

ACADEMIC BOARD PHASE THREE REVIEW

REVIEW TEAM REPORT

Faculty of Economics and Business



building and sustaining the leading learning community in business, economics and government in Australia and its region

August 2008

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SECTION I: PREFACE

(1) Background

The Academic Board reviews are intended to encourage in faculties an academic culture that values scholarship, free inquiry and intellectual rigour and honesty, supporting, in turn, the development and maintenance of high standards of teaching, scholarship and research.

In 2001, the Academic Board initiated a cycle of collegial reviews of the academic activities within faculties with a view to supporting faculties in developing effective academic quality assurance process. These were followed up in 2003 with a second phase of faculty reviews, which expanded the scope to include all elements within the University Strategic Plan.

The Phase 3 Review is based on the Faculty's Self-Evaluation Report (SER) which provides an overview of the Faculty's assessment of the culture which supports, and the processes that lead to, continuous quality improvement in the Faculty at the time of the Review. To guide the development of the SER, faculties were invited to address criteria adapted from the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence 2007.

(2) The Review Process

The Faculty presented its SER to the Academic Board on 17 March 2008 along with a number of supporting documents and relevant data. The Review Team met on 27 March 2008 to consider these materials.

The review visit took place on 4 April 2008. The key purpose of the visit was to enable the Review Team to assess the robustness and validity of the Faculty's judgements.

Implementation

Within six weeks of receipt of the Review Report, the Faculty is required to provide the Academic Board with a response to the Recommendations contained in the Report, indicating how the Faculty will build the Recommendations into Faculty planning processes

Twelve months after the date the Report was presented to the Academic Board, the Faculty is required to provide the Board with a progress Report responding to the Recommendations.

(3) Membership

Review Team

Professor Bruce Sutton, Chair

Professor Belinda Bennett, Faculty of Law

Associate Professor Tania Gerzina, Faculty of Dentistry

Professor Duncan Ivison, Faculty of Arts

Associate Professor Jill Thistlethwaite, Faculty of Medicine

Faculty Executive Committee

Professor Peter Wolnizer, Dean

Ms Prue Castleden, Director Academic and Administration

Associate Professor Carole Comerton-Forde, Associate Dean (Undergraduate)

Professor Elizabeth Cowley, Director Doctoral Studies

Professor Alan Dupont, Director, Centre for International Security Studies (not present at meeting)

Mr John Edwards, Faculty Finance Director

Associate Professor Mark Freeman, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and Director, OLTEB

Professor Geoff Gallop, Director, Graduate School of Government

Professor David Grant, Associate Dean (Research)
Professor Sid Gray, Associate Dean (International)
Professor David Hensher, Associate Dean (Postgraduate Coursework) and Director, ITLS
Mr Ken Jackson, Faculty IT Manager
Professor Marcus O'Connor, Pro-Dean
Mr Nigel Smith, Manager Student and Academic Services
Professor Chris Styles, Director, Management Education (not present at meeting)
Adjunct Associate Professor Thomas Wong, Director of Corporate and International Relations.

Faculty Discipline Chairs

Dr John Buchanan, Director, Workplace Research Centre (not present at meeting)
Professor Steve Elliot, Business Information Systems
Dr Richard Gerlach, Econometrics (not present at meeting)
Professor James Guthrie, Accounting
Associate Professor Richard Hall, Acting Chair, Work & Organisational Studies
Associate Professor Paul Henry, Marketing
Professor David Johnstone, Finance
Professor Ben Tipton, International Business (not present at meeting)
Associate Professor Russell Ross, Economics

Students

The Review Team met with three groups of students: ten undergraduate students; four postgraduate coursework students and thirteen research higher degree students.

SECTION II: OUTCOMES

This section summarises the main findings and lists the commendations, affirmations and recommendations. It should be noted that, in addition, other favourable comments and suggestions for improvement are mentioned throughout the text of the Report. The Report draws on the information provided in the Self-Evaluation Report as well as discussion with staff and students. In some places, text from the Self-Evaluation Report has been incorporated directly into the text of this Report.

(1) Introduction to Findings

The Faculty of Economics and Business is structured as a single-entity, multidisciplinary model. It consists of nine Disciplines.

- Accounting
- Business Information Systems
- Business Law
- Econometrics and Business Statistics
- Economics
- Finance
- International Business
- Marketing
- Work and Organisational Studies

and four teaching and research centres:

- Centre for International Security Studies
- Graduate School of Government
- Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies
- Workplace Research Centre

The Faculty is recognised as one of the leading faculties of its kind in Australia and the Asian region. The Review visit reinforced evidence presented in the Self-Evaluation Report of a strong and successful Faculty with a wide range of programs and a focus on investment in its future.

