

Report of the Board of Education

The Board of Education met on 30 June and 1 July 1988. Five new members attended the meeting: Anne Hazell, Christine Henderson, David Jones, Fay Nicholson and Vicki Williamson.

Membership

Due to the number of new members on the Board of Education, the membership of Board sub-committees has changed substantially. The Professional Standards Committee now comprises Ed Parr (Convenor), Mairead Browne, David Jones, Fay Nicholson and Janette Wright. The Professional Development Committee now comprises Twila Herr (Convenor), Anne Hazell, Christine Henderson and Vicki Williamson.

Revised conditions

The first two applications for professional membership of the LAA under the revised criteria were considered at the meeting. One of these was accepted by the Board. Seven overseas qualifications were assessed, five of which were accepted by the Board. The Board has decided to accept all graduates of courses in the United Kingdom which are currently accredited by the Library Association, and all graduates of schools accredited by the American Library Association. It is investigating the course recognition policies and procedures of the New Zealand Library Association and the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Service with a view to automatic acceptance of recognised awards from those countries.

Tim Bruwer, a member of the Association, expressed concern that block acceptance of South African awards might encourage librarians who subscribe to apartheid and racist theology. The Board considers that its main responsibility is for professional status of courses, and has referred the matter raised by Mr Bruwer to General Council for discussion in the context of the revision of LAA policy statements.

Professor Boyd Rayward of the University of NSW and the staff of the Graduate School of Librarianship at Monash University have written to the LAA seeking postponement of the implementation of the new criteria for eligibility for professional membership. Margaret Cameron of Deakin University has also expressed concern about this change. They oppose the possibility of acceptance under new criteria of persons who have completed courses not recognised by the Association or who have failed recognised courses, and the assessment of individuals. They consider that these changes may discourage schools of library and information studies from seeking or retaining recognition of their courses. They believe the professional competence and commitment criteria cannot be assessed satisfactorily.

The Board felt that these matters could be addressed under the new criteria and that guidelines could be prepared to assist state panels in these instances.

Educational policy statements

The Board is undertaking a major review of educational policy statements and will put suggested revisions to Council in 1989.

Assessing overseas technicians

The Board decided that the current procedure for assessing overseas library technician qualifications, which is based on the assessment of the applications on an individual basis and on the use of precedents, should

continue. The criteria and procedures for assessment of overseas library technician qualifications will be reviewed at the Board's second meeting in 1989.

External courses for technicians

Helen O'Brien has examined the possibilities and limitations of providing a national external studies program for library technicians, and has recommended that such a course be established. This recommendation is supported by the LAA Central Western Regional Group, the New England Regional Group and the Library Technicians Section (NSW Group).

The Chairman of the Board of Education and the Assistant Executive Director are to prepare a submission to the Department of Education, Employment and Training, setting out the existing pattern of library technician education, identifying issues such as access and suggesting options and the desirability of a national policy.

Accreditation for library technician qualifications

Helen O'Brien has suggested that the Board develop a position on the commonality of some procedural components of library technician and professional level courses, with a view to producing guidelines for the granting of status for library technician studies in professional courses.

The Board recognises that this is an area requiring a flexible approach and that the granting of advanced standing will depend on individual circumstances. The Board wishes to encourage co-operation between schools teaching library technician and professional courses in exploring ways in which improved access for people with library technician qualifications can be obtained.

The Secretary is to write to library technician schools suggesting that they negotiate status for their graduates with schools offering professional courses.

Selection and training of librarianship students

The President is concerned that some library schools admit students on the basis of academic scores only, with no employer participation in the selection process, and that advocacy skills are often not given sufficient attention in courses.

The Chairman of the Board is to prepare a paper on attracting people with innate skills into library and information studies courses. The selection of students will be included in the review of the education policy statements and a summary of current procedures in library and information studies schools will be made. Schools will be advised that this is a matter being examined by the Board and which requires their attention. The development of advocacy, marketing and public relations skills will also be examined by the Professional Development Committee.

Priorities for reform

The Chairman of the Board is preparing a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training. Issues to be canvassed in the paper will include information literacy, funding for post-basic courses, level of resources for library and information studies, research funding, adult and continuing education, and the needs of libraries to support independent study.

Upgrading of courses

The situation regarding the status of library technician certificate qualifications in relation to the new associate diploma courses varies significantly between the states. Some states require technicians with a certificate to undertake a bridging course, while in others the two awards are regarded as being equivalent in the workplace. The Secretary of the Board is to write to the Directors-General of TAFE in those states where the library technician certificate has been upgraded to associate diploma level, seeking a statement regarding the relationship between the two courses.

Academic standards

The Sub-Committee on Academic Standards of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has produced a paper which examines the relationship between academic standards and the recognition of degrees by professional bodies in a number of professions, including medicine, engineering, law, chemistry, psychology and accountancy.

The Secretary of the Board is to forward a brief response to the AVCC paper, outlining the Association's course recognition procedures and policies.

Training foundation

In September 1987, the Minister of Industry, Technology and Commerce, Senator Button, released an information industries strategy aimed at boosting the performance and competitiveness of the Australian information industries. The Department is establishing the Information Industries Training Foundation (IITF) to identify specific skill shortages and facilitate the development of short courses to rectify these.

The Chairman, in consultation with Janette Wright, is to prepare a submission to the Department of Industry Technology and Commerce on library representation on the IITF.

Meeting of educators

The Board's meeting with library educators, which is held in conjunction with the biennial conference, will take place on Wednesday, 31 August 1988.

Collection of workforce data

Mairead Browne has developed a methodology for collecting publicly advertised workforce data. A proposal for collecting this information has been placed on the agenda for the Executive Committee meeting on 25 August 1988.

Awards

The Board considered nominations for Fellowships and the Library Manager of the Year Award. Recommendations regarding these awards have been forwarded to General Council for endorsement.

Course recognition visits

Course recognition visits have been conducted at the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education and Monash University. The Board has forwarded recommendations regarding these visits to the General Council. A course recognition visit will be conducted at the University of NSW in September.

Louise Lansley

Secretary
Board of Education