

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND
BUSINESS**

**ACADEMIC BOARD VISIT TO REVIEW
TEACHING AND LEARNING AND
RESEARCH TRAINING**

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2002

**FINAL REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following Academic Board Review Team members visited the Faculty of Economics and Business on Tuesday 12 November, 2002, as part of the review and evaluation of teaching and learning and research training in all faculties across the University.

Chair

Professor Judyth Sachs

Chair, Academic Board

Team members

Professor Paul Ramsden

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)

Professor Doug Elliott

Faculty of Nursing

Dr Robyn Ewing

Faculty of Education

Dr Marie-Thérèse Barbaux-Couper

Faculty of Arts

Observers

Mrs Margaret McKerchar

Faculty of Rural Management

Dr David Livesey

Faculty of Science

Administrative Officer

Rachel Symons

Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)

- 1.2 During the visit, the Team interviewed the following groups of staff and students:

- Dean Professor Peter Wolnizer, Associate Deans, and Heads of Schools¹:
 - Professor Michael Jackson, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies)
 - Professor Russell Lansbury, Associate Dean (Research)
 - Professor David Hensher, Associate Dean (Postgraduate Coursework)
 - Associate Professor Russell Ross, Associate Dean (Research Higher Degree)
 - Professor Bob Bartels, Head of the School of Business
 - Professor Graeme Gill, Head of the School of Economics and Political Science
- Chairs of Disciplines
- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate coursework students
- Postgraduate research students
- Other academic and general staff²

- 1.3 This report is based on the findings of the Review Team in relation to the teaching and learning, and research training activities of the Faculty. It is based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Plan, additional documentation provided to the Faculty (listed at Appendix Two), and interviews conducted with staff and students during the visit.

2 RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

- 2.1 The restructuring process, which began in 1999 and resulted in the renaming of the Faculty and establishment of two schools (the School of Business and the School of Economics and Political Science), was found by the Review Team to be a positive initiative within the Faculty. The consultation process, involving the convening of strategic planning workshops to discuss major issues with representatives from all layers of academic and non-academic staff, had been supported by the Chairs of Discipline. All staff welcomed the changes that had occurred as a result of the restructuring process. The Review Team congratulated the Dean on successfully engineering significant changes in a complex Faculty.

¹ Referred to as senior Faculty staff in the report

² Referred to as staff in the report

- 2.2 Staff considered that on the whole communication links across the schools were working well, although there were some areas that needed improving.

See Commendation 1

3 EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

3.1 International accreditation

- 3.1.1 The Faculty is seeking international accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the peak international accreditation body for business schools. AACSB accreditation is a rigorous process involving self-evaluation, continuous improvement and international peer review. The Faculty has established a number of steering committees to look at major aspects of the accreditation, with the main report focussing on quality assurance. A quality assurance and accreditation manager has been appointed to coordinate and administer the process. The Faculty considers that the preparation for accreditation has already had a positive impact on teaching and learning quality outcomes.
- 3.1.2 Support and appreciation of the accreditation process was evident across the Faculty. Chairs of Discipline considered that the process would improve the student experience through engaging with them in discussion of the programs, goals, and teaching and learning quality. It had given cohesion to the Faculty, formalised the forward planning process, focussed debate on workload issues, and enabled comparability across the Faculty to take place. Chairs also expressed the opinion that the review might help identify divergences in international practices that had not been considered previously.
- 3.1.3 The Review Team noted that several Disciplines within the Faculty (covering subjects in accounting, BIS, business law, finance, economics and econometrics) are subject to annual and extensive five-year accreditation reviews by the accounting profession, which are mini-AACSB-type quality assurance exercises.
- 3.1.3 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the use of accreditation processes as a mechanism to drive change, and improve Faculty quality assurance processes and their integration into Faculty activity. It has also created a stronger culture of quality assurance across the Faculty.

See Commendation 2

3.2 Self-Evaluation Report

- 3.2.1 The Faculty Self-Evaluation Report was developed by a working party consisting of a cross section of staff, and occurred concurrently with initiatives relating to the AACSB International accreditation process. Extensive discussion took place across the Faculty during the process. Staff reported that they would have liked to have seen the student body involved in the process, but unfortunately this did not happen. Students who attended the review were provided with copies of the report. The Review Team noted that information relating to research-led teaching and assessment of students were omitted from the report.

3.3 Benchmarking

- 3.3.1 The Faculty reported that a TIF (Teaching Improvement Fund) grant had enabled it to embark on a benchmarking relationship with the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Melbourne. Aspects being covered include quality assurance processes for teaching and learning; working with casual staff, especially in relation to teaching local and international students from a non-English speaking background (NESB); progression of international students; and research candidature completion rates.

See Commendation 3

3.4 Evaluation of teaching and learning

- 3.4.1 The Faculty reported that all programs are being reviewed as part of the restructuring and accreditation processes. This will result in all units of study having a standard template which will include clear educational objectives, assessment criteria, learning outcomes and generic skills.
- 3.4.2 The Review Team was interested in ascertaining whether information concerning the way in which the evaluation process has led to improvements in the Unit of Study was made available to students in written form. Staff reported that written response to feedback for some subjects was provided through the use of Blackboard e-learning platform. When evaluation forms were distributed to students at the end of the semester, feedback occurred with the next cohort of students; where they were distributed halfway through the semester, feedback took place with the current cohort.
- 3.4.3 Undergraduate students supported the use of providing evaluations of subjects, and considered it to be good practice. They preferred being provided with feedback on how the unit of study had been improved from their feedback during the semester, rather than having evaluations at the end of semester and consequently not knowing what happened as a result of their feedback. Postgraduate students reported that they would like to receive evaluation forms for all subjects.
- 3.4.4 Chairs of Discipline reported that the Teaching Quality Fellow had held fora for undergraduate students in which students talked about their experiences. This aided in identifying the needs of this cohort and provided a useful focus for feedback.
- 3.4.5 The Review Team concluded that although some disciplines, such as Accounting, were complying with the Academic Board policy on student evaluation and feedback by providing in written form information to students on the results of, and actions taken, in response to their feedback, the policy was not being complied with across the Faculty. It recommends that there should be a Faculty-wide compliance.

See Recommendation 1

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC BOARD POLICIES

4.1 Audit of Academic Board policies

- 4.1.1 During the AACSB International accreditation process the Faculty became focussed on the implementation of Academic Board policies and commissioned Michael Hogan, Honorary Research Associate, Government and International Relations, to conduct an audit of academic policies and procedures within the Faculty, and to advise on changes that should be made at the Faculty, School or Discipline level. The resulting report *The Alignment of Academic Board policies with Faculty policies* (hereafter referred to as the Hogan report) was published in April 2002, and the Faculty is currently working on development of a Student and Academic Administration Policies and Procedures Manual for Staff.
- 4.1.2 The Review Team was concerned that the policies on the *Management and Evaluation of Teaching* and *Generic Attributes of Graduates* were not covered in the Hogan report, and recommended that it be updated to include information on these important policies. The Faculty acknowledged that this omission had been an oversight. The Review Team considered that other faculties would benefit from seeing the Hogan report.

See Commendation 4 and Recommendation 2

4.2 Academic Honesty (Plagiarism) in Coursework

- 4.2.1 The Academic Board policy on *Academic Honesty in Coursework* is included in all unit of study outlines and discussed with students. All students are made aware of the consequences of cheating. Chairs of Disciplines reported that where incidences of cheating are discovered, students are interviewed and failed for the unit. Outcomes of plagiarism cases are reported on Blackboard.
- 4.2.2 Discussions with Chairs of Discipline, staff and undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students indicated that, despite the above, there were still serious problems with compliance with the policy throughout the Faculty. Widespread examples of serious cheating and academic dishonesty were reported to the Review Team. These included submission of identical assignments, downloading information from the internet for assignments, and using other students to take examinations. The Review Team considers this to be a serious problem, and recommends that ways of combating the high incidence of plagiarism and academic dishonesty across all the Faculty be investigated.
- 4.2.3 Both staff and students considered that the large class sizes were at the heart of the problem. Staff did not know individual students, and the large number of essays they staff were required to mark made it more difficult to identify cases of cheating. Staff were of the opinion that spreading assignments across the semester, rather than having one exam at the end, would assist in the identification of cases of academic dishonesty. For example, if a student performs poorly during the semester and excels at the exam, there would be cause for concern that the same student was not undertaking all assessment tasks for the unit. Staff also suggested that it may be worthwhile investigating the purchase of software which finds similarities between textual documents to detect plagiarism using digital signatures to find similar pieces of text. The Review Team suggested that the Faculty closely monitor this issue.

See Recommendation 3

4.3 Generic Attributes of Graduates

- 4.3.1 The integration of generic and disciplinary attributes into the curriculum is a current priority. The Faculty Advisory Board and Disciplinary Advisory Boards provide the basis for the faculty to obtain advice and feedback from various stakeholders. As previously mentioned (Section 3.4.1) all unit of study outlines will include information on the linkages between assessment and graduate attributes.
- 4.3.2 Faculty staff are currently working to achieve a more systematic integration of graduate attributes into the curriculum. An exercise is underway to map skills across programs and majors. Developmental skills such as writing, presentation, analysis, group work and peer evaluation would be introduced early in degree programs. Some Chairs of Discipline considered that the introduction of core business competency units exposed students to the skills in a systematic way. However, other Chairs expressed the view that large class sizes, and the resulting demands on limited resources, impeded their ability to include skills development in the classroom, or to include written comments for essays (to improve writing skills).
- 4.3.3 Undergraduate students considered that although some units of study were explicit about generic attributes, others were not. In many cases, learning of these skills was implicit rather than explicit, and they were not tested to see if they were acquiring them. Although staff reported that employers looked for graduates who had worked on group projects and showed the making of a team player, students expressed the view that they were not gaining experience in team work, although it was necessary in the workforce.