The Self-Evaluation Report and discussions with staff and students during the Review visit brought out a number of issues which are addressed further within this Report, as follows:

1. International rankings and accreditation are critical to the future sustainability of the Faculty.
2. The Faculty is focussing on the development of pre- and post-experience management and executive education programs while stabilising overall student numbers at their current levels, with a key emphasis being the provision of high quality teaching.
3. The Faculty has specific strategies in place to improve its research profile.
4. The Faculty has developed a new flatter organisational structure and is continuing to work on the issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of Discipline Chairs.
5. There are specific issues in relation to staff workload and the Faculty intends to develop agreed workload principles to address those issues.
6. Student feedback, including from the CEQ, is indicative of some ongoing concerns with respect to teaching quality.

A summary of Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations follows. Note that these are not prioritised by the Review Team. They are listed below in the order in which the relevant issues appear in the SER.

(2) Commendations

Areas where the Academic Board commends the practices of the Faculty are as follows:

1. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for its success in achieving wide-ranging national and international accreditation.
2. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the development and introduction of innovative programs in line with its strategic goals and the commitment of individual staff to their success.
3. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for developing a structure which aims to facilitate and encourage links between stakeholders and students and enhance the Faculty's ability to meet the specific needs of its students.
4. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the initiatives being taken between and within individual Disciplines to promote interdisciplinary learning.
5. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for its contributions to key community-relevant debates.
6. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the activities it has developed to assist orientation for all students.
7. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the implementation of programs to support student learning, including the Peer Assisted Study Sessions.
8. The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the awards it offers for excellence in learning and teaching.
9. The Academic Board commends the initiative taken by Business Information Systems in developing the Small Group Experience.

(3) Affirmations

Areas where the Academic Board affirms the Faculty's identification of the need for improvements to its practices are as follows:

1. The Academic Board affirms the Faculty's intention to review the role of Discipline Chairs in the Faculty and the extent of their participation in Faculty management, at the forthcoming Faculty Retreat.
2. The Academic Board affirms the Faculty's intention to develop agreed academic workload principles.

(4) Recommendations

Areas where the Academic Board recommends improvements to the practices of the Faculty are as follows:

1. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty consider how it can better ensure that all staff and students are fully aware of, engaged with and supportive of the culture promoted by the Faculty's flatter single-school structure.
2. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty ensure that mechanisms are invoked in the development and deployment of strategy that enable all staff to have an opportunity to inform the process and to be made aware of the implications for their own work of specific strategies.
3. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty review its policies on the granting of credit for undergraduate studies to students enrolled in postgraduate programs (Note: the Faculty has provided a response to this recommendation which is provided as a footnote in the relevant section of the Report).
4. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty ensure that it provides adequate opportunity for students to consult academic advisors at the critical early stages of their undergraduate programs.
5. The Academic Board recommends that the Dean consider the range of factors that might impact on the quality of teaching in the Faculty when reviewing the workload policy.
6. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty investigate how it can ensure greater participation from staff in all Disciplines in its mentoring program.
7. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty consider:
 - (1) the methods of instruction and assessment used in and for group work, in order to address students' concerns; and
 - (2) the implementation of mechanisms that will help to ensure consistency of quality of tutorials and lectures across the Faculty.
8. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty develop a clear strategy, working with the ITL, to address the factors impacting on its low CEQ scores.
9. The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty
 - (1) consider how greater consistency can be achieved in the experiences of doctoral students across the Faculty; and
 - (2) provide more opportunity for research students to develop professional skills relevant to future careers as academics.

SECTION III REPORT

(1) INTRODUCTION AND FACULTY PROFILE

The University's decision in 2005 to discontinue the formal joint venture with the University of New South Wales in respect of the AGSM has been the major factor in recent developments in the Faculty's profile. It has become the University's business school, with a sharpened focus around business and management education. Within this focus on business and management education, the Review Team found that the Graduate School of Government and the Centre for International Security Studies remained a good fit for the Faculty, while in January 2008 the Disciplines of Government and International Relations and Political Economy had transferred to the Faculty of Arts.

One of the key themes emerging from the Review is the Faculty's focus on the development of pre- and post-experience management education programs and on the importance of international rankings and accreditation in ensuring its future sustainability.

The Review Team was particularly interested in exploring with the Faculty the implications of potential changes in the international student market and how it plans to achieve its planned outcomes for both students and staff.

The Faculty has drawn attention to a number of challenges, including:

1.1 Competition for students

The Faculty faces competition in its undergraduate and postgraduate markets from both national and international providers. The strategic initiatives it has taken since the start of this decade have seen the Faculty successfully addressing this challenge, with significant growth in student numbers, both domestic and international.

