

Citation for Honorary Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*)

Professor Peter McPhee

Professor Peter McPhee, inaugural Provost of the University of Melbourne, has made a remarkable contribution to higher education.

As Chair of the University's Curriculum Commission Professor McPhee oversaw a far-reaching curriculum reform which involved rethinking the University of Melbourne's curricula from first principles. In achieving this, he worked closely with representatives from all faculties to define the core characteristics of the new curriculum and map its 10-year implementation. Transforming an abstract concept into significant curriculum reform involved many challenges, which were always managed with Professor McPhee's trademark collegiality and good humour.

In a very real sense he is the 'architect of the Melbourne Model'. The Curriculum Commission report is a landmark document in higher education in Australia. The University of Melbourne was the first Australian university to announce a major institutional reform that took up some of the challenges of the current higher education environment.

The 'Melbourne Model' reforms have had a significant impact on the higher education sector in Australia. The Model is designed to equip its graduates with the generic and interdisciplinary skills necessary to succeed in the changing workplace of the twenty-first century. The 'new generation' degrees have academic breadth as well as depth of content and will lead to employment, professional graduate programs or research higher degrees.

As the University's inaugural Provost, Professor McPhee has overseen the implementation of the Melbourne Model, managing it through the difficult period of transition, and working indefatigably towards the goal of an outstanding Melbourne experience for all students, both those in the 'new generation' degrees and students in continuing degrees. He has worked closely with overseas students to improve their experience while in Melbourne.

Through out his career, Professor McPhee has cared passionately about students and their learning. It is therefore unsurprising that under his direction the University has introduced a student-focussed approach to delivering student services. New Student Centres provide services which are coordinated, seamless and equitable and that support a sense of belonging and connectedness. New, specially designed state-of-the-art student learning environments provide IT rich spaces for individual as well as collaborative study in classrooms and libraries.

The University aims to attract the brightest Australian, interstate and international students regardless of their financial circumstances. A country boy himself (he attended Coleraine Primary School and Colac High School), Professor McPhee has always strived to ensure that the Melbourne experience would be open to students from all backgrounds. He has worked particularly hard to improve support for Indigenous students.

His teaching was recognised in 1997 with the award of the inaugural 'Universitas 21' Teaching Fellowship. As a teacher, Peter McPhee exemplifies the Melbourne Vision of the University as a place where 'great scholars lead talented students to open their minds, share wisdom and face the great unknowns: a place where each new generation can define a future that it values'. Passionately committed to teaching, even when his responsibilities in developing and implementing the Melbourne Model presented a demanding workload, he maintained a responsibility for teaching in History.

Professor McPhee's research was recognised with appointment to a Personal Chair in History in 1993. The most recent of his ten books are *A Social History of France 1789-1914* (London & New York, 2004) and *Living the French Revolution 1789-1799* (London & New York, 2006). He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1997 and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2003. He was awarded a Centenary Medal for services to education in 2003.

Professor McPhee's exemplary leadership skills have been showcased on a number of platforms at Melbourne – as Head of the Department of History, as Acting Dean of the School of Graduate Research, as President of the Academic Board, as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and more recently as the University's inaugural Provost.