See Recommendation 4

4.4 Quality Assurance and On-line Learning

- 4.4.1 The Faculty has invested in software and hardware to create one on-line system suited to the needs of its students and teachers based on Blackboard. Since WebCT is the e-learning platform centrally supported by the University, the Review Team was interested in ascertaining whether the Faculty's quality assurance processes for the implementation and use of Blackboard, the support which is provided to users, and its use by both staff and students, complied with those for WebCT in the Academic Board policy *Quality Assurance and On-line Learning*.
- 4.4.2 The Team found that there was little awareness of the policy across the Faculty, although some staff indicated that they had known about it when they had used WebCT, because all these were required to go through a quality assurance process. However, in relation to the units of study being placed on Blackboard, no quality assurance processes were in place. Staff reported that most usage was Mode A (Mode A - Web Supplemented where participation on-line is optional for the student) with some units moving to Mode B (Web Dependent with participation on-line for either interaction with the education content necessary for study; or communication with staff and/or other students); or a combination of both.³
- 4.4.3 The Faculty holds classes each semester for staff who are inexperienced in the use of Blackboard. Follow-up sessions for two extra stages – discipline specific review and development, and presentation by an off-campus specialist on the use of Blackboard as a teaching tool are currently being developed. Ad hoc mentoring also takes place within and across disciplines.
- 4.4.4 Students were, on the whole, pleased with Blackboard, indicating that it was well integrated into the curriculum, and provided a method of communicating information about units of study. Submission of essays in electronic format was considered by some students to be a good idea, and that it could reduce opportunities for plagiarism. Undergraduate students indicated that they would appreciate lecture notes being made available on Blackboard prior to the lecture. However, some lecturers expressed the view that this would result in non-attendance at lectures by some students. A number of students were concerned that the use of Blackboard would replace the relationship between lecturer and student, and that this would reduce opportunities for them to gain communication and interpersonal skills.
- 4.4.5 The Review Team found that, while there has been extensive unit of study take-up of Blackboard, its use was variable across the Faculty. They recommended that the Faculty should establish a policy for its use that is consistent with the Academic Board policy on online learning.

See Recommendation 5

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

5.1 Teaching Quality Fellow

- 5.1.1 The Faculty has employed a Teaching Quality Fellow since 1992, initially on contract but now as a full-time position. The main role of the Teaching Fellow is to work with staff in improving the quality of units of study and teaching in the Faculty, with particular emphasis at the level of first year teaching, and on the process of integrating skills development into the units of study⁴. It was evident through the visit that the whole Faculty appreciates the work of the current incumbent in organising teaching fora, symposia and workshops; formalising the teaching award process; formalising links between committees; implementing Academic Board policies; and organising the orientation process.

³ Academic Board *Quality Assurance and On-line Learning* Section 4 (1) (c)

⁴ Faculty Self-Evaluation Report, Appendix 6: Teaching Quality Fellow (extract from duty statement) page 29

- 5.1.2 The Review Team noted that the Discipline of Accounting's \$180,000 teaching initiative and other Faculty teaching initiatives (see Section 5.3) have augmented the above initiatives undertaken by the Teaching Quality Fellow.

See Commendation 5

5.2 Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning

- 5.2.1 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the establishment of a Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning which will commence operation in 2003. The Faculty reported that the Centre will look at pedagogical innovations for academic staff, study skills, language support, training of casual tutors, and will be tailored to the needs of its staff and students. Other activities identified for the Centre by staff included development of a register of teaching and learning initiatives, and support for research-led teaching and research into teaching. Chairs of Discipline considered that the Centre would provide central support for tasks currently being undertaken by the Teaching Quality Fellow. The Review Team alerted the Faculty to the necessity of resourcing the Centre carefully, and of making the terms of reference clear so that expectations are not set up that are cannot be achieved.

See Commendation 6

5.3 Staff development programs

- 5.3.1 Staff development activities aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, are to be commended. Staff are provided with support to attend courses at the Institute for Teaching and Learning, to study for the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education, and to complete PhDs. The Faculty reported that selection criteria for new staff include a commitment to high quality teaching and learning and research, the ability to communicate in English, and communication with students. A number of workshops, symposia, and teaching fora have been organised covering topics such as support for NESB students, the use of Blackboard, and approaches to teaching in higher education.

See Commendation 7

5.4 Rewarding good teaching

- 5.4.1 The Faculty recognises outstanding teaching through the presentation of a Faculty Teaching Excellence Award which was introduced in 1992 and which is based on the University's award of the same name. Four staff have been recipients of University Teaching Excellence Awards. The Teaching Quality Fellow reported that there had been ninety (90) nominations from students for forty-eight (48) members of staff for the 2002 awards, and that he had been contacted by other faculties to share the process used. Staff reported they work in an enthusiastic environment where teaching is valued and their skills are recognised by colleagues.
- 5.4.2 Postgraduate students expressed the opinion that there was little recognition for the positive input of teaching staff, and were surprised that teachers that they considered to be good were not on the list of award recipients listed in the Self-Evaluation Report.

5.5 Quality of teaching and learning

- 5.5.1 Whilst there are good examples of quality teaching across the Faculty, cases of poor teaching were also reported by the students interviewed. The main concerns raised by the students related to the variance of teaching between disciplines, the lack of reconciliation between lectures and tutorials, large class sizes, teaching skills of tutors, and English language skills of tutors. They considered that most staff were approachable, except where the large class sizes of first year subjects made this difficult to achieve.

- 5.5.2 Postgraduate students reported that whereas some lecturers and tutors were well prepared, providing unit of study notes with a clear structure, and a good blend of teaching and discussion, others presented topics from one viewpoint and discouraged discussions. They expressed the view that large class sizes added to the problem, since it was difficult to hold discussions with groups of between fifty and sixty. They considered that they were not receiving value for money when class times were shortened by up to forty minutes by the lecturer. Successful classes were those with no more than fifteen which permitted better tailoring of the subject matter, more discussion and better managed.
- 5.5.3 Undergraduate students had similar experiences to the postgraduate students. Their major concern was that with two to three lecturers sharing a unit of study, it became disjointed. Lectures and tutorials were not reconciled. Tutorial groups for the same subject covered different topics which often did not match the lecture, leading to problems in examinations which were linked to lectures. Cases were also reported of casual staff not being available for all the tutorials due to commitments at other institutions. Students expressed the view that the quality of the teaching provided by tutors affected their marks, and that they often chose tutorials by the tutor's reputation. They suggested that quality problems, especially in relation to class participation and discussion skills, could relate to the Faculty choosing tutors and lecturers by their academic rather than their teaching skills.
- 5.5.4 Faculty staff reported that the large class sizes were due to circumstances beyond their control. There was an unexpected increase of 30-40% in enrolments during second semester, mainly from international students, whose arrival was not known about until a week before the start of the semester. In addition, the number of students from other faculties is an unknown quantity. In resource terms this adds up to an additional 20 hours of tutors. The problem was exacerbated by the inability to find suitably qualified tutors in a short timeframe. Chairs of Discipline indicated that limiting the number of students would alleviate the problem of large class sizes. They expressed the view that it was difficult to ensure the quality of part-time staff, though the interview process for casual staff may help in this regard.
- 5.5.5 Although the Faculty is already taking significant steps in the area of reducing large class sizes either by capping classes or running large lectures and then streaming the class into cohorts for case presentations (oral and written) on all day Saturday session, the Review Team recommends that they continue to monitor and address the situation, particularly in regard to large postgraduate coursework subjects.

See Recommendations 6 and 7

5.6 Tutors and Tutorials

- 5.6.1 The Review Team discovered that there were varying practices relating to the Faculty requirement that all new tutors undertake an induction program, and that those who are tutoring for the first time should also undertake the Institute for Teaching and Learning course. Some tutors who were interviewed indicated that they had received no training, but were provided with help and advice from their colleagues and the head tutor. They would appreciate a peer support system. Other tutors reported that they had found the Institute for Teaching and Learning courses useful. Staff considered training of tutors to be a resource issue, and considered that the casual staff who were drawn from the PhD student cohort gave continuity and enhanced quality, though they usually left after completion of their degree.
- 5.6.2 The Dean reported that lack of suitable accommodation impeded the employment of full-time academic staff in preference to part-time and casual staff. The Review Team found that the high level of casualisation in the Faculty, whilst being an economic strategy to solve staffing problems, created other problems, including coordination. It recommended that the Faculty implements systematic processes for tutor training across the Faculty to address the unevenness of quality experienced by students.

- 5.6.3 The Review Team found that there was dissonance between what the academic staff reported and what the students said in relation to the English language skills of tutors. Students reported that they found it difficult to communicate with some tutors who, although they had subject expertise, were lacking English language skills. Staff conveyed that they were unaware of problems in this area, and that they ensured that all staff had a high level of English proficiency.

See Recommendations 8 and 9

5.7 Research-led teaching and scholarship of teaching

- 5.7.1 Undergraduate students reported varying experiences of lecturers integrating research into their teaching. They considered that most academics were involved in research, and often found that those that were active researchers were better teachers and effective communicators. On the other hand staff could sometimes overly focus on their own research: examples were given of lecturers who taught from their own viewpoint, who did not give a broad overview of a subject, or who based lectures solely on their own publications. This was felt to affect the learning experience and assessment, especially when students who were studying the same subject were presented with different perspectives across the five streams of the unit.
- 5.7.2 The Review Team found that some staff were involved in research in the scholarship of teaching, and used it to enhance the learning experience of their students. Promotion of research-led teaching and the scholarship of teaching are among the priorities for the Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning. *(See Section 5.1)*

See Recommendation 10

6 ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Undergraduate students expressed concern at the lack of feedback they were receiving on assessment tasks. Reasons given by staff for the lack of feedback included large class sizes, assignments due on the last day of semester, and the practice of lecturers using tutors to mark different subjects. Students indicated that they wanted a document explaining the assessment criteria. They considered that the wide range of standards and expectations of assessments between units of study with the same credit point rating was confusing and undesirable. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider publicising assessment criteria and providing more detailed feedback to students.
- 6.2 Regarding group work, students were concerned about the inconsistency and lack of equity of their peers not participating fully in presentations but being awarded the same mark for the assignment. Opinions on the value of group work varied with some students expressing the view that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages as they learnt more from group work than from examinations. Others expressed the opposite view, stating that time constraints made participation in group discussions difficult. Lack of even allocation of groups had resulted in some students working alone, with other members of the class being in groups of four or five. Staff acknowledged that acceptance of group work varied across the student cohort and it could sometimes be difficult to ascertain levels of participation. Methods of solving the marking question include allowing students to share a pool of marks based on their individual performances, and self assessment. The Review Team recommended that the Faculty consider running a staff development program aimed at supporting staff in developing strategies to improve the quality of group work as a learning experience.
- 6.3 Assignment workload varied across the Faculty. Both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework student reported major assignments from the same discipline due simultaneously, and suggested that it would be beneficial if staff communicated information about due dates to each other so that the students' workload could be spread more evenly. Other students reported changes in the assessment process from a 100% final examination to final essays due

at the beginning or middle of semester. In this case, students reported that they lost interest in the subject as there was no necessity to study for exams.

