

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ISSUES AND IDEAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Indigenous higher education issues in the post-Bradley era: How should we be responding, and who is going to do the work?

Dr Christine Asmar, University of Melbourne, and Assoc. Prof Susan Page, Macquarie University

Monday 7
September

12.30 - 2.00pm

Barbara Falk Room
1st Floor
CSHE
715 Swanston St
All welcome

To register please email
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Dr Christine Asmar is a Senior Lecturer in Higher Education at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education. With an ongoing interest in higher education cultural diversity issues, Christine has recently focused her research on the experiences and roles of Indigenous academics in Australia. In 2008, Christine was awarded an Associate Fellowship from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), to support the development of research-based exemplars for university staff (from all backgrounds) who are involved in Indigenous teaching.



Associate Professor Susan Page is Director of the Warawara Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University. Susan's research has previously focused on Indigenous students' academic success; and more recently on the experiences of Indigenous academic staff in Australian universities (with Dr Christine Asmar), in studies funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). This national research project is the first of its kind in Australia, and has led to trans-Tasman collaborations with Māori colleagues.

In some ways Indigenous issues feature prominently in the Bradley Review of Australian higher education; and in other ways they are surprisingly under-emphasised. The result is that the implications for academic and professional staff in our universities remain somewhat unclear. According to Bradley, universities should ensure that their institutional culture; the cultural competence of their staff; and the nature of their curriculum; should all support the

participation of Indigenous students. It is also suggested that Indigenous knowledge should be embedded into the curriculum to ensure that all students in Australia have an understanding of Indigenous culture. If implemented, these are very big agendas indeed, and one question which immediately arises is: who is going to do the work? In this seminar we will attempt to engage with this particular question by drawing on our

national research with Indigenous academics. Our findings indicate, for example, that providing cultural awareness across a whole institution is work that often goes unrecognised. We also found that the teaching of Indigenous curriculum can result in high levels of satisfaction - and also of stress. We look forward to discussing with our colleagues some of these important and highly topical issues.