UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY THREATENED

The scholarly standards of great institutions could only be maintained and improved by self-government and not by detailed intervention on the part of public authorities, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Martin, said at the weekend.

Professor Martin, who was giving the Occasional Address at a University of Melbourne graduation, said that the standing and reputation of universities were linked intimately with the traditional concepts of academic freedom and autonomy.

There was, however, a danger that university autonomy - and, as a consequence, academic standards - "might become casualties of the increasing and understandable desire of governments to achieve coordination and rationalisation of higher education on the one hand, and a reduction of public expenditure on the other."

Professor Martin said that the determination of some states to maintain their constitutional responsibilities for education through new post-secondary education authorities raised important, and as yet unanswered, questions about their relationship with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

"In particular, to have the power of approval of university courses for funding purposes vested in both the Commonwealth and a state commission would place the universities in an intolerable position, since the Commonwealth and state might well disagree," he said.

"In Victoria, recent amendments to the Post-Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, which defines the function and powers of the new state commission, are currently being debated by Parliament. The bill as introduced in Parliament seriously infringes university autonomy by transferring to the state the responsibility given to universities under their Acts for managing their own academic affairs.

"The outcome of the debate is crucial. Accreditation and approval of the content of their degree courses is a matter for the universities: external interference in this traditional process by a statutory authority must inevitably debase academic standards and diminish the overseas standing of our universities.

"The decline and fall of the Victorian university estate could become a reality overnight."

BLOW TO ACADEMIC VALUES

At its meeting on Wednesday, March 26, the Professorial Board discussed the Australian Government's decisions relating to Soviet/Australian exchanges. It passed the following resolution:

"The Professorial Board of this University considers that the request by the Commonwealth Government to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee for the curtailment of non-official Soviet Australian academic exchanges and contacts runs counter to academic values and is contrary to the interests of Australian scholarship.

"A suitable message to this effect should be conveyed to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee."

ABORIGINAL DANCE AT THE ALEX

The Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre Group tonight opens a three-night season of 'Dance Fanfare' in the Alexander Theatre.

The performance features a combination of modern and traditional dance forms and includes a ballet, 'The Embassy', based on the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972.

'Dance Fanfare' will be presented tonight, tomorrow and Wednesday nights at 8 p.m. Admission: adults $8.50; students and pensioners $6.

WEDNESDAY CONSORT

The Wednesday Consort will open its 1980 April Recital Series in the Religious Centre this coming Wednesday (April 2) with a special pre-Easter program of sacred music.

Other performances in the series will be given on April 16, with works by Telemann, Bach and Haydn, and on April 30 (Praetorius, Jenkins, Telemann, Pachelbel and Bach).

All concerts will begin at 1.10 p.m. The third concert will be repeated on Saturday, May 10, as part of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord.

BROWN COAL RESEARCH

The Victorian Brown Coal Council invites applications for grants to support appropriate brown coal research projects in 1981.

Further information and appropriate application forms are available from Mrs P. Mahon, ext. 3073. Applications close with Mr B.D. Shields on Friday, May 23, 1980.
MONASH “A GREAT UNIVERSITY”
— Prime Minister

(But Demonstration “Regrettable”)
The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Martin, has criticised events surrounding the visit of the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, to Robert Blackwood Hall on Thursday night.

“It is the right of any group within the University - or the community - to hire University facilities for any private, lawful function,” he said.

“Equally it is the right of any group - again within or outside the University - to stage a peaceful demonstration.

“Thursday night’s demonstration was not peaceful. It is regrettable that missiles - eggs, tomatoes, paint - should have been thrown, and it is only through good fortune that no physical injury or damage resulted.

“There were, of course, many non-Monash people among the demonstrators on the campus on Thursday night, and it would be impossible to sheet home the blame for the troubles that occurred. Nevertheless, such activities inevitably damage the standing of the University in the eyes of the community, and the organisers of such affairs bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that they do not happen again.”

Professor Martin added: “It is a pity that the events outside the Hall shielded from the public the Prime Minister’s affirmation in his speech that Monash remains, in his own words, ‘a great University.’”