See Recommendations 11 and 12

7 STUDENT PROGRESSION

6.1 International students

- 6.1.1 The Faculty has a high percentage of international students for whom English is a second language. It acknowledged that there was a problem with the progression rates of this cohort. The Review Team identified a number of strategies across the Faculty which supported international students, as well as local NESB students.
- 6.1.2 Teaching fora aimed at teaching NESB students have been organised by the Teaching Quality Fellow, and a more systematic way of working with these students is high on the priorities for the new Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning. (See Section 5.3). A self-help network for students, with groups covering a range of cultural backgrounds has been established. A digitised library which allows searching by phrase context to show linkages and provide understanding of words and phrases has been introduced in one discipline.
- 6.1.3 Although there were no international students in the undergraduate group that was interviewed, the local students considered that the main problem for this cohort was language. They reported that whereas some lecturers recognised the difficulties of learning in a different language and addressed the international students with more attention; others taught as if all students had English as their first language. They expressed concern at the adverse effect on the work of the international students, and by implication theirs (if they were in a group with them), might have if adequate support was not provided. Local postgraduate coursework students valued the wide range of perspectives that discussions with international students provided, and reported that it was made clear that lecturers were willing to help NESB students with problems. Postgraduate research students appreciated the help that the University Learning Centre provided, especially with English proficiency.
- 7.1.4 The Faculty is currently benchmarking international student progression rates with the University of Melbourne which has a similar profile and draws candidates from the same pool, and is considering implementing some of their strategies. A systematic process for identifying students with problems early in their degree program, applying available resources and putting students in contact with appropriate help, is currently being put in place to replace the current ad hoc system.

7.2 Student diversity

- 7.2.1 The diversity of the student body across the Faculty is wide, with students from over thirty countries studying across all disciplines. The Faculty reported that most international students came from Asia due to Australia's geographical proximity and the fact that it was the closest western economy. Since the majority of postgraduate coursework students are from overseas, the Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider implementing a strategy to encourage local students to enrol in the postgraduate coursework programs.

See Recommendation 13

7.3 Orientation programs

- 7.3.1 Staff reported that an induction program for students was a priority for the Faculty, and would be a good avenue to introduce issues such as communication and unit of study advice. They considered that ongoing help and support was needed once students commenced their units of study, in addition to a session at the end of the first year to provide advice on the next step. The Teaching Quality Fellow reported that an orientation program was in place, whereby

information on core structure, filling in forms and academic culture was explained. A separate orientation program occurs for international postgraduate students.

7.4 Support scholarships

- 7.4.1 The Review Team was impressed with the support scholarships provided through members of Disciplinary Advisory Boards and professional bodies, for example by the Accounting Foundation.

See Commendation 8

8 RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

8.1 Completion rates

- 8.1.1 The Faculty acknowledges that there is a problem with low retention and completion rates of Research Higher Degree (RHD) students, and has implemented a number of strategies to remedy the situation. These include the introduction of a compulsory induction program, a research training scheme, stricter admission standards, more systematic reviewing process, encouragement to attend staff research seminars, and the establishment of a dedicated Postgraduate Student Research Centre. In addition more stringent processes are in place for assessing whether or not students wishing to suspend will actually complete. Writing and publishing workshops and dedicated help with datasets have also proved beneficial.
- 8.1.2 Completion rates of RHD students will be discussed during benchmarking exercises with the University of Melbourne.

8.2 Induction program

- 8.2.1 The Faculty has introduced a compulsory, one-semester long, induction program for all new postgraduate research students. Fortnightly meetings are held to discuss issues such as supervision, research topics, library resources, time management, and research writing. Academic staff considered that this process would help identify and resolve problems quickly. From 2003 the program will be run twice yearly.
- 8.2.2 Postgraduate research students who were interviewed reported that attendance during the induction program was not compulsory and that not all disciplines engaged in, or were aware of, the program. Students who commenced their candidature mid year 2002 were concerned that they could not attend the induction program until the beginning of 2003, although this issue has now been remedied by the change to twice yearly induction. Students expressed the view that wider involvement of Faculty staff in the induction seminars would improve them.

8.3 Research supervision

- 8.3.1 The Faculty acknowledges that it needs to increase the number of staff who are available to supervise RHD students. They reported that some senior academic staff are reluctant to take on supervisory responsibilities, and the younger staff, whilst keen, are required to be associate supervisors first. Chairs of Disciplines encourage new staff to attend the Institute for Teaching and Learning courses, but were unsure whether this was a Faculty requirement.
- 8.3.2 RHD students considered that their supervisors were supportive and helped them to access resources. Meetings with supervisors varied from regular monthly or fortnightly meetings to ones when a chapter had been completed. One student considered that if regular communication was occurring, face to face meetings were unnecessary.

8.4 Annual Review Process

- 8.4.1 The Faculty told the Review Team that it had become more systematic in the annual review process of postgraduate research students. Chairs of Discipline outlined the process whereby confidential annual interviews are held with each student, during which they are questioned on the quality of their supervision. This allows unsatisfactory supervision to be tracked down and remedied promptly through the postgraduate coordinator.
- 8.4.2 Postgraduate students reported varying experiences of the annual review process. Whereas some students had formal interviews without the presence of the supervisor, others had not, and considered that a formal interview would be useful. They expressed the opinion that they would use alternate avenues to highlight problems they were having, for example contacting the postgraduate coordinator when the problem occurs for immediate resolution. Some students considered that regular contact with the supervisor negated the value of the annual review. They expressed the view that for the process to be of use, it should occur every six months.

8.5 Support and resources

- 8.5.1 The Review Team was impressed with the dedicated postgraduate research facilities and considered that they have the potential to help strengthen the research culture within the Faculty. Students appreciated the improvement that had occurred with the provision of facilities in the new building. All students are provided with desks and computers, although some computers are in need of replacement. Some students expressed the view that they would prefer resources to be allocated for attendance at conferences away from the University, and for access to electronic journals.
- 8.5.2 Whereas students within disciplines met regularly to discuss papers and research, there is little communication across disciplines. Students identified themselves with their discipline rather than the Faculty as a whole. They considered that cross disciplinary access to resources, staff and research would be beneficial. Mentoring and advice in the skills necessary to proceed to academia, such as writing an ARC grant application, interview techniques, writing a resume, etc, would also be useful. Strategies are being introduced to stimulate collegiality across the Faculty, for example: discussions between students and staff about conference presentations and research, and provision of the dedicated postgraduate research room. Postgraduate students who were tutors reported that they were treated like junior members of staff. However, staff acknowledged that whilst there had been improvements in developing a collegial atmosphere with the postgraduate students, more work was still needed.
- 8.5.3 The Review Team recommended that the Faculty include a dimension of mentoring into the postgraduate research experience, and that more attention should be paid to making the postgraduate research student cohort feel part of the Faculty community.

See Commendation 9 and Recommendation 14

9 ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

9.1 Admissions and enrolment

- 9.1.1 The Faculty's student administration had been restructured in recent years with a view to providing a stronger student oriented service. Some students advised the Review Team that they had experienced problems with the admissions and enrolments processes, citing delays and communication problems (such as incorrect information and lost documentation). Postgraduate coursework students who worked during the day indicated that later opening hours of the administration office would be beneficial. The Faculty considers that the Student Information Office provides a benchmark in student service provision for the University by being open during semester from 9am to 7pm.

- 9.1.2 The Team considered that it was important that students should feel that Faculty administration is responsive to their needs and recommended that the Faculty consider ways to improve the efficiency and service orientation of the administration, particularly in relation to enrolments.

See Recommendation 15

9.2 Unit of study advice and availability

- 9.2.1 The Review Team found that there was a range of views and expectations in the Faculty regarding the provision of advice on unit of study and program requirements. On the one hand, students expected that this advice should be available from Student Administration. On the other hand, some academic staff expressed the view that it was not appropriate for administrative staff to provide advice on program planning. The Team suggested that the Faculty address this issue to ensure that clear and accurate advice is easily accessible by students and that information sources are clearly communicated to students.
- 9.2.2 Postgraduate coursework students reported a lack of congruency between the units of study that were listed in both the handbook and on the Faculty website and those that were actually available when they arrived at the University. The students interviewed reported that in the majority of cases the units that they had chosen prior to arrival at the University were either not available during 2002 or had never been conducted. A unit of study that was essential for completion of one degree has not been offered for two years and is not being offered in the foreseeable future. Students enrolled in this degree were concerned about the effect this would have on their ability to complete their degree. Staff expressed concern regarding these problems, and reported that they are currently being resolved.
- 9.2.3 Overall the Review Team found that there was a need to improve student satisfaction across the Faculty. It considered that the Faculty is not sufficiently student centred, particularly in structure, processes and relationships.

See Recommendation 16 and 17

9.3 Faculty website

- 9.3.1 Staff from the Faculty confirmed the Review Team's findings that information on the Faculty website is out of date and inaccurate. Problems associated with updating material on the website included loss of expert personnel, the number of places that information had to be changed within the site, and the lack of a formal process to ensure accuracy. The Review Team recommends the implementation of quality assurance processes relating to the provision of information on the website.

