**NZPI’s New Education Policy and Accreditation**

**Hamish G. Rennie and Ali Memon***

In December 2009, despite concern expressed by Lincoln and other universities, the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) Council approved a new Education Policy. The Policy is interesting in that it moves in a different direction to that being taken in Australia and does not fit with the direction of the Bologna Convention on education and the direction being taken in Europe. In some respects, it signifies a shift of the pendulum back towards Town Planning and away from regional and environmental planning. A Bachelors degree must comprise four years study to meet the new NZPI Policy and the three year plus one model (acceptable previously and still accepted in Australia) does not fit the new NZPI Policy.

NZPI accreditation of planning programmes enables a student completing that programme to enter the NZPI as a Graduate member. After a further three years of professional work experience, they are eligible to apply for full membership.

Lincoln University has given the new policy considerable thought. In doing so, it has considered the value attributed by employers to its multidisciplinary Bachelor of Environmental Management and Planning (BEMP) programme and the flexibility it allows students to diversify into planning or other related aspects of environmental management and to join a range of professional bodies.

It has decided:

- not to seek re-accreditation of the BEMP degree for the time being. The undergraduate programme is accredited until 2012 provided graduates complete a fourth year of prescribed courses in 2013. Planning will continue to be taught within the existing BEMP degree but Lincoln will not seek re-accreditation by the NZPI under the current circumstances. Therefore the current 2010 first semester intake of students into the accredited undergraduate programme will be last to be able to meet the requirements of NZPI through Lincoln University without an MEP degree.

- to concentrate Lincoln’s resources on offering a new NZPI accredited two year masterate degree in Planning, alongside or in place of the existing Master of Environmental Policy degree. Admission to the planning masterate would be open to graduates from a variety of disciplines.

- to work closely with Canterbury planning practitioners during the process of developing and delivering the Master of Planning degree.

While it recognises that not offering an accredited undergraduate degree in planning at Lincoln after 2012 may disadvantage South Island local authorities in terms of staff recruitment, the University’s decision has been endorsed by the Lincoln University Planning Advisory Board at its inaugural December 2009 meeting. The undergraduate accreditation option could be revisited in the future if circumstances change.

The decision also means that Lincoln BEMP students will continue to have a range of other options available to them for professional careers in environmental management and planning (e.g. the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (ELIANZ) and the New Zealand Association of Resource Management (NZARM)).

The NZPI is considering introducing a new class of provisional membership that would provide a pathway to full NZPI membership for students who completed the BEMP, but who did not complete the two year accredited post graduate qualification. This would mean that such BEMP graduates would have a seven year post-completion period before being eligible for full membership.

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**Landscape Architecture Building Opening**

**Michelle Flanagan***

It has been a year of milestones for the School of Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University. The University, or Lincoln College as it was then, was the first New Zealand institution to offer a professional qualification in landscape architecture. From modest beginnings in 1969 the School has expanded with the recognition and growth of the discipline and in November 2009 celebrated its 40th anniversary. Anniversary celebrations included a workshop on Urban Ecology and Ecological Design, a landscape research symposium, reunions, garden tours and a formal dance.

A highlight of the 40th Anniversary was an art auction to raise funds for a sculpture to complement the new building. Original works by 40 artists, including well known New Zealand artists such as Gretchen Albrecht, Barry Cleavin, Andrew Craig, Neil Dawson, Ralph Hotere, Sandra Thompson, Philip Tristram and Bianca van Rangelrooy, amongst others, were auctioned alongside pieces by emergent artists and current students. The auction generated a high level of interest, and in 2010 a sculptor in residence will commence design and production of the new sculpture.

Coinciding with the anniversary and art auction was the opening of the new landscape building. Where the first intake of five students was housed in a small prefab building, the current 150 students now occupy a new purpose built facility adjacent to the Stewart Building and Ivey Hall. The new studio facilities within the building are designed to allow for open teaching and student interaction and emulate a professional office environment. The building was formally opened by the Minister for Economic Development and Leader of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Gerry Brownlee in November 2009 during the anniversary celebrations.

As a further honour, the new landscape building, designed by Sheppard & Rout Architects Ltd and Royal Associates Architects, was recognised in the 2009 Canterbury Architecture Awards winning the Public Architecture Award. The judges praised the inclusive learning environment created, and described the facility as a “ground breaking education building”.

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