The Faculty's emphasis is on the quality of its offerings. Maintaining high quality in the context of a global shortage of doctorally qualified business staff has been a key factor in the Faculty's strategy of achieving a stable total student load 7,000 EFTSL (6,000 EFTSL post the transfer of 1,000 EFTSL and two Disciplines to the Faculty of Arts). The Faculty's reputation and ability to attract students and staff is also underpinned by the quality of its facilities and infrastructure, in which it is making significant investments.

Accreditation is a key component of the Faculty's leading position nationally and internationally. The Review Team noted that it also provides for

- Ongoing monitoring of achievement of goals and graduate attributes, with several of the accrediting bodies monitoring Faculty assurance of learning processes.
- Internally, as accreditation takes place, staff are involved and reflect on the quality of their teaching and research.

The Review Team explored with the various student groups the reasons why they had chosen this Faculty. Their decisions were strongly influenced by the Faculty's reputation as defined through international rankings and accreditation by international bodies. Students were also attracted by the Faculty's excellent scholarship programs.

Commendation 1

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for its success in achieving wide-ranging national and international accreditation.

1.2 Potential decline in international students

The Faculty acknowledges the particular risks it faces in a decline in international students as Australia loses its English language education monopoly in Asia due to improved country of origin education opportunities.

The Faculty has a range of strategies in place to mitigate the risk it might face from a declining international market, including the provision of new programs that will contribute to the diversification of the student body and greater numbers of local fee-paying postgraduate coursework students. The Executive MBA and pre-experience Master of Management programs are two significant components of this. Accreditation with EQUIS and membership of CEMS also provide additional scope for strengthening European markets.

Commendation 2

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the introduction of innovative programs in line with its strategic goals and the commitment of individual staff to their success.

1.3 Emerging shortage of doctorally-qualified business faculty

The difficulty of securing doctorally qualified staff particularly in areas such as accounting was an important factor in the Faculty's strategic decision to constrain growth and focus on quality in teaching, learning and research. The Faculty's international reputation as shown through international rankings and accreditation is also an important factor in attracting high quality staff and its success in the international recruitment of senior staff is a measure of the positioning it has achieved.

1.4 Measuring the achievement of Faculty aspirations

Mechanisms by which the Faculty measures the achievement of its aspirations include:

- Feedback from students and employers. The Faculty has identified the importance of employing specialists in areas such as marketing and has established a Career and Employer Relations Office to provide a structure for ensuring feedback is obtained from graduate students and employers. This unit, which is seen as complementing the University's Careers Office, enables the Faculty to engage directly with employers and build on its strong business contacts.
- Improvements in research outputs and research grant awards
- International benchmarking
- International recruitment of senior staff and a high level of interest from international visitors.

Commendation 3

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for developing a structure which aims to facilitate and encourage links between stakeholders and students and enhance the Faculty's ability to meet the specific needs of its students.

(2) LEADERSHIP

2.1 How Senior Leaders Lead

(a) **Development and Promotion of Vision, Culture and Values**

The SER states that the Faculty's new, flatter single-school structure and integrated leadership and governance arrangements reflect and enhance the Faculty's inclusive and enabling culture. It also states that the structure emphasises interdisciplinary teaching and research and breadth and depth in the preparation of business graduates. It facilitates strong collegial engagement and research flexibility, and inculcates a sense of intellectual community within the Faculty.

The Review Team explored the extent to which all staff agree that the Faculty has a clear and shared mission and vision. The Review Team was advised that this was an important issue for Discipline Chairs and was not currently handled consistently across the Faculty.

The Review Team explored with staff and research students the growth of interdisciplinary relationships in the new structure. Certain areas were moving ahead more quickly in this than others. Examples given were Accounting and Finance, where staff work closely together within the two Disciplines, and a new model for teaching in undergraduate Business Information Systems, using team-based learning, where tutors from other areas work as a multidisciplinary team. The Business Information Systems model had received a very positive response from students.

Recommendation 1

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty consider how it can better ensure that all staff and students are engaged with and supportive of the culture promoted by the Faculty's flatter single-school structure.

Commendation 4

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the initiatives being taken between and within individual Disciplines to promote interdisciplinary learning.

(b) **Overseeing, Guiding and Sustaining Faculty Activities**

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) facilitates effective governance of the Faculty and is responsible for advising the Dean on policy, strategic planning, resource planning and management, overall program development, and quality management and assurance. The FEC comprises the Dean (Chair) and Pro-Dean; Associate Deans (International, Learning & Teaching, Postgraduate, Research, and Undergraduate); Director Doctoral Studies; Director Management Education; Directors of the Centre for International Security Studies and the Graduate School of Government; Director Corporate & International Relations; Director, Academic Policy and Administration, Finance Director, IT Manager and Manager Student and Academic Services.

The Review Team noted that the Pro-Dean had a very wide-ranging portfolio, particularly liaison with and management responsibility for Discipline Chairs, and had some concerns at the breadth of responsibility which this entailed.