See Recommendation 18

10 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 10.1 The Faculty of Economics and Business is to be commended on its successful restructuring process. The accreditation process currently being undertaken is driving change and putting a number of quality assurance processes in place in relation to teaching and learning and research training. The audit of Academic Board policies is an initiative that should be shared with other faculties. Staff development activities organised by the Teaching Quality Fellow, together with the establishment of a Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning are also seen as important initiatives.
- 10.2 Areas which the Faculty might consider for improvement include improving student satisfaction particularly in the areas of admissions and enrolments, the quality of teaching across the Faculty especially in relation to tutors and tutorials; compliance with Academic

Board policies on Academic Honesty in Coursework and Online learning; and providing a more collegial experience for the postgraduate research students.

- 10.3 These findings were communicated to the Dean in the *Brief report of the findings of the Review Team* that was sent to the Faculty on 2 December 2002.

11 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE (COMMENDATIONS)

Based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the Teaching and Learning Plan, other documentation provided by the Faculty, and the findings of the Review Team, the following areas of good practice have been identified within the Faculty of Economics and Business.

Commendation 1

The Review Team congratulates the Dean on engineering successful and widely accepted changes in a complex Faculty. Significant changes have taken place and will continue. (*See Section 2*)

Commendation 2

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the use of accreditation processes with AACSB (International), and the accounting profession, to drive change and put a system of quality assurance processes in place. The initiative is strongly supported across the Faculty. (*See Section 3.1*)

Commendation 3

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the benchmarking activities it is undertaking with the University of Melbourne. (*See Section 3.3*)

Commendation 4

The Review Team commends the Faculty on its audit of the implementation of Academic Board policies – *The Alignment of Academic Board policies with Faculty policies* by Michael Hogan. (*See also Recommendation 2*) (*See Section 4.1*)

Commendation 5

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the use of the Teaching Quality Fellow, to improve the quality of teaching and learning within the Faculty. It notes that the activities of the Teaching Quality Fellow are augmented by other teaching and learning initiatives across the Faculty. (*See Section 5.1 and Section 5.3*)

Commendation 6

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the establishment of the Centre for Teaching and Learning. However, the Faculty will need to ensure that it is resourced appropriately, developing terms of reference which are attainable. (*See Section 5.2*)

Commendation 7

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the number of staff development activities which are taking place aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning across the Faculty. (*See Section 5.3*)

Commendation 8

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the provision of support scholarships by members of Disciplinary Advisory Boards and professional bodies, for example the Accounting Foundation. (See Section 7.4)

Commendation 9

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the provision of its dedicated postgraduate research facilities. (See Section 8.5)

13 AREAS OF CONSIDERATION FOR IMPROVEMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS)

The Review Team identified a number of areas of consideration for improvement, and makes the following recommendations to the Faculty.

Recommendation 1

The Review Team recommends that there should be Faculty-wide compliance with the Academic Board policy on student evaluation and feedback by providing in written form information to students on the results of, and actions taken, in response to their feedback. (See Section 3.4)

Recommendation 2

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty updates the *Alignment of Academic Board policies with Faculty policies* by Michael Hogan, with information on policies that were not originally included eg *Management and Evaluation of Teaching* and *Generic Attributes of Graduates*. (See also Commendation 5) (See Section 4.1)

Recommendation 3

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways of combating the high incidence of plagiarism and academic dishonesty across the Faculty, and complying with the Academic Board policy on Academic Honesty in Coursework. (See Section 4.2)

Recommendation 4

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider stating generic attributes more explicitly in all unit of study outlines. (See Section 4.3)

Recommendation 5

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty should instigate a policy for the use of Blackboard which is consistent with the Academic Board policy *Quality Assurance and Online Learning* for WebCT (See Section 4.4)

Recommendation 6

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways of addressing the variation in the quality of teaching across the Faculty, particularly in relation to part-time and sessional tutors. (See Section 5.5)

Recommendation 7

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty continue to monitor and consider ways of addressing the issue of large class sizes, particularly for postgraduate coursework subjects. (See Section 5.5)

Recommendation 8

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider the implementation of systematic processes for tutor training across the Faculty to address unevenness. *(See Section 5.6)*

Recommendation 9

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways of improving the English language proficiency of tutors across the Faculty. *(See Section 5.6)*

Recommendation 10

The Review Team recommends that one of the priorities of the Faculty's new Centre for Teaching and Learning should be to focus on research-led teaching and in particular on ways in which undergraduate students can be exposed to inquiry-based learning. *(See Section 5.7)*

Recommendation 11

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider publicising assessment criteria and providing more detailed feedback to students. *(See Section 6)*

Recommendation 12

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider running a staff development program to improve the operation and assessment of group work. *(See Section 6)*

Recommendation 13

Since the majority of postgraduate coursework students are from overseas, the Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider implementing a strategy to encourage local students to enrol in the postgraduate coursework programs. *(See Section 7.2)*

Recommendation 14

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty include a dimension of mentoring into the postgraduate research experience, and that more attention should be paid to making the postgraduate research student cohort feel part of the Faculty community. *(See Section 8.5)*

Recommendation 15

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways of improving the admissions and enrolments process in the Faculty office, and the provision of a more student oriented and service centred approach. *(See Section 9.1)*

Recommendation 16

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider updating information about unit of study availability, in particular for postgraduate coursework level units, in both the Faculty handbook and on the Faculty website. *(See Section 9.2)*

Recommendation 17

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways of improving student satisfaction and developing a more student-centred Faculty, especially in relation to structure, processes and relationships. *(See Section 9.2)*

Recommendation 18

In view of the current inclusion of out of date and inaccurate information on the Faculty website, the Review Team recommends that the Faculty considers ways of implementing quality assurance processes to ensure ongoing quality and accuracy of information. (*See Section 9.3*)

Prof Judyth Sachs
Chair, Review Team
Chair, Academic Board

27 February 2003

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW VISIT

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2002

BRIEF REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

1 Introduction

1.1 The Academic Board Review Team, chaired by Prof. Judyth Sachs, Chair of the Academic Board, visited the Faculty of Economics and Business on Tuesday 12 November 2002 to review and evaluate academic planning and quality assurance systems within the Faculty.

1.2 The Review Team conducted interviews with the following:

- The Dean, Professor Peter Wolnizer, Associate Deans and Heads of Schools
- Chairs of Disciplines
- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate coursework students
- Postgraduate research students
- Other academic and general staff
- Open session interviews

2 General comments

2.1 The Faculty has recently undergone a major restructuring. The Faculty Self-Evaluation Report omitted to present information about some of the recent achievements of the Faculty. These should have been included as they represented substantial aspects of the Faculty reform and restructuring initiatives.

3. Areas of good practice

3.1 Use of the accreditation process with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) to drive change and put a system of quality assurance processes in place. The initiative was strongly supported across the Faculty.

3.2 Establishment of the Faculty Centre for Teaching and Learning.

3.3 Teaching Quality Fellow.

3.4 Teaching fora, symposia, workshops and other activities related to teaching and learning.

3.5 Postgraduate research facilities.

3.6 Support scholarships.

3.7 Audit of Academic Board policies. Needs to be updated with information on policies not originally included eg *Management and Evaluation of Teaching*.

3.8 Benchmarking with University of Melbourne.

4. Areas of consideration for improvement

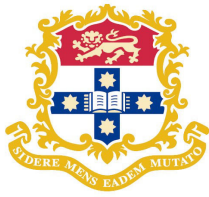
- 4.1 Improving student satisfaction and developing a more student centred Faculty, especially in relation to structure, processes and relationships.
- 4.2 Admission and enrolments processes, particularly for double degree students. Need for designated staff to aid in enrolment process, and for student/ course advisors.
- 4.3 Variation in quality and oversight of quality of teaching across the Faculty – especially as this relates to part-time and sessional tutors.
- 4.4 Communication processes between disciplines, staff and students. There is some evidence to suggest that chairs of disciplines are blocking information flow.
- 4.5 Need a develop a recruitment strategy to encourage more local students to take postgraduate coursework programs. At present the majority of postgraduate coursework students are international.
- 4.6 Class sizes, especially in relation to postgraduate coursework classes.
- 4.7 English language proficiency of tutors needs addressing across the Faculty.
- 4.8 Compliance with Academic Board policies on student evaluation and feedback, and the use of ICT (Blackboard and WebCT).
- 4.9 Compliance with Academic Board Academic Honesty policy. Cited examples indicate a serious problem within the Faculty
- 4.10 Course availability, particularly in postgraduate level. Units of study listed in handbook and website and are not being offered.
- 4.11 Postgraduate research experience – mentoring, feeling part of the Faculty.
- 4.12 Updating of Faculty website.
- 4.13 Implementation of systematic processes for tutor training across the Faculty to address unevenness.
- 4.14 Course outlines to state generic attributes explicitly.
- 4.15 Communication of information about course advisors.
- 4.16 Publicising assessment criteria and providing more detailed feedback to students.
- 4.17 High level of casualisation which, whilst being an economical strategy to solve staffing problems, creates other problems, especially coordination.
- 4.18 Staff development program to support staff in developing strategies in relation to group work.

Prof Judyth Sachs
Chair, Review Team
Chair, Academic Board

2 December 2002

1. Self Evaluation Report (see Appendix Three)
2. Teaching & Learning Strategic Plan 2002–2004 (See Appendix Four)
3. Teaching Programs
4. Staff Profile and Student Ratio
5. Undergraduate Curriculum Review 2000–2001
6. Blackboard Software
7. Teaching Quality Fellow
8. Teaching Forum
9. Academic Board Policies on Teaching
10. Student Induction and Enrolment
11. Student Manual to Assist Undergraduates and Postgraduates
12. Faculty Teaching Excellence Award
13. Teaching Performance Indicators
14. Scholarship Index
15. Faculty Organisational Charts
16. Review of Policies and Procedures on Academic Matters (Hogan Report)
17. Student and Academic Administration Policies and Procedures Manual for Staff

***NB** Appendices to the Self-Evaluation Report (items 3-15) are available from the Faculty or from the Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning).*



Faculty of Economics and Business

The University of Sydney

ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Economics and Business has a rich history of intellectual endeavour and a fine reputation for excellence in teaching, learning and research. Its distinctiveness is that it locates the key business-related disciplines in their broader economic and political contexts.

