



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), MARK PARTON MLA

Inquiry into referred 2018–19 Annual and Financial Reports QUESTION ON NOTICE

BEC CODY: To ask the University of Canberra

Ref: Annual Report

In relation to: Assistant Professor Scheme

UC has recently been in the media regarding the Assistant Professor Scheme, how has the Uni responded to these claims?

Response

On the 29 March 2019, the University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Deep Saini, announced an independent review of Contingent-Continuing academic employment—commonly referred to as the Assistant Professor program—to evaluate and improve the program.

The University just concluded an independent review into these matters, when will the results be made public?

Response

The results of the independent review were released to all University staff on 19 November 2019 and ongoing consultation is occurring to support implementation and agreed outcomes.

The following communication to staff from the Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Deep Saini, summarises the outcomes of the review.

"The University of Canberra has accepted three of the four major recommendations of the Independent Review into the Contingent-Continuing Program, commonly known as the Assistant Professor Program.

The fourth recommendation, which called for the elimination of education-focused stream of Assistant Professors, was deemed inconsistent with the University's workforce plan and dedication to high quality teaching.

Further, nine of the twelve secondary and tertiary recommendations were also accepted, accepted with further enhancement, or accepted with alignment to university policy. Two of the recommendations that were not accepted are already provided for in the current Enterprise Agreement.

Professor Deep Saini, Vice-Chancellor and President, today met with the Assistant Professor cohort to discuss the recommendations of the Independent review, and adopt a co-designed implementation to the response to the report in consultation with the cohort. UC today released the report in full to all staff, after meeting with those directly impacted in the program.

"We've listened to our staff, we have received an external independent report, we've analysed that, and we've acted in consultation with those impacted staff," said Professor Deep Saini, Vice-Chancellor and President. "We have acted with the intent to create a sustainable, positive environment for our staff to continue to excel."

The Independent Review was commissioned directly by the Vice-Chancellor in May to improve the implementation of the high-performance scheme—established in 2010.

The Review aimed to enable the Vice-Chancellor to make informed changes to the program and seek any recommendations that could result in an improved performance for program participants.

Staff were invited to participate in the extensive independent consultation process. A total of 44 current and past Assistant Professors, 16 management staff and three National Tertiary Education Union staff were formally interviewed. A staff forum was also held on 14 August 2019 to enable staff to provide further input and 18 written submissions were received. There are currently 95 Assistant Professors at UC.

The Independent Review Report highlighted many positive aspects of the program, and recommended to retain these. The intent of the program is recognised for its significant contribution to the University through the impact of high performance across all areas of academic performance—in both teaching and research, service, engagement and leadership.

"I am committed to ensuring that, before I leave UC on December 20, the process of implementing the accepted recommendations of the report is set in motion," said Professor Deep Saini, Vice-President and Chancellor.

"I am confident in our focus on co-designing the activities related to the recommended improvements and thank all the Assistant Professors who have contributed to the review and their commitment to the program going forward."

Ends.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs

Signature:



Date:

5/02/2020

By the [name/title of Vice Chancellor]

Belinda Robinson