

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Public Relations

From G. Pickford*

The article "The need for University Public Relations" by Stephen Johnston was interesting in that it outlined the problem very perceptively, but offered as a solution most of the things that Universities currently do.

It is clear to me that the things Universities are doing now to improve their relations with the public are not working, and therefore fresh approaches are needed. I did not find any untried approaches in Stephen Johnston's article.

My own experience at the University of Wollongong leads me to believe that there are two steps, very simple ones, that need to be taken.

1. Universities must, within themselves, cease to see contact with the outside world as undesirable and damaging to the University image.
2. Universities must get interested members of the public actively involved in working for, and financially supporting, that part of the University which interests them the most.

The first step must precede the second.

Everything else that is mouthed about University public relations is quite simply rubbish.

Giles Pickford
18 May 1983

*Giles Pickford has worked at the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and in four Australian Universities. He is currently the Executive Officer of the Friends of the University of Wollongong Ltd, which he helped to create.

"Disruption and Due Process" a reply

From
Associate Professor G. Gurthoys, President,
and Mr. R. Mackie, Secretary, University
of Newcastle Staff Association

We refer to Brian Martin's article 'Disruption and Due Process: The Dismissal of Dr Spautz from the University of Newcastle' (*Vestes*, Vol. 26, 1983, No. 1, pp. 3-9), concerning the conduct of Dr M.E. Spautz within the University of Newcastle and the statutory dismissal of Dr Spautz from a senior lectureship. Apart from the issue of the wisdom of publication of a detailed analysis and comment at a time when Dr Spautz is pursuing before courts of law various claims in respect of events leading up to the dismissal of him from office, the question arises whether Dr Martin fully appreciates the nature of the role of the University of Newcastle Staff Association in the University proceedings in the matter of Dr Spautz.

Dr Martin states, *inter alia*, that the 'Report of the Executive to the Members of the Staff Association on the Recent Dismissal of a Tenured Member of the Academic Staff of the University' (dated 11 July, 1980) "does not attempt to address the full complexity and ramifications of the case" (*loc.cit.* p.4). Dr Martin should be aware that this was at no time the intention of the Executive. In fact the Executive conceived that its primary duty to the members of the Association was to maintain impartial vigilance in the course of what emerged as an integrated process of discipline of a tenured member of the academic staff of the University. It was certainly not the role of the Executive to make an evaluative judgement of the conduct of Dr Spautz or the substance of his "campaign" in the University.

Geoff Gurthoys
Robert Mackie
29 June 1983

"The Corbett Report and After" — a comment

From
Dr. John Hatch
Department of Economics,
University of Adelaide

I read with much interest the paper by Peter Mayer, *Vestes*, Vol 26.1 entitled "The Revolution of 1981: The Corbett Report and After", which outlines recent changes in the governance of the University of Adelaide. As someone who has spent the last sixteen years of their academic career at the University of Adelaide, most recently as a Departmental Chairperson, I found it in general a lively and balanced view of what has been occurring. It is of interest in itself, but also because it may throw light on other attempts at administrative 'revolution'.

I would like however to clarify what I think are a couple of slightly misleading comments, or perhaps omissions. I hope that these will not be interpreted as special pleading, but rather indicative of some of the complex issues which arise when hard decisions have to be made. My queries relate to Dr Mayer's discussion of the so-called Compact, which was an attempt to achieve a systematic and equitable reduction of academic staff members. I should immediately declare myself by stating that I am Chairman of one of the two Departments, Economics, in one of the two Faculties which in Dr Mayer's words "...sought... to repudiate the Compact". It is true that the Economics Faculty, and the Engineering Faculty, quite separately opposed the Compact. However, in Economics we did not oppose it on principle, but rather in detail, and I think that this reflected the enormous problems involved in practice, in implementing contraction. This relates to my second quibble. Dr Mayer coyly, but I think wisely, rarely mentions Faculties or Departments by name, but in discussing the implementation of the Compact he states that "The largest *absolute* reductions in staffing levels... were in the Faculties of Arts and Science which are to be reduced by 9 per cent and

Vestes, 26(2), 1983

CORRIGENDA

1. The last issue of Vestes was incorrectly labelled "Vol. 27, 1983, No. 2". This should have read "Vol. 26, 1983, No. 2".
2. On page 55 of the last issue a letter appears from Associate Professor G. Curthoys and Mr R. Mackie who are described as President and Secretary respectively of the University of Newcastle Staff Association.

It should be noted that Professor Curthoys and Mr Mackie were President and Secretary respectively during the events described in "Disruption and Due Process" (Vestes, Vol. 26, 1983, No. 1) in 1980, but do not now occupy those positions.
3. In the article "Women in Australian Universities 1945-80" in the last issue, an error in Table 6, p. 19 has been brought to our notice by the author. In that table, the figure for Women Staff as a percentage of Academic Staff in Australian Universities for 1975 should read 15%.