



The University of Sydney

Academic Board Agenda

Academic Board Officer: Keri Neveldsen

Secretariat, Quadrangle, A14

Phone: 9351 3305; Fax: 9351 3572

E-mail: K.Neveldsen@secretariat.usyd.edu.au

Web site: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/ab/>

Enclosure for the agenda

for the meeting of the Academic Board on 14 August 2002

- 10. Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee**
 - 10.2.2 Academic Board Faculty Review Visits**
 - (1) Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the Final Report and Recommendations from the Academic Board Visit to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, as set out in the report presented.

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

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

TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2001

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Membership of the Review Team	4
3	Self Evaluation Report – special mention	4
4	Findings of the Review Team	5
a.	Change at the Conservatorium	5
b.	Achievements in teaching and learning	6
c.	Curriculum Design/redesign	6
d.	Quality of Teaching and Learning	7
e.	Research-led teaching	8
f.	Assessment	8
g.	Evaluation	9
h.	Monitoring student progress	9
i.	Research supervision and training	10
j.	Communication	10
k.	Casualisation of staff	11
l.	Messages to the Dean from students and staff	11
m.	Concluding comments	12
5	Areas of good practice	12
6	Areas for consideration for improvement	13