Discipline Chairs and the Director of the Workplace Research Centre are not members of the Faculty Executive Committee. The Review Team was informed that the Faculty had a range of communication mechanisms to ensure that Discipline Chairs were fully informed and able to contribute to strategic decision-making e.g. through regular meetings with the Pro-Dean and through the Faculty Retreat. Nevertheless, it recognised that there are issues still to be addressed in respect of the direct involvement of Discipline Chairs in Faculty management.

The Review Team found that other staff generally had a clear idea of how the Faculty's organisational and decision-making structure operates and there are mechanisms for communication through all levels of staff, although it was not clear that junior staff were as well-informed as others.

(c) Role of Discipline Chairs: Academic Staff Management/Establishing Consistent Expectations

The Faculty's integrated academic staff management process emphasises the leadership role of the Pro-Dean working with Discipline Chairs. The SER states that the management of the Faculty benefits from the flatter structure, and the closer connection between senior leadership and those undertaking teaching and research in Disciplines enables increased organisational agility.

The Review Team explored

- the extent to which there is a tension between this flatter structure and the achievement of organisational objectives; and
- how Discipline Chairs ensure that Discipline members have a clear understanding of performance expectations.

In this and other respects it became clear that the critical issue was the role and functions of Discipline Chairs and that there was some inconsistency across the Faculty at present. This matter was to be addressed at the forthcoming Faculty Retreat. The Faculty's aim has been to encourage Discipline Chairs to be leaders rather than administrators. The Faculty is concerned that Discipline Chairs are not recognised in the University structure. The Faculty has recognised the need to look more closely at the structure and to consider additional incentives for Discipline Chairs beyond research assistance support for teaching and research activities and reduced teaching loads (eg. possible salary incentives). Issues raised by Discipline Chairs were:

- Some delegations stop at the level of Pro-Dean: Discipline Chairs have accountability with no responsibility. There is some tension since Chairs have little discretionary expenditure.
- Time may be wasted in decision-making as all issues had to go through the Pro-Dean.
- Discipline Chairs have to deal with a huge amount of paperwork and it is difficult to manage this.

Affirmation 1

The Academic Board affirms the Faculty's intention to review the role of Discipline Chairs in the Faculty and the extent of their participation in Faculty management, at the forthcoming Faculty Retreat.

(d) Communication and Performance

Discipline Chairs were confident that communication worked well across the Faculty, with many opportunities for staff at all levels to become involved. As with other aspects of the Faculty's operations, the effectiveness of communication of strategy depended on Discipline Chairs and the information provided to staff via monthly Discipline meetings.

2.2 Social responsibilities

Ethical Behaviour and Corporate Social Responsibility

There are a number of Faculty-specific initiatives addressing ethical behaviour and social responsibility. The Review Team noted that ethical behaviour and corporate social responsibility were embedded in teaching.

Commendation 5

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for its contributions to key community-relevant debates.

(3) STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Review Team was particularly interested in exploring with the Faculty the implications of recent restructuring and the impact of this on both student learning and staff workload.

3.1 Strategic Development of the Faculty

The Faculty has engaged in extensive strategic reviews and changes in recent years which have considerably strengthened its position in all aspects of research, teaching and learning and administration.

3.2 Strategy Development and Deployment

(a) Strategy Development and Deployment

The Faculty utilises a strategic management framework which is informed by its overall mission and comprises a 5-year business plan and Strategic Statement, as well as supporting operational plans and annual budgets. These documents are integrated and inform actions at all levels. On an annual basis, the Faculty's senior executive group undertakes a formal, off-campus strategic planning workshop. Discipline Chairs are usually present for at least part of these workshops. Their interests are also formally represented by the Pro-Dean, who meets fortnightly with them, both as a group and individually. The Review Team noted the possibility for some tensions in this respect, in the light of the issues regarding Discipline Chairs raised above.

The Review Team explored the extent to which the wider Faculty is involved in developing strategy. It was clear that there were mechanisms in place across the Faculty which provide for this, despite the fact that Discipline Chairs had no direct representation on the Faculty Executive. The Faculty would be addressing its strategic priorities at its forthcoming Retreat and Discipline Chairs will have input into the discussions. The Faculty believes it is important to preserve agility in making strategic decisions and this can be difficult when large numbers of staff are involved. While there was no direct input by more junior staff to strategic planning, initiatives can come up through Discipline Chairs, senior managers or Faculty-level committees, all of whom are expected to represent the views of their staff/members.

(b) Communication of Strategy

The Faculty utilises a range of formal and informal mechanisms to ensure involvement in and understanding of its strategic priorities, their development and deployment. The Review Team noted that strategy is deployed via Discipline Chairs, unit managers/directors and through meetings of Faculty and its Committees.