SENIOR RESIDENT WANTED FOR RICHARDSON HALL

Applications are invited from married members of staff and postgraduate students to fill a Senior Resident position in Richardson Hall.

The accommodation is a self-contained flat. The 1980 weekly accommodation fee is $14.35. Where a spouse is academically qualified, both husband and wife may be jointly appointed as Senior Residents and the weekly accommodation fee is $11.90.

Senior Residents are expected to buy most meals from the Halls’ diningroom and assist in running the Hall.

Application forms and further information may be obtained from Mrs Eileen Rogers, Halls Administrative Assistant, ext. 2900. Applications to be submitted immediately.

BOOK EARLY FOR CHORALE

The Melbourne Chorale will give three performances in Robert Blackwood Hall this year - on June 1, August 2 and September 20.

Bookings are open now and concession discounts are available on all tickets and vouchers bought before April 14. Further details from Bev. Pocknee on ext. 2829.

“WOMEN AND WRITING: INTO THE ’80s”

To complement the seminar series “Women and Art: Into the ’80s”, the departments of English and Visual Arts are conducting a series of lunchtime seminars entitled “Women and Writing: Into the ’80s”, in the Exhibition Gallery, Menzies Building, at 1.10 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The series will be introduced by Associate Professor Elaine Barry on April 9. Four Melbourne writers will read and comment on their work, then lead an open discussion with their audience on the following dates: Finola Moorhead (April 9); Helen Garner (May 7); Judith Rodriguez (June 4); Jennifer Stauss (July 2).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Listed below are requests and items of international news compiled by the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee. For further information contact the Secretary, AVCC, P.O. Box 1142, Canberra ACT 2601; or write direct as indicated:

The President, Free Institute for the Study of International Relations, France, invites Australian students to study at the Institute. Contact: President, Institute Libre D’Etude Des Relations Internationales, 175 Boulevard Saint-Germain, 75006 Paris, France.

An International Conference on Electrical Machines, sponsored by the National Technical University of Athens, the University of Patras, and the University of Thessaloniki, will be held in Athens, Greece, on September 15, 16, and 17, 1980. Contact Professor J.A. Tegopoulos, National Technical University of Athens, 42 October 28th Street, Athens 147, Greece.

The Institute of Education, European Cultural Foundation, Universite Dauphine, Place du Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, 75116 Paris, France, has forwarded information on its research work, conferences and seminars, and a list of publications. They advise that from time to time the Institute can offer facilities for visiting fellows to carry out research projects. However, no funding is available.

An Oceania Literature Research Unit has been established at the Anhui University, China. This Unit intends to compile histories of Australian and Oceanic literature and wishes to establish linking arrangements with literature research units in Australia to assist with the exchange of literary works and materials.

The Middle East Technical University, Turkey, in particular the department of Chemistry, would like to establish informal contact with Australian universities.

A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY

Ivan Turgenev’s romantic comedy, “A Month in the Country”, will have a production at Monash on Monday, March 31, Tuesday, April 1 and Wednesday, April 2.

It will be presented by the English Staff Players in the Ground Floor Theatre of the Menzies building, starting at 8.15 p.m.

The version of the play is a new English adaptation by senior lecturer in English, Dennis Davison, who is directing the production. The adaptation has recently been published by the English department as a third year drama text.

The cast will be headed by Jenepher Duncan (curator of Monash’s art collection), Richard Pannell, Marina Milankovic, Russell Blackford and Fred Naylor.

Tickets cost $2 ($1 for students) and may be purchased from room 707 in the Menzies building.

POSITIONS VACANT

New Positions available, not previously listed in Sound:

GENERAL

SCIENCE
Botany - Secretary; Genetics - Adult Stenographer (half time)
COMPTROLLER
Council Secretariat - Administrative Assistant II (half time)
Copies of relevant advertisements can be sighted on application to Room 101, First Floor, University Offices Annexe.
Telephone inquiries about these positions should be directed to extension 2038.

Authorised by K.W. Benettes, Information Officer