leech, Dr Carla Tromans and Mrs Barbara Green. It is a pleasure to work with such an active and positive team and their friendship and support is much appreciated. All members have made a significant contribution, however the special contribution made by Rose as local convenor for the Adelaide Conference must be acknowledged. She has completed her role in the most difficult of circumstances and we offer our sincere condolences for the loss of her husband David on the 30th April this year.

Deborah Pugh, our Executive Officer, manages to fit many different activities into her one day a week engagement. She makes a wonderful contribution to the Association’s ongoing work and her efforts are much appreciated.

Dr Bob Cope our conference organiser has done a superb job of managing the process and keeping us all on track.

It has been a pleasure to work with UCA as President over the past two years and I look forward to continuing to work with the Executive, as Immediate Past President, to support members and promote our vibrant and nurturing colleges and halls.

Adjunct Professor Iyla Davies
President
University Colleges Australia

Adelaide, South Australia
3 October 2014