(c) Sustainability and Flexibility of Strategy

There is evidence that the structure of the Faculty is providing it with the flexibility it needs to ensure that strategic decisions can be taken quickly and effectively. As noted above, there is, however, some concern that this is management-driven and not inclusive of other levels of staff, including Discipline Chairs.

Recommendation 2

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty ensure that mechanisms are invoked in the development and deployment of strategy to enable all staff to have an opportunity to inform the process and to be made aware of the implications for their own work of specific strategies.

(4) STUDENT FOCUS

4.1 Knowledge of students

(a) Students and Market Knowledge

The Review Team noted the mechanisms the Faculty has in place to determine the needs, expectations and requirements of its students. These include a focus on the effectiveness of selection criteria, development of graduate attributes, arrangements for credit transfer and exemption and scholarship programs. While the Review Team was impressed with the breadth of information provided, it did not find any evidence of how the Faculty uses these mechanisms to inform decision-making.

Students commented favourably on the Faculty's scholarship programs and they are clearly an attraction for high-performing students to choose the Faculty.

The Review Team queried the Faculty's policy of granting credit at the postgraduate level for studies undertaken at undergraduate level. The Master of Commerce was the only program for which such credit was available and the Review Team was advised that this issue had been taken up by EQUIS during the accreditation process. Nevertheless, the Review Team wished to ensure that Faculty policy on this issue conforms with Academic Board policy.

Recommendation 3

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty review its policies on the granting of credit for undergraduate studies to students enrolled in postgraduate programs.¹

4.2 Student Relationships and Support for Learning

(a) Orientation and Transition:

The Faculty has developed a comprehensive range of activities to assist orientation for domestic and international students. These include the Transition Program and the Peer Mentoring Program. Students reported a high level of participation in the Faculty's Peer Mentoring Program and believed it was of considerable benefit in enabling them to feel members of the wider Faculty community. International students particularly valued these programs. The Faculty indicated that retention rates are much higher for students who have mentoring. Participation in the programs is voluntary and it was noted that in some cases, students preferred to establish their own links and support networks. The undergraduate students interviewed also appreciated that there was a specific mentoring program for scholarship students, as well as the Peer Mentoring Program available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Commendation 6

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the activities it has developed to assist orientation for all students.

(b) Course Progression and Support for Learning

The Faculty has a range of mechanisms to investigate and address issues relating to course progression and student satisfaction. These include Early Identification of Barriers to Learning; Differential Progression Rates; Students at Risk; Peer Assisted Study Sessions. It is continuing

¹ Following the Review Visit, the Faculty has advised as follows: *Since the preparation of the Faculty Report to the Board, the Academic Reform process in the University has gained considerable traction. This, along with observations from international accreditation bodies and the Faculty's own reflections on its strategic positioning, prompted a decision to review the structure of the major postgraduate program, the Master of Commerce. In the review which will begin later in 2008, the Faculty is likely to move to a 10 unit MCom with no credits. Students with background study in MCom subjects will be required to study substitute units.*

to explore new and innovative methods of teaching delivery, including the development of collaborative student-centred learning spaces for smaller groups.

Students spoke highly of the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). They felt that this program facilitated their learning and helped to create good peer networks. Undergraduate students drew to the Review Team's attention the process for appointment of student facilitators for PASS. There is a competitive process for such appointments but there were some subject areas which did not attract interest from students to be facilitators and they hoped the Faculty could address this since the success of the program depended on the skills of the facilitator.

Commendation 7

The Faculty is commended for the implementation of programs to support student learning, including the Peer Assisted Study Sessions.

(c) **Personal and Professional Development of Students**

The Faculty advised that it places considerable emphasis on the development of generic graduate attributes. These are defined through the common learning outcomes for Faculty programs, each of which contributes to the development of one of the five graduate attributes.

The Review Team explored with students their views of the alignment of their study with their overall academic goals. It found varied responses to this. Some undergraduate students found that there is too much compulsory coursework and insufficient academic advisors. Students have found this a problem in developing appropriate academic programs for specific majors.

The Review Team was also interested in students' views on the extent to which the Faculty, as set out in its mission statement, places a particular emphasis on the intellectual and personal development of students and staff. Undergraduate students did not feel this was very consistent. There was a view that the emphasis, at least in the early years of their courses, was only on what was needed for examinations rather than encouraging wider learning. Students generally felt that there was a good life/workload balance. Undergraduate students found that their workload compared well with students from other faculties and students themselves decided how hard they work depending on the marks they want to achieve. All students interviewed managed paid work but acknowledged that many found it difficult.

Recommendation 4

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty ensure that it provides adequate opportunity for students to consult academic advisors at the critical early stages of their undergraduate programs.

