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Search begins for new UNE Vice-Chancellor as Pettigrew retires

University of New England Chancellor Richard Torbay, endorsed by UNE Council, has announced the retirement of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Pettigrew, to become effective later in 2009, after almost four years in the position.

"Professor Pettigrew approached me last week expressing his wish to retire and I, along with the rest of the UNE community, wish him well for the future," Dr Torbay said.

"The Vice-Chancellor has made a strong contribution in setting a new direction for the University presiding over negotiations with the Commonwealth and State Governments and the University of Newcastle to establish the Rural Medical School on the UNE campus as well as many other significant structural and academic initiatives and partnerships with other institutions."

Dr Torbay said Professor Pettigrew was leaving UNE in a sound financial position with enrolments on campus for the first semester up almost 10 per cent this year including a significant increase in international students.

"The demonstrated early success of more than 20 new and revitalised courses offered by the University means we're in a good position to pursue an increase in overall enrolments," said Dr Torbay.

The search for a new Vice-Chancellor would begin immediately, he said.

"It is a critical time for all universities to position themselves within the new guidelines set by the Commonwealth in response to the Bradley Report," Dr Torbay pointed out.

"UNE already has a number of strategic partnerships and collaborative projects with the government and non government sectors as well as other universities and TAFE."

Dr Torbay said he would continue to discuss mutual interests with fellow chancellors, particularly from other regional universities.

"We have much in common and there is a lot of good will regarding ways we can work together to serve our university and wider regional communities," he said.

"UNE, as the oldest regional university in Australia, has a strong tradition of research and teaching on which we are continuing to build. We have received a five star rating from our students for educational experience in nine of the last ten years. Our staff have won many national grants and awards from competitive sources.

"Our staff are positive about UNE's future direction and are taking a strategic leadership role in ensuring the University can make the most of the many opportunities available in this highly competitive environment."

One of the current priorities is to investigate and develop a higher capacity to deliver the e-learning capability of the University.

"These are exciting times in higher education, which has been under funded and in the doldrums for too many years," he said. "UNE is in a strong position, leaving past dissension well behind."

Further information Richard Torbay (02) 6772 5552/0427 635 029