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INDUSTRY NEWS

Victorian College of the Arts and Music: Union reacts to VCA changes



Screen Hub

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While the University of Melbourne considers the report into the future of VCAM, the Union has lit a fire under the process by calling for the resignation of the Dean, Professor Sharman Pretty.

The letter claims that Professor Pretty displayed a "continued refusal to genuinely listen to the many concerns raised by staff and students of VCAM, and the wider arts community."

"Serious and potentially devastating changes continue to be made to VCAM, pre-empting the University's reponse to the VCAM review."

It concludes that "VCAM needs a Faculty leader who is conciliatory and unifying. On this basis, I do not believe that you can be a part of the healing that is necessary."

The letter is signed by Matthew McGowan, the Division Secretary. In the press release, the National Tertiary Education Union made it clear that the gesture is centred on the Film and Television course. It claims that "Changes to Film and Television courses are currently being discussed that would significantly reduce students' experience in film making at the very time when students of the School are being honoured at the Cannes Film Festival."

McGowan is quoted as saying: "Members at the Victorian College of the Arts and Music have expressed a lack of confidence in the leadership of the Dean, Prof Pretty."

Asked whether the Union had put this move to a meeting of staff, a Union representative would say only that these meetings are considered to be private. However, the very high level of dissatisfaction of staff with Professor Petty has been reported publically last year.

According to an academic in an allied area with extensive experience of the Dean's role, "Shady things have happened behind closed doors and Deans have disappeared – but I have never seen this happen in twenty five years of union activism."

Staff are seen to be conservative, and likely to support management. To publically call on a Dean to resign is believed to be unprecedented.

The Union is seeking responses from staff about the review and subsequent developments, through [this link](#).

More [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

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