The Faculty is committed to providing students with an education that is both intellectually rigorous and relevant to their future careers. True to this commitment, a key objective of the Faculty is the continuous review and enhancement of its teaching, learning, research and research training capabilities. We are currently embarking on significant quality assurance and accreditation initiatives – including the Academic Board Review process – which will help us in our pursuit of excellence.

REORGANISATION OF THE FACULTY

The Faculty restructuring process that commenced three years ago is bearing fruit. The reorganisation was founded on the intellectual distinctiveness of the Faculty and has given impetus to strategic and innovative developments in program and curriculum design and cross-disciplinary collaboration in research. A change of name and the establishment of two schools (the School of Business and the School of Economics and Political Science) reflect the principal focus of the Faculty's teaching and research interests.

Underpinning this restructure, the Faculty has also strengthened and extended the roles of Associate Deans dedicated to undergraduate, graduate coursework and research students.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

It is appropriate that this report acknowledges what students hope to gain from their experience in the Faculty of Economics and Business at The University of Sydney. It is also important to note that local and international fee-paying students now constitute a high proportion of the student body (41%, up from 20% in 1999).

Regardless of country of origin, students have high expectations. They expect to engage in new learning, and make new contacts with other students from different countries and diverse cultures. Most want to belong to their peer group, especially those living away from home for the first time. They are also conscious that friendships forged at university will develop in both a personal and professional sense.

Students view study as a means of helping them prepare for entry into the workforce. Hence, there is an expectation that time spent with the Faculty will provide a solid grounding in the development of theory, strategy and practice, backed by appropriate intellectual understanding and technical skills in business, economics and government. In short, they aspire to become the well-rounded managers and leaders of the future. Surveys and student feedback indicate that graduates continue to value the high quality of the academic programs and the commitment of Faculty staff to student learning.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Faculty offers a diverse range of core and elective units of study designed to whet the intellectual appetite of its students. We emphasise basic technical and theoretical skills, but at the same time we aim to develop students who are informed, reflective, discerning and can express themselves cogently. Through lectures, debates, assessment tasks, feedback, workshops, video-recorded presentations and online web-based study, the Faculty is helping students to develop these skills.

In addition, the Faculty recognises that students need access to current IT hardware and software, and we deliver high quality services and support in this area. Over the past three years, the Faculty has substantially upgraded its IT support facilities.

NEW INITIATIVES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Faculty is committed to ensuring continuous improvement in the area of teaching and learning and this report outlines new initiatives which are coordinated by the Teaching Quality Fellow, the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Associate Deans. For example, budget provisions from 2003 provide for the creation of a Centre for Teaching and Learning to work with staff and students. In particular, students for whom English is their second language, and who experience difficulty in written and spoken English, will receive appropriate assistance.

PREPARATION AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The findings outlined in this self-review report are the product of collaboration and consultation with staff within the Faculty. Comments were sought on teaching programs and their perceived strengths and weaknesses in terms of content and delivery. Special consideration was given to the effectiveness of support mechanisms currently in place to assist students across all levels of ability.

A working party was established to collect data and incorporate the responses in a draft report, which was extensively reviewed and amended by senior Faculty management and staff. A separate working party assumed responsibility for the development of a new Faculty Teaching & Learning Strategic Plan 2002–2004, which is attached as Appendix 1.

To reflect the spirit of the guidelines set out for Stage One of the review process as required by the University, the following material has been structured under the four key headings:

1. Academic Program, Students, Staff and Learning Resources
2. Academic Quality Improvement Systems
3. Methods to Monitor Teaching and Learning Outcomes and Revise Processes
4. Self-analysis and Evaluation

1. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, STUDENTS, STAFF AND LEARNING RESOURCES

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Faculty provides the full range of undergraduate and graduate degrees leading to coursework and research awards. More information is available in Appendix 2.

Degree Program	Courses Offered	Learning Methods
Undergraduate	Bachelor degrees in: Economics, Economics & Social Sciences, Commerce, Commerce/ Liberal Studies	2-3 hours of lectures and one smaller numbers class (tutorial/workshop) per week. 2-3 hours lectures/seminars per week for units with smaller numbers (including honours units).
Postgraduate coursework	Masters degrees in: Commerce, Business, International Business, International Studies, Economics, Public Affairs, Public Policy, Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management, Logistics Management, Transport Management, Labour Law and Relations	2-3 hour block (lecture/seminar) per week or more concentrated modes such as daylong blocks over a 2-6 week period.
Postgraduate research	Masters of Philosophy (M.Phil), and Ph. D.	Supervised thesis-based research.

New Business Education Program

The Master of Business offers a business education, which is outstanding among its kind for being grounded in a broader social sciences context.

The launch of the Master of Business (MBus) on 18 September 2002 was a milestone for the Faculty in terms of the delivery of innovative business education. The program will enable students to acquire expert technical and professional skills and thus attain a broader professional capability. Particular emphasis is placed on developing the interpersonal and strategic skills upon which business and professional practice ultimately depend. This program will become the template for future reviews of all graduate and undergraduate degrees in the Faculty.

GROWTH IN STUDENT ENROLMENTS

The growth in student enrolments has been nothing short of phenomenal. In 2002 the Faculty enjoyed a sizeable increase in postgraduate student enrolments over 2001.

In second semester of 2002 there was a significant and unanticipated increase in mid-year enrolments in postgraduate coursework units. This was accompanied by a rise in undergraduate enrolments, all of which has created issues regarding timetabling and the provision of teaching and physical resources. In some units the increased numbers were accommodated, by repeating units of study.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF

Students receive tuition and intellectual mentoring and support from over 150 full-time members of the Faculty's academic staff. The teaching staff comprises 106 male and 36 female members, of whom a total of 87 hold a PhD qualification. (See Appendix 3.)

Student staff ratios for 1997–2001 were:

1997 – 29.1:1
1998 – 28.9:1
1999 – 30.4:1
2000 – 26.2:1
2001 – 21.9:1

IMPROVEMENTS IN LEARNING RESOURCES

- Merewether Building:**
- The two large lecture theatres in Merewether have inbuilt PowerPoint and Internet capacity. The two theatres and Lecture Rooms Three, Four, Five and Six are being equipped with data projectors, computers, video cassette recorders and sound systems.
 - In 1999 all teaching rooms were extensively refurbished, which included the installation of new lighting, air conditioning and seating, the laying of carpet, and panelling using sound baffles.
 - These improvements have significantly reduced noise, improved air quality and eliminated the acoustic effect created by hard flooring.
- Computer laboratories:**
- The Faculty has invested significant funds in the development of Information Technology infrastructure to support teaching and learning.
 - The new Economics and Business Building houses six computer laboratories utilised for teaching and learning and a postgraduate research student centre which will be fully equipped with 80 workstations.

- The six computer laboratories consist of two with 89 workstations, three with 25 workstations, and a development laboratory with 23 workstations and four servers.
- The Merewether Building houses another four computer laboratories.
- In 2002 the Faculty invested in a much-needed and major upgrade of its website. This has improved our overall internet image and enabled us to build special features that better assist users to access information on all matters of Faculty activity.

Institute Building: ▪ Institute lecture theatres one and two are equipped with data projectors and sound systems.

Storie Dixon Building: ▪ The Faculty has two fully-equipped lecture theatres.

Mobile facilities: ▪ The Faculty has four new mobile data projectors and screens.

2. ACADEMIC QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

ENSURING QUALITY

A major challenge facing the Faculty has been to ensure high quality teaching and learning across all units of study, but in particular:

- in undergraduate units where there is a high student staff ratio;
- in postgraduate units where there is the temptation to divert resources to subsidise undergraduate teaching; and
- across all units where an increased enrolment of international students has resulted in a greater disparity in students' English language skills and educational culture.

The comparative data on output quality, such as CEQ and SCEQ, indicates that we have some way to go in meeting this challenge. However, we have begun to make real progress.

IMPROVING COURSEWORK PROGRAMS

In 2000, the Faculty's Postgraduate Program Review Committee (PPRC) and Undergraduate Review Committee (URC) commenced a review of all award courses. The review was intended to ensure that coursework programs remain flexible and coherent. Because student needs and aspirations will continue to change, the process of review and modification is ongoing.

Committee recommendations have been extensively discussed within the Faculty with final recommendations (Appendix 4) being approved for introduction in 2003. In brief, the committees recommended:

- that each program should have distinctive educational objectives;
- amendments to majors; and
- the development of new majors to provide greater variety of courses.

The outcome is that the Faculty has developed an array of award courses and administrative enhancements, which improve our ability to meet the needs of students and employers.

Outcome	Recommendations
New postgraduate course	To fill a gap in our current offerings the PPRC developed a proposal for an innovative new award course, the Master of Business (see page 3). From 2003 the Postgraduate Studies Board will introduce joint masters degrees with Law (Master of International Business and Law) and with Engineering (Master of Business in Technology).
New undergraduate courses	URC working parties are investigating two new undergraduate award courses (Bachelor of International Studies and Bachelor of Business Administration).
Enhanced advice capability	Student Information Office provides student advice on administrative and academic matters. The Office was restructured to provide a strong student oriented service.
New student administration procedures	New procedures are being developed by the Associate Deans for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework Programs, in conjunction with the Student Administrative Services Manager. While these issues were not part of the Academic Board's brief, we believe they play an important role in supporting students.

SETTING AND MONITORING QUALITY STANDARDS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Faculty is now in a better position to set and monitor quality standards for teaching and learning. These include assuring implementation of Academic Board policies as well as setting and monitoring more specific policies on graduate attributes and unit aims, outcomes and assessment methods.

Some Disciplines have adopted formal policies and procedures, with notable successes being Accounting and Business Law, and Transport and Logistics Management.

Example: Accounting and Business Law

Feedback from CEQ and SCEQ data, employers and external audits identify students' communication skills as a major area for improvement.

At the initiative of staff in key first year units, and with the support of the School of Business, the Accounting Discipline has adopted procedures to develop generic communication skills.

An Integrated Approach to Monitoring Quality

Other Disciplines have relied on the Chair to provide informal guidance, but there has been a tendency for staff to duplicate the teaching of some generic skills whilst neglecting others. To address this issue, an integrated, Faculty-wide approach is being implemented.

