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Arts, music board members quit

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UP TO three members of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music's seven-person advisory board have resigned.

At a meeting of the faculty's integration committee - which oversees the merger of the former college with Melbourne University - advisory board members Lynne Landy, Janine Kirk and Noel Turnbull are believed to have signalled their intention to quit.

Their decision comes amid a furore over changes at the former college. Students claim the introduction of the university's broad-based curriculum will limit practical experience, while dean Sharman Pretty insists practice will be central.

Mr Turnbull, a former president of the Melbourne International Arts Festival and a leading public relations consultant, said he had been on the Victorian College of the Arts council and its successor, the faculty advisory board, for five years.

"With all the changes taking place and with new people recently recruited to the board, it is a good time to step down and let people with other ideas about the faculty's future become involved," Mr Turnbull said yesterday.

Dr Kirk, who is a partner at consulting firm Ernst & Young and chairman of Tourism Victoria, confirmed she had resigned from the board, but did not wish to comment on the matter. Ms Landy could not be contacted yesterday.

Asked on ABC radio yesterday about the resignations, Professor Pretty said she needed to get more information.

When presenter Jon Faine asked her if the trio had quit because they didn't want to be associated with the changes, Professor Pretty replied: "That may well be the case."

Last night, university spokeswoman Christina Buckridge said the faculty had received no formal resignations from the advisory board but had received an email from Mr Turnbull with his decision.

The restructure of the faculty will require a "major" reduction in academic and administrative staff over the next two years, according to the faculty's confidential business plan.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's artist nephew Van Thanh Rudd has joined the "Save the VCA" campaign.

Mr Rudd, a part-time master student at the faculty, said the university was operating as a large corporation, with a focus on bringing in money and not quality students.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/arts-music-board-members-quit-20090819-eqmw.html>

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