The Quo Vadis Forum 2010: An Examination of Philosophy at the Macquarie University Department of Chiropractic.

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Recent years have seen a new development in the intellectual, academic, research and political activities taking place within the chiropractic profession in Australia and in how these spheres relate to each other. This development has been composed of a series of forums and summits held by the Chiropractors’ Association of Australia (National) Ltd. (CAA), by the Australasian College of Chiropractors (ACC), and, more recently, by the Advisory Board of the Macquarie University Department of Chiropractic (MUDOC). These public forums have involved invited speakers examining particular issues such as the CAA Wellness Initiative; chiropractic education; the chiropractic subluxation, the adjustment and wellness; and the current state of chiropractic research in Australia.

In the first of such events arranged independently of the CAA and ACC, MUDOC staff, students and other interested persons gathered on the Macquarie campus on May 8, 2010 to ask the question *Quo vadis*? – where are you going with the teaching and learning of chiropractic philosophy at Macquarie?

This innovative and thought-provoking event was organised by the Advisory Board under the guidance of its Chair Dr Anthony O’Reilly and member Dr Mark Uren. It began with a presentation entitled *Science vs. Philosophy – Do We Need Both? Why?* by Mr Wilson Cooper, a graduate student of Macquarie’s Department of Philosophy.

Then followed a series of reviews of the past and present teaching and learning of this subject at Macquarie and other institutions, including presentations by Dr Val Pennacchio (representing New Zealand College of Chiropractic), Assoc. Prof. Phillip Ebrall (RMIT University), Dr John Kelly (Sydney College of Chiropractic) and Dr Peter Bull (MUDOC).

In addition, the following perspectives were offered:

- **The Role of Chiropractic Philosophy in Practice - The View From the Peak Body Representing Chiropractors in Australia.** (Presented by Dr Simon Floriani, President, CAA).
- **Does Chiropractic Philosophy Have a Place in Research? If So, What?** (Dr Martin Harvey, President, Australian Spinal Research Foundation).
- **Philosophical Models in Health Care.** (Dr Dennis Richards, private practice).
- **Teaching and Learning of Chiropractic Technique Congruent with the ‘Macquarie Brand’.** (Dr Scott Phillipson, MUDOC).
- **Chiropractic Philosophy and the Biopsychosocial Model of Health Care.** (Assoc. Prof. Henry Pollard, MUDOC).
- **Chiropractic Philosophy in the University Curriculum: Its Relevance to the Chiropractor Practicing in 2020.** (Dr Nimrod Weiner, private practice).
- **Science versus Philosophy.** (Dr Peter Tuchin, MUDOC).
A vigorous open panel discussion session then examined questions such as: How much science, how much philosophy? How important might philosophy be for the chiropractor of 2020? What sort of curriculum would be needed for the teaching and learning of the relevant philosophy? What sort of terminology was relevant?

At the end of the day, a consensus session involving all present arrived at the following outcome:

The following suggestions are offered to the Department of Chiropractic as the outcomes of a consensus process involving attendees at the Quo Vadis Forum.

1) The teaching, learning, scholarship, research and clinical application of and in philosophy as they relate to chiropractic are paramount in the Macquarie program.

2) The offering of the fundamentals of philosophy as a discipline in the development of critical thinking as an approach to evaluating all material offered in the program.

3) Historical overviews of the development of chiropractic including philosophical perspectives should be offered in Semester 1 Year 1.

4) A diversity of models should be presented to students. For example, the ACC Paradigm, the WFC Identity Statements, the Proceedings of the WFC Philosophy Conference, and understandings of various health care models.

5) Questions of terminology should be addressed. For example, the offering, examination and discussion of definitions of terms such as ‘subluxation’. The Department should arrive at preferred definitions for use within the institution.

This event was well received by all present as an opportunity for the exchange of a range of perspectives from persons in different positions in the profession. The consensus outcomes were offered to the Department to assist in its efforts in the teaching, learning and clinical application of and in philosophy and to encourage it to expand into associated scholarship and research.

The presentations by Mr Cooper and Drs Floriani, Harvey, Kelly, Richards and Ebrall are included in this edition of CJA, so that this material can be shared, examined and discussed more widely within the profession.

Preparations are now underway for future Quo Vadis Forums and it is intended that their themes and content will be expanded beyond a focus on the situation at MUDOC alone to examination and discussion of philosophy in teaching, learning, research and practice as it relates to chiropractic in general.

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