The Faculty is pleased to advise that a more integrated approach to setting and monitoring teaching and learning policies is being achieved through its Heads of School, Teaching and Learning Committee and the Associate Deans.

In 2001 the Teaching and Learning Committee revised its graduate attributes, aims and outcomes. From mid-2002 Disciplines were required to submit forms for all current and newly-proposed undergraduate and postgraduate units of study, specifying inter alia the attributes the unit was seeking to develop, as well aims, outcomes and assessment methods. Associate Deans and the Student Information Office now have the relevant data on each unit of study in an accessible form to advise students and to monitor coherence of the programs.

For the first time information will be lodged in one database, Flexsis, which is linked to the Faculty Website. We will now be able to accurately track the currency of all information on our unit of study offerings. Information from Flexsis is converted into the Faculty handbooks and also available via the student manual and the Faculty web site.

The task of reviewing all units of study will take time to complete, although we consider this essential to achieve a consistent, integrated approach to our teaching. In the meantime, Heads of School monitor assessment outcomes to ensure a grade distribution consistent with the Academic Board policy.

Information Technology Support

Key initiatives pursued by the IT Policy and Procedures Committee are summarised as follows:

- Teaching platforms:**
- Mid-1990s – introduction of a dedicated file server allowing staff to upload lecture notes et al for students to peruse.
 - 1999 – introduction of an interactive web-based package offering enhanced capabilities.
 - 2000 – licensing of Blackboard and purchase of a new file server, two major software upgrades and establishment of a consolidated information technology function.
 - Setup of staff accounts and training in the use of Blackboard. A significant proportion of staff use this facility (Appendix 5). Some disciplines have developed their own online teaching capability to complement Blackboard.
- Student access:**
- Establishment of an extensive network of well-equipped computer laboratories to ensure student access to information technology teaching and learning facilities and ability to conduct independent web-based research.
 - The Faculty has a total capacity of 350 desktop workstations allocated to students, out of a total Faculty population of approximately 800 workstations.
- Lecture room equipment:**
- Near-completion of the installation of computer projection facilities in all rooms, and activation of a support system offering immediate technical backup.
- Hardware and software:**
- A redundant server for Blackboard has been purchased in case of main server failure.
 - All staff and student local area network connectivity is based on 100 mbs switched technology.
 - The Faculty has introduced a policy of triennial desktop hardware replacement.
 - Dedicated student and Faculty file and print servers have been established.
 - Each student has been allocated 10 MB storage space.
 - The Faculty is now utilising teaching software that provides lecturers with remote access to student workstations.
 - Students have access to software such as ARIS, SAP, SAS and SPSS.

Improving Processes and Mechanisms

If the Faculty is to achieve high quality learning outcomes then it must provide staff and students with the equipment and skills they need to understand their respective roles in the teaching and learning process.

Equipping Staff

Teaching Quality Fellow	Since 1994 a Teaching Quality Fellow (Appendix 6) has been providing staff with advice and assistance on teaching methods, and remedial help to students referred by staff. The Fellow also teaches two highly successful communication units.
Centre for Teaching and Learning	The Centre will address the teaching and learning issues associated with the Faculty's increasingly diverse student body. It is scheduled to open in early 2003 and will be staffed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director – Associate Professor, level D ▪ Teaching Quality Fellow – Senior Lecturer, level C ▪ NESB and learning skills specialist – level B (under consideration) Educational/instructional design specialist – level B (under consideration)
Teaching forum	The Faculty has been holding teaching forums since 1994, many of which have been led by specialists from the University's ITL (Appendix7). The aims of these forums include identifying teaching and learning problems in the Faculty, devising solutions and raising staff awareness. The most recent forum on NESB students addressed both aims.
Compliance audit	The Faculty appointed a consultant to review its compliance with Academic Board student policies. The report has been tabled at the Teaching and Learning Committee (Appendix 8) and acted upon where appropriate.

Equipping Students

Undergraduate orientation	During enrolment the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies) and the Teaching Quality Fellow address students on matters pertaining to units of study, majors, and the programs more generally. Small groups of 50 are preferred. In 2001 and 2002 over 500 new students attended the undergraduate student orientation day (Appendix 9). With a focus on SWOT, this orientation includes a one-page diagnostic on readiness to learn economics.
Postgraduate orientation	The program for postgraduate coursework students (Postgraduate Professional Development Program) is run in the week prior to the commencement of Semesters 1 and 2, and is designed to help students settle into University life. Themes of this 7-hour program include managing expectations; essay writing; literature review; referencing; how to be a successful postgraduate student; exam techniques; and making the most of the library and Student Information Office.
Student induction manual	The Faculty publishes a <i>New Student Manual</i> (Appendix 10), which by 2002 had expanded to become a 61-page document. In addition to administrative and organisational information, it contains advice on teaching and learning methods, students' obligations, and how to prepare and present written work, make oral presentations, and study for examinations. Students receive a hard copy upon enrolment.
Faculty web page	Our web page was significantly upgraded in 2002 and contains major sections of the <i>Student Induction Manual</i> . A Webmaster has been employed to maintain the site.

Targeting 'At Risk' Students

To improve progression rates, the Faculty recognises the need to assist students who are 'at risk' educationally. Specific initiatives include the adoption of new diagnostic procedures. For example, the Learning Centre's MASUS program is currently screening 1st year undergraduate students in Commerce Law/Accounting which are required units in the Bachelor of Commerce, our largest undergraduate award program. Students are graded and receive formative feedback, and those with difficulties are referred to

the Learning Centre. The Accounting Discipline allows students who have undertaken a course at the Centre to resit a test that they may have failed.

Rewarding Excellence and Best Practice

The award of scholarships and prizes provides encouragement for students to excel in their studies.

For staff, appointment and promotion committees evaluate teaching performance and reward best practice through:

- **Research electives** – Staff members may offer an elective at senior undergraduate and postgraduate level based on their research interest, provided that it is consistent with the overall focus of a program. Electives are only offered if they attract sufficient student numbers, thus putting the onus on staff to build a reputation for innovative, and stimulating pedagogy.
- **Award for Teaching Excellence** – In 1992 the Faculty established a Teaching Excellence Award. Nominations are invited from all students and Discipline Chairs. Recipients are determined by the Teaching and Learning Committee and receive public recognition (Appendix 11), an announcement at the student prizes night, and a grant of \$1,000.
- **New awards and scholarships** – The Faculty recently received a \$500,000 donation to fund a major prize for teaching excellence and for undergraduate scholarships. This amount has been matched by the Faculty.

TRAINING IN RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The Faculty has developed comprehensive processes and procedures which underpin the quality of its research training.

- **Honours Program** – Disciplines provide research training at the undergraduate level through their honours programs. These programs are subject to the quality assurance processes for undergraduate coursework. Final results are determined at a Faculty-wide examiners' meeting, to ensure consistency between Disciplines. Each discipline has a IVth honours examiners meeting prior to the Faculty meeting.
- **Research Award Programs** – The Associate Dean Higher Degree by Research Studies oversees all quality assurance aspects of postgraduate research training. The Associate Dean HDR seeks advice and guidance from the Research Committee and the Graduate Studies Board.

Supporting and Equipping Staff

The Associate Dean HDR and the Chairs of Disciplines encourage supervisors to complete the Postgraduate Supervision Development Program offered by the Institute for Teaching and Learning. The program is mandatory for new and/or inexperienced supervisors who serve a probationary period as an associate supervisor. Appointment as a supervisor is contingent upon working under the guidance of an experienced academic.

Discipline postgraduate coordinators are encouraged to attend the University Postgraduate Coordinators Workshops run by the Academic Board.

The Faculty's manual on research supervision is readily available and we encourage supervisors to acquaint themselves with the Faculty's expectations.

Heads of School provide conference/fieldwork support on a case-by-case basis for those who are not tutors. Students who are part-time tutors can apply for support through the Schools' conference travel fund.

Supporting and Equipping Students

An electronic copy of all material relating to postgraduate research training is provided on the Blackboard website. In addition, an electronic newsletter is distributed to all students at least once per semester informing them of important milestones and other deadlines.

The Disciplines and individual supervisors are primarily responsible for equipping students to pursue high quality research. Notwithstanding, the Faculty has introduced an induction program for all new postgraduate research students. The program:

- is compulsory and one-semester long.
- involves two-hourly meetings held once a fortnight Each session has a single theme as its point of focus. Examples include: What is a PhD/MPhil anyway?; Supervision; Your research topic; Library resources; Time management; The grammar of research writing; Staying Sane!
- offers an environment where new students meet as a group and discuss issues of common interest.
- forms the basis of a self-help network.
- provides a Faculty-focused base on which students can develop their research studies.
- ensures there is no 'drift' in the first year of candidature.

Starting with students who enrolled in Semester 1, 2001, new participants in the program have continued to grow. Such is the demand that from 2003 the Induction Program will be run twice yearly.

Mechanisms for Ensuring Effective Completion and Retention

The Faculty has several mechanisms for ensuring student retention and course completion:

- The Postgraduate Student Research Centre provides the physical and IT resources and a stimulating research environment for HDR students.
- The compulsory induction program introduced in 2001 – as discussed above.
- Students are encouraged to attend staff research seminars in their discipline and are advised of seminars in the other disciplines.
- The Academic Board's policy requires annual progress reporting. All students are formally interviewed at the end of their first academic year and, in most disciplines, all subsequent years as well. Students must complete the annual progress report (APRF) before they can re-enrol in the next academic year. This requirement also applies to students returning from a period of suspension prior to enrolment. Most Disciplines require students to present a seminar at the end of their first year as a part of the assessment of probation process, and again towards the end of their second year of (full-time equivalent) candidature.

Monitoring the Research Climate and the Provision of Resources to Support Research

Mechanisms for monitoring and providing resources to support the research climate include the following:

- Each Discipline's postgraduate coordinator advises the Associate Dean HDR of any local issues both informally and at Postgraduate Coordinators meetings. Issues of more general applicability are discussed at the Postgraduate Coordinators meetings.
- Both users of the Postgraduate Research Student Centre and the Associate Dean HDR (who maintains a high level of visibility in the Centre) are encouraged to provide continuous feedback on the status of resources in the Centre.
- The Associate Dean HDR reports the results of the allocations under the PRSS scheme to the Research Committee.