(5) MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Review Team noted the Faculty's summary of the data used to measure performance and support Faculty decision making. With respect to the management of information and knowledge, the Review Team explored the mechanisms for the implementation of initiatives supporting information sharing and dissemination of knowledge, and how such initiatives were measured and reviewed. Discipline Chairs have a major role in this. It was noted that the Faculty Research Support Cluster, a specialised IT infrastructure allowing for higher performance computing was an academic initiative and that the Student Virtual Lab, designed to give students access to specialised software through internet browsers, was implemented in response to student requests.

The Review Team noted that the Faculty is in the process of implementing Digital Measures, a major initiative supporting information sharing and dissemination of knowledge. DM is a web-based multi-user database system, aimed at streamlining the collection, management, sharing and reporting on information related to academic staff profile, research, teaching and service activities, and other intellectual contributions.

(6) WORKFORCE FOCUS

6.1 Workforce Engagement: Academic Staff Management and Recruitment

(a) Integrated Staff Management Framework/Workload Issues

The Faculty has advised that it fosters a culture conducive to high standards of academic performance and a motivated workforce through integrated staff management, planning and development strategies.

The Review Team explored the Faculty's mechanisms for determining academic staff workloads and how it manages the workforce environment to ensure outcomes for staff are achieved in teaching and research. The Review Team was advised that the workload model and principles were not consistent across the Faculty. The Faculty was undertaking international benchmarking and the Pro-Dean was leading the development of agreed academic workload principles. The difficulty of international benchmarking in view of the much larger size of the Faculty compared to overseas institutions was noted. The Dean emphasised that in his view, all academic staff should undertake at least some teaching, as was the case in the best US institutions.

The Review Team noted that one of the most significant challenges for the Faculty in ensuring some equity in workload was the class size in units of study. Some staff were under a good deal of pressure because of the size of their classes, not just their contact hours. The Review Team explored issues of workload in relation to the Faculty's changing model of teaching including the move to collaborative learning spaces for smaller groups.

Affirmation 2

The Academic Board affirms the Faculty's intention to develop agreed academic workload principles.

Recommendation 5

The Academic Board recommends that the Dean consider the range of factors that might impact on the quality of teaching in the Faculty when reviewing the workload policy

(b) Academic Staff Distribution

The Review Team noted the gender imbalance at senior levels in the Faculty (although this was not significantly different from the wider University) and explored the strategies in place to address this. One of the key parameters to the Search firms used for senior recruitment was to identify potential female appointees and the Faculty has made three offers of positions to women. The Faculty has taken preliminary steps towards the development of a Women in Leadership program. There was some suggestion that female junior staff find it more difficult to obtain mentoring than male staff.

6.2 Workforce Environment

The Faculty advised that the recognition and professional development of academic staff is supported in a variety of ways at Faculty, Discipline and University levels. The Review Team explored the extent to which the Faculty's governance structure provides opportunities for staff involvement in developing strategies that improve the workforce environment, as stated in the SER. It found that while, in general, staff felt positively about their workforce environment, there was no evidence that staff at more junior levels were able to do very much to handle what were at times unsustainably high workloads, because of the very large numbers of students in some classes.

- (a) **Performance Evaluation and Promotion Procedures**
The University's PM&D program is an essential tool for academic staff development in the Faculty. Discipline Chairs felt that it was an essential mentoring tool, but recognise that its effectiveness varies across the Faculty and there is an inadequate level of consistency.
- (b) **Competitive Grants and Awards for Excellence**
The Faculty offers a number of awards for excellence in learning and teaching.

Commendation 8

The Academic Board commends the Faculty for the awards it offers for excellence in learning and teaching.

- (c) **Salary supplementation and Performance Bonuses**
The Review Team explored Faculty procedures for discretionary salary supplementation and possible payment of market loadings. The Faculty advised that it has designed a form that all academic staff complete yearly to have their market loading assessed/renewed and to apply for discretionary salary supplementation. Use of the form means all staff are assessed on the same criteria and thereby ensures transparency and consistency. All staff are given two months to complete the application form and are directed to University policies on market loadings and discretionary salary supplementation, with a link provided at the top of the form. In addition, the Faculty has created its own procedures document which is supplied to all staff.
- (d) **Additional Faculty Support for Professional Development**
The Academic Board was particularly interested in exploring the Faculty's mechanisms for staff mentoring. It was noted that there is some mentoring and pastoral care for more junior staff but it can be inconsistent: formal mentoring programs exist in some disciplines but not others. To address the sporadic provision of mentoring within Disciplines, a Faculty-wide mentoring program has been operating since 2006. The 2007 program gave preference to new staff and those whose mentoring goals were to develop their teaching and/or research-led teaching.

Recommendation 6

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty investigate how it can ensure greater participation from staff in all Disciplines in its mentoring program.

6.3 Future Academic Staff Development and Sustainability

The Faculty has identified several objectives required to enhance performance across all activities and ensure its ability to meet organisational and individual aspirations. There is a tension between the aspirations of the Faculty to improve its research profile and to improve its teaching.