- The Associate Dean HDR raises relevant issues at fortnightly Faculty Executive Committee meetings.

3. MONITORING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AND REVISING PROCESSES

The Faculty utilises a variety of monitoring tools to help maintain high standards of teaching and learning:

- **Student questionnaires** – To help them shape teaching methods, Faculty staff gain valuable data from the *Unit of Study Evaluation*. Not every Discipline requires the data to be submitted for monitoring and evaluation purpose, although the Faculty draws on more aggregated data to revise procedures and processes.
- **Other performance data** – To identify teaching problems the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee reviews the University's Teaching Performance Indicator data. It also surveys feedback from the Alternative Handbook, SCEQ and CEQ, and uses this information to revise the Faculty Teaching & Learning Strategic Plan (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12). It also compiles the Scholarship in Teaching Index.
- **Benchmarking exercise** – A TIF grant has enabled the Faculty to embark on a benchmarking relationship with the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Melbourne.
- **Professional accreditation** – Our Accounting program is subject to regular professional accreditation reviews.
- **International accreditation** – We are seeking accreditation from the peak international accreditation body for business schools, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). This involves a rigorous process of self evaluation, continuous improvement and international peer review. This process will have a significant impact on the continuous development and monitoring of teaching and learning quality and outcomes.
- **Quality assurance and accreditation manager** – The Faculty has developed this position to coordinate and administer the accreditation and quality assurance process.
- **Specialist data analyst** – To assist in analysing the relevant quantitative and qualitative data, the Faculty has recently employed a specialist data analyst.

4. SELF-EVALUATION

The Faculty is currently re-assessing its approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance. Hitherto, we have maintained quality teaching and learning by relying on individual, committed staff that enjoy the support of the resident Teaching Quality Fellow and the Blackboard facility.

Notwithstanding, with the growth in student numbers (especially those paying full fees) there has been an understandable and corresponding rise in student expectations. Consistent with its pursuit of AACSB Accreditation, the Faculty recognises the imperative to both strengthen and make systematic its processes and mechanisms for self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

To this end, the findings of recent curriculum reviews, together with this audit and the accreditation exercise, have enabled us to identify significant areas that require attention. The Faculty is moving forward and the Centre for Teaching and Learning will provide leadership in drawing together initiatives and promoting the teaching and learning commitment.

ASSOCIATE DEAN (UNDERGRADUATE)

In 2002 the Faculty upgraded and centralised its response to the report on scholarship index on teaching. The office of the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies) is now responsible for this significant data gathering exercise. (See Appendix 13.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded over 75 years ago, the Faculty of Economics and Business has a rich history of intellectual endeavour and an outstanding reputation for excellence in teaching, learning, research and research-based training. With a strong foundation in the social sciences, the Faculty offers a wide scope of scholarship across the economic, political and business disciplines which provides students with a contemporary and extensive range of study options.

A PERIOD OF GROWTH AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Faculty is experiencing significant growth in student numbers. In second semester 2002, student enrolments were as follows:

Undergraduate students	5491 (4240 local and 1251 international),
Postgraduate coursework students	2562 (1112 local and 1350 overseas),
PhD students	131 (108 local and 23 international)
Masters by research students	20 (17 local and 3 international).

The Faculty restructured its **undergraduate** programs in 2000–2001 to increase their relevance and flexibility. The following award courses were restructured and the new structure will commence in 2003:

Bachelor of Commerce	Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Law
Bachelor of Commerce (Liberal Studies)	Bachelor of Economics/Bachelor of Law
Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Economics (Social Science)/Bachelor of Law
Bachelor of Economic and Social Science	Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Commerce
Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Commerce	Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Commerce

In addition to its undergraduate programs, the Faculty offers over thirty **coursework programs** at the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters and Honours levels. In 2003 the Faculty will introduce three new Masters programs: a Master of Business, Master of Business in Technology and Master of International Business and Law. These new programs emphasise problem and research-based learning and are based around the key themes of generic skills, advanced professional knowledge, an international perspective and program flexibility.

OTHER TEACHING AND LEARNING INITIATIVES

The Faculty is embarking on several strategic initiatives that will help ensure continuous review and improvement in teaching and learning:

1. The Faculty is seeking business administration and accounting **accreditation from AACSB International** (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). On the strength of our Eligibility Applications submitted in June, AACSB has advised that the Faculty can by-pass the period of pre-candidacy, often up to 3-5 years, and move straight into the 12-month self-review period. This will culminate in the submission of a self-review report and visit by a peer-review team. With its emphasis on continuous improvement and the assurance of learning, the AACSB process is being viewed by the Faculty as an opportunity to systematically and continuously review and revise the Faculty’s teaching and learning processes in relation to an international benchmark.

2. The **establishment of a Centre for Teaching & Learning** will occur in early 2003. This Centre will provide collegial support to Faculty staff, in particular to help deliver high-level teaching outcomes; and learning support to Faculty students. Centre staff will include a Director (level D) and a Teaching Quality Fellow (level C). Under consideration are an NESB/learning skills specialist and an educational/instructional design specialist (level B).

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIC PLAN

Consistent with the University of Sydney Strategic Plan (Goal 1), a primary strategic teaching goal of the Faculty of Economics and Business is:

to maintain and enhance our position as an outstanding provider of high quality undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, both in Australia and internationally.

In order to achieve this goal, the Faculty has developed – by means of extensive consultation with various stakeholders – this Teaching & Learning Strategic Plan 2002–2004. The plan includes the following objectives:

Quality of applicants	To attract high calibre students and foster their development by offering intellectually challenging and flexible degree programs.
Appropriate diversity of learning opportunities	To assist students in reaching their full intellectual potential by providing a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities that offer stimulating and challenging learning experiences.
Curricula	To provide curricula which are grounded in current research, scholarship and professional practice, and which are responsive to the communities served by the Faculty's teaching.
Innovative teaching and learning	To foster an environment where quality and innovation in teaching and learning are valued, recognised, and properly resourced.
Student support services	To provide students with quality support which includes access to information technology and a physical learning environment that is of a high standard.
Staff support services	To enhance teaching and learning in the Faculty by encouraging staff to develop high quality teaching and learning outcomes, and to use resources effectively.

The Plan sets out a series of Faculty Teaching & Learning Strategies developed from an analysis of the Faculty's strengths and weaknesses (provided here on pages 22–24) and informed by data from the GCCA, SCEQ, CEQ and the Student Course Evaluation Questionnaires conducted by the University.

TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIC PLAN 2002–2004

Goal One: Quality Teaching and Learning

The University of Sydney will maintain and enhance its position as an outstanding provider of high quality undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, both in Australia and internationally. (Source: *The University of Sydney Strategic Plan 1999–2004*)

Goal One – Objective 1: The University will attract, foster and graduate an increasing proportion of the most intellectually able students, both local and international, including an agreed minimum proportion who have suffered social and educational disadvantage.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objective

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

1. Provide advanced programs, scholarship schemes and special admission schemes to ensure equitable and inclusive provision for all who can benefit.

2. Provide programs to ensure more effective transition from school to university.

3. Monitor student progress rates as part of the standard set of performance indicators and use this information to improve student progress.

4. Enhance the first year undergraduate experience and increase first year retention rates for all categories of students.

5. Further develop the opportunities provided through the Sydney Summer School.

- Increase participation in advanced (honours and doctoral) programs.

- Review and clarify existing prizes and scholarships and increase number and value of prizes and scholarships

- Associate Deans to continue to coordinate with the Marketing Manager and Teaching Quality Fellow, as well as senior students, in the organisation of the Transition to University program during 2003 Orientation period. The program introduces students to the physical environment, promotes support services and, introduces students to the academic culture of the Faculty. It focuses strongly on promoting involvement with University life, especially engagement with peers.

- Expand the current structured PhD support program from the disciplines of economics, political economy and work and organisational studies to all disciplines within the Faculty.

- First year co-ordinators support first year teaching and learning strategies to enhance the transition from school to university.

- First year coordinators of Accounting 1A and Commercial Transactions 1A to continue liaising with the Learning Centre through the MASUSS program to devise specific support programs for their students at risk of failure due to inadequate writing skills in English.

- Ensure that all core first year units have an early diagnostic task to identify students at risk of failing.

- Continue First Year Experience orientation in both semesters.

- Continue to provide all new undergraduate students in the Faculty with a New Student Manual.

- Employ a lecturer level B with expertise in teaching tertiary students from language backgrounds other than English as part of a Centre for Teaching & Learning.

- Each discipline to designate a first year director to advise students on their program of study

- Establish a first year coordinators group to coordinate assessment, and the teaching of generic skills

Goal One – Objective 2:

The University of Sydney will provide a rich diversity of formal and informal learning opportunities for all students, challenging them and thus enabling them to reach their full potential.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objectives

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

Meet the challenge of engagement by offering an outstanding quality of learning experience to all Sydney students

1. Maintain a wide variety of course offerings including opportunities for enrolment in combined degree programs and double major degrees.

- Develop a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Bachelor of International Studies.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the new structures for the Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Political and Social Sciences.

2. Increase active and collaborative learning opportunities to ensure that students are engaged in imaginative inquiry.

- Employ as Director of the Centre for Teaching & Learning a specialist in university education at associate professor level to consolidate existing activities, identify future directions and provide leadership and co-ordination of teaching and learning initiatives throughout the Faculty.

3. Further expand the provision of web-enhanced flexible learning experiences.

- Continue to actively support the development of on-line teaching and learning in the Faculty through the use of Blackboard and Ebook with a series of workshops on web-assisted teaching.

4. Develop leadership in the provision of challenging student learning experiences through funding incentives and public recognition of teaching excellence.

- Encourage unit of study coordinators to publish unit of study outlines (including both disciplinary and generic learning objectives, assessment and learning outcomes) on-line, using the Faculty's Unit of Study Outline Template.

- Continue to promote the Faculty's Teaching Excellence Award, as it has been redefined in 2002.

Goal One – Objective 3:

The University of Sydney will provide curricula that are informed by current research, scholarship, creative works and professional practice, are responsive to the needs of the many communities served by the University and result in graduates well equipped to contribute successfully to the global society in which they live and work.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objectives

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Extend curriculum innovation and teaching; link graduate attributes to scholarly excellence | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Undertake a project to disseminate examples of inquiry-based, research-led curricula; support additional innovations in interdisciplinary curricula.2. Seek input to course development from employers and the professions through advisory bodies and employer surveys.3. Further develop the generic attributes of Sydney graduates and embed them in research and scholarship, drawing on best practice in other research-intensive universities.4. Provide additional funding to support evidence-based curricula and teaching developments linked to the University's strategic goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Measure the improvement of good teaching practice by setting a target for increasing the Faculty mean on the SCEQ Good Teaching Scale although this measure cannot be disaggregated to the field of study.▪ Continue to enhance teaching excellence within Schools. Heads of Schools to monitor progress through results from unit of study evaluations and the analysis of SCEQ data, and report to the Dean.▪ Move to full compliance with Academic Board teaching and learning policy through undertaking an audit of Faculty, School and Discipline procedures and processes and changing policy where there is discordance with University policy.▪ Undergraduate and Postgraduate Associate Deans with Teaching Quality Fellow to audit all units of study to ensure development of the Faculty's Generic Attributes of Graduates.▪ Measure the achievement of this objective by improving the Faculty mean on the CEQ Generic Skills Scale to at least the GO8 average for comparable faculties by the end of 2004.▪ Encourage and provide training for research students to become tutors to enhance their career path as academics.▪ Create formal structure Staff Student Liaison Committee |
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Goal One – Objective 4: The University of Sydney will foster an environment where quality and innovation in teaching and learning are valued and supported by appropriate resources and adequate recognition.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objectives

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

Develop the University's quality assurance framework to world best practice standards in research-led universities, implementing a teaching and learning management process that recognises performance through funding and compares our achievements against international criteria

1. Regularly report on the quality of courses and faculties' educational performance, publishing teaching performance indicator results and comparing the standards achieved to international and national benchmarks.

2. Reward and encourage excellence in teaching and improving the student experience by allocating a proportion of funding on the basis of teaching and learning performance.

3. Extend mandatory student and graduate evaluation of all courses of study to postgraduate courses and research degrees.

4. Expand the annually revised faculty strategic and operational plans for teaching and learning, incorporating reporting against targets, to include all postgraduate coursework.

5. Support the implementation of a rigorous program of annual Academic Board reviews of faculties' educational provision.

- Establish Centre for Teaching & Learning within the Faculty comprising a Director at Associate Professor level as the head, the Teaching Quality Fellow (level C), a level B specialist in teaching students from a non-English speaking background, and a data analyst at HEW 7/8. This unit would have as its basic aim the development of a quality enhancement framework within the Faculty.

- Teaching Quality Fellow to continue to organise a Teaching Forum for Faculty each semester.

- Heads of School to report to the Dean annually on specific teaching issues, raised at Teaching Fora.

- Support (eg teaching release) staff to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education) and the development of teaching and learning materials.

- Support and encourage staff to undertake research into teaching and learning.

Goal One – Objective 5:

The University of Sydney will strive to provide the best possible physical, social and learning support environment, incorporating extensive opportunities for access to information technology and recognising the multicultural nature of Australian society.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objectives

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

Enhance the total student experience and invest in the teaching and learning environment to support student learning

1. Provide significant investment in IT improvements and increase student access to IT and web-enhanced learning.
2. Emphasise the provision of high quality space for teaching.
3. Implement and monitor the recommendations of the Senate taskforce on overcrowding and tutorial quality.
4. Provide student support services that are accessible, equitable, and focused on student needs.
5. Provide support services for special interest groups such as equity target groups and first-generation students.

- Continue to upgrade the computer and IT services. By the end of 2002, the Faculty Computing and IT Committee, in consultation with key academics, to prepare a three-year plan to upgrade the Faculty's IT infrastructure supporting teaching and learning.
- Teaching & Learning Committee to audit teaching space in use for strengths and weaknesses, including access to IT and AV equipment.
- Limit the number of students per tutorial in all Faculty units of study to a maximum of 20 if possible.
- Continue to limit as far as possible number of students per lecture in postgraduate units of study to a maximum of 50.
- New Centre for Teaching & Learning to be focus of student learning support services in conjunction with University wide support services.

Goal One – Objective 6: The University of Sydney will attract, develop and reward well qualified staff with a strong commitment to teaching informed by research and offer opportunities for teaching development.

Associated Teaching and Learning Objectives

University Teaching and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Economics and Business Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Exploit the advantages of research-led teaching and reward the scholarship of teaching
1. Continue to develop incentives to stimulate improvement in individual teaching performance and demonstrations of teaching-research links, including evidence-based innovation and inquiry-based learning.
 - Enhance the Faculty's teaching and learning prizes.
 - Chairs of Discipline to audit teaching workload for individuals and keep within acceptable range of four units of study per year.
 2. Provide additional staff development and training in a range of teaching methods including flexible learning modes and student-focused forms of assessment.
 - Encourage feedback from tutors to unit co-ordinators.
 - For quality control of casual teachers, those employed as casual and part-time tutors be paid to participate once in the Effective Tutoring Workshop of the Institute for Teaching and Learning and/or the tutor training workshops run by the Teaching Quality Fellow.
 3. Ensure explicit recognition of teaching in appointments, promotions and confirmation processes.
 4. Allocate funding to recognise and reward scholarly outputs in the field of university learning and teaching.

**TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIC PLAN 2002–2004:
ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

STRENGTHS

Our students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have a diverse and academically talented student body. ▪ Students perceive they are developing abilities in problem solving and analytical skills (as affirmed by SCEQ data). ▪ Students are benefiting from contact with active researchers (as affirmed by SCEQ data). ▪ Students acknowledge Faculty efforts to provide interesting and intellectually stimulating study units.
Popularity of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey results indicate we are the Faculty of choice for full-fee paying students attending the University. ▪ We enrol over 25% of the University’s international student body and over 60% of participants in the University of Sydney Summer School.
Degree programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We offer flexible degree programs via: six, combined-degree structures; three, 3-year degrees, and one 4 year degree at Undergrad level. ▪ Our Undergrad degree programs provide students with greater access to study outside the Faculty. ▪ We are making continuous improvement to our offerings and processes via the Faculty Advisory Board, and various Discipline advisory boards.
Links with the business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faculty is close to Sydney’s CBD, which is a major world business centre. ▪ We enjoy an ongoing involvement with Australian Business Week (ABW) which is helping to cement a close relationship with the local business community and potential high achieving business students. ▪ The Faculty Advisory Board comprises leading business men and women who play an active role in building and maintaining the Faculty’s links with the business community.
Facilities and location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new Faculty building has improved the learning infrastructure, especially in IT and provision of carrels for PhD students. ▪ Cross-discipline collaboration in both schools is beneficial to teaching and learning. ▪ Significant improvements in IT have reinforced the high uptake in the use of Blackboard system.

WEAKNESSES

Class sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class sizes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels are still too large making it difficult for us to provide students with the level of individual academic guidance to which we aspire.
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of lecture and tutorial presentations tends to vary. At 1:21 our Staff Student Ratio is relatively high within the University, and almost twice the national average of 1:12. The large number of casual tutors makes it difficult to provide them with adequate training, monitoring and mentoring. The design and size of many class rooms is hindering the teaching practice like syndicate groups. Academic staff are conscious there is much to be done if we are to communicate expectations and standards to post graduate course work students. This is borne out by students' perception that feedback mechanisms with the Faculty are inadequate.
Course work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students comment that learning quality is being compromised by the heavy workload that pertains to award course. Faculty acknowledges there is a lack of consistency in the way it is attempting to foster the development of generic skills over the various degree programs.
Relevance of course offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student feedback suggests that our award courses may be overly theoretical with little relevance to the workplace.
Student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCEQ data suggest that we need to recognise the different needs and agendas of local students and overseas students who are paying full fees.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is also strong evidence of inadequate liaison between academic staff and Faculty and University administration.

OPPORTUNITIES

IT investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing investment in information technology will enable us to offer more flexible learning programs for on-campus students, and for teaching consortia with other universities.
Building community and international links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an opportunity for us to engage more effectively with the business community and government, thereby enriching the learning experience of students. To this end Faculty will continue to strengthen its relationship with Australian Business Week. Likewise the Faculty Advisory Board and the various discipline advisory committees will identify opportunities in this area. With the largest number of overseas students in the University, the Faculty has the opportunity to develop a more 'international' blend of curricula that reflects its multicultural student cohort.

Improving student literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership with the Learning Centre and its MASSUS program, the Faculty has the opportunity to develop literacy skills testing of the student body in the first semester, and extend this across the board. Early identification of ‘at-risk’ students will enhance and develop graduate attributes.
Improving teaching skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed development of a Centre for Teaching & Learning within the Faculty provides an opportunity for us to achieve best practice in university teaching and learning. ▪ The Faculty is in the process of applying for accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). Opportunities are opening up for us to review and systematically and continuously revise our teaching and learning processes in relation to a benchmark international standard.
Meeting demand for postgraduate programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Faculty should take advantage of the growing demand for specialised postgraduate coursework programs. ▪ With the introduction of the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS) the Faculty’s postgraduate coursework programs will become available to an even greater variety of students. ▪ More and more postgraduate coursework students are entering research degree programmes.

THREATS

Equipment obsolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faculty’s work is hampered by equipment obsolescence. Many of the disciplines require ‘state of the art’ equipment in sizeable quantities if they are to remain at the forefront of economics, business and political science education in Australia.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The trend in reduced levels of public funding for higher education shows no sign of abating. ▪ Faculty is predominantly reliant on the local and international full-fee paying students as a source of income.
Other institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competition for students from other local and international tertiary institutions in Sydney is intense.
Vocational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The demand for short-term vocational training and learning is increasingly at odds with the Faculty’s provision of theoretically informed, life long, research-based learning and teaching. These tensions are evident in both corporate and student expectations.
Meeting a diversity of student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Surveys indicate that the different cohorts of students comprising local and overseas students (especially at post-graduate level) have different needs and agendas. The Faculty has not sufficiently recognised or managed for either group.