The Review Team explored the mechanisms within the Faculty to better support all levels of staff, in particular early career staff, to achieve an appropriate balance of teaching, research and administration. It was noted that the Faculty has a range of grants for Level B & C staff, that 80% of Level B staff are research active and that workload tensions tended to be the same across all levels of staff. There was evidence that while junior staff found the overall environment a positive one, the huge growth in some areas was imposing an unsustainable teaching load, at the expense of research. At the same time, some students felt that, where teaching quality was poor, this was because staff were concentrating on research at the expense of teaching. These issues are also addressed in other sections of this Report.

It was reported that motivated staff who were involved in the development of new programs had little opportunity to further their research careers during that development phase. Staff would welcome any changes to University promotion procedures which gave greater weight to significant teaching development achievements.

(7) ACADEMIC PROCESS MANAGEMENT

The Faculty seeks input from a broad range of stakeholders and is involved in a continuous cycle of review and quality enhancement for all its programs, a number of which have received professional and/or international accreditations. The Review Team noted the range of strategies the Faculty has in place to encourage high academic quality, address student and stakeholder needs and achieve sustainable educational programs. Issues relating to the effectiveness of these strategies are also addressed elsewhere in this Report.

7.1 a Coursework Programs: An Overview

The Review Team noted the Faculty's approaches to the achievement of its academic aspirations.

The attention of the Review Team was drawn in particular to the development processes for two new programs: the Master of Management (pre-Experience) and the Master of Marketing. Both of these programs demonstrate the kinds of high quality programs which the Faculty is developing and will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Faculty's overall strategic objectives. The Review Team also noted the Faculty's strategic decision to reduce the number of postgraduate coursework programs offered by the Faculty, in line with its sharpened focus around business and management education.

7.1 b Coursework Programs: Management, Design and Delivery

The Review Team noted that the Faculty has sound procedures in place for the development of new coursework proposals.

(a) Program Delivery

The Faculty has advised that, as a consequence of its size and complexity, and the differing characteristics and cultures of its Disciplines, there is considerable diversity in terms of teaching and learning modes, process and forms of interaction.

The Review Team explored with the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework student groups their views on the Faculty's mechanisms for program delivery. The Review Team found that the undergraduate students were not as satisfied with the quality of those mechanisms as appeared to be the case from the Faculty's perspective, as set out below.

Group Work

The undergraduate students interviewed reported that they were not generally in favour of group work, finding that it was not always conducive to learning and was not a fair indication of the amount of work individual students may put in, particularly high-achieving students. At the same time, they agreed that working in teams in this way was a good introduction to future work practices. The postgraduate coursework students interviewed, however, were happy with group assignments, while recognising that some participants were going to be carried by others. Staff comments, on the other hand, indicated that group work was generally favourably received.

Tutorials

The undergraduate students reported that there was a big continuum with no consistency of tutor quality. Some are engaged with students, while others took a purely mechanical approach. The latter did not encourage learning. There was a suggestion from the undergraduate students that some staff focussed on research at the expense of teaching quality and this was evident in the way they delivered their material. These views were not held by the postgraduate students, who were very satisfied with the quality of their tutorials.

Academic staff felt that the Tutor Development Program had been very successful and that tutors were receiving good support from the Faculty to improve their teaching skills. There was no evidence that senior staff had mechanisms requiring tutors to report on feedback during the

period of their appointment, although feedback was used when making decisions about future employment.

Lectures

As with tutorials, the students interviewed reported that there was inconsistency of quality in lectures. The postgraduate coursework students, who were all international students, mentioned that some lecturers from overseas are difficult to understand. They suggested that the Faculty needed to provide additional training in this respect.

Recommendation 7

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty consider:

- (1) the methods of instruction and assessment used in and for group work, in order to address students concerns; and
- (2) the implementation of mechanisms that will help to ensure consistency of quality of tutorials and lectures across the Faculty.

(b) Student assessment and innovation in assessment

Faculty programs utilise a range of student assessment processes, corresponding to the specific aims, content and learning strategies of units of study. The Review Team explored issues relating to grade distribution and was satisfied that the Faculty's practices conform with University policies and guidelines.

7 c Coursework Programs: Quality and Evaluation

(a) Student Satisfaction and Feedback

Student satisfaction is measured through the formal evaluation mechanisms of USE, CEQ and SCEQ. The Faculty also has a range of other internal mechanisms to obtain student feedback, including via the Student Reference Group. The Review Team noted that while the undergraduate students interviewed were aware of the Student Reference Group, their knowledge of its composition and function was very limited.

The undergraduate students interviewed were satisfied that their feedback was acted upon. For example, they were aware of a move to online learning and weekly assessments as a result of student feedback. However, changes were usually made after they had completed the unit of study and they would prefer a mechanism, as was the case in some other faculties, for student feedback to have immediate impact. The Review Team was aware that it was not always possible to make changes that would impact on the cohort making the recommendations.

The Review Team explored with the Faculty the reasons for its low CEQ scores. It was advised that the Faculty was moving to program-wide planning rather than a unit of study perspective. At present, there was no program-wide planning or program-wide approach to closing the loop. The Faculty also indicated that some of the low scores related to sampling size. The Review Team was of the view that some of the issues reported upon in other sections of this Report may also contribute to the low CEQ scores.

Recommendation 8

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty develop a clear strategy, working with the ITL, to address the factors impacting on its low CEQ scores.

(d) Other Means for Assuring Quality

There are a variety of other mechanisms for ensuring teaching quality. These include compliance with Academic Board policy, accreditation requirements and Faculty mechanisms, including:

- Tutor feedback/peer review
- Undergraduate coordinators group

- Learning and teaching associates
- Advisory bodies

The Review Team noted recent improvements in the Faculty's Scholarship Index, evidence of continuing improvement in teaching quality. Teaching initiatives taken in specific Disciplines were noted. For example, Business Information Systems, recognising the variable quality of tutors, had developed a 'Small Group Experience' where tutors work together with expert teachers to deliver teaching to small groups of students within one larger group. This is providing a solution to workload issues at the same time.

Commendation 9

The Academic Board commends the initiative taken by Business Information Systems in developing the Small Group Experience.

7.2a Research and Scholarship

The Review Team noted the initiatives the Faculty was taking to improve its research output and that there had been positive outcomes from these initiatives. Over the past five years there have been significant improvements in the Faculty's overall research output and capacity.

The Review Team was advised that EQUIS had found that the Faculty benchmarks well internationally in terms of productivity per EAS and publications and it has solid foundations for future growth. The Review Team noted the steady improvement in publication output and competitive research income relative to other relevant Go8 Faculties, but also noted that there remained considerable room for improvement given the University's research ambitions and its leading position in attracting nationally competitive research income. The Faculty has a range of internal mechanisms to support research productivity by staff. One significant factor was the recruitment of key research staff.

Issues relating to research productivity have been addressed elsewhere in this Report, particularly in relation to workload and staff development and the extent to which more junior staff have opportunities to develop their research agendas.

7.2b Research Training

The Faculty has more than 220 research students enrolled, giving it one of the largest, and most diverse research program communities of business schools in the region. The Faculty has established a set of nine learning goals to help ensure that the Faculty's doctoral students make, and demonstrate, original research contributions of high quality.

The doctoral students interviewed confirmed that they were attracted to the Faculty because of its international reputation and that they felt they were members of a vibrant research culture. They felt that the Faculty had been very supportive and provided an appropriate induction program, although an induction program more tailored to specific disciplines would be useful.

Key issues for doctoral students centred on appropriate coursework, supervision, opportunities and training for teaching, and career support. The following aspects of the management of their research candidature were raised:

- Most students would value a comprehensive research design unit at the commencement of their course. However, students appreciate flexibility and differences between disciplines and suggest that decisions on coursework units be left to individual disciplines.
- Doctoral students appreciate the tutor development programs. They obtain feedback from the tutor feedback form but there is variation in advice given to research students about obtaining feedback.
- Doctoral students did not appear to know how involvement in Faculty committees such as the Faculty Learning Committee operated or who their representative would be.

- There was no evidence of interdisciplinary links and the students interviewed advised that their associate supervisors were from their own discipline. Academic staff advised that this was not the case for all students and that at least 30% of associate supervisors were outside students' own disciplines.
- As with undergraduate and postgraduate students, doctoral students found there was inconsistency in the quality of lectures and tutorials in their coursework.
- Students reported positive experiences with their supervisors. The Review Team noted that there appeared to be some variations between disciplines, for example in respect of requirements for students to present their work to larger groups.

The Review Team explored the opportunities the Faculty provided for doctoral students to develop their generic skills, particularly as future academics, if that was their intention. It found that there is little emphasis on future career development by supervisors although this does occur in some disciplines. The Review Team would have liked to have seen more opportunities for research students to be exposed to academic activities such as grant-writing, and for them to be more actively involved in a faculty-wide research community. The view was also put that students need to take some initiatives in this regard as the resources are there if needed. Given the Faculty's concern about the lack of doctorally qualified teaching staff, the Review Team felt that the Faculty might give more emphasis to developing future academic staff from amongst its own doctoral students.

Recommendation 9

The Academic Board recommends that the Faculty

- (1) consider how greater consistency can be achieved in the experiences of doctoral students across the Faculty;
- (2) provide more opportunity for research students to develop professional skills relevant to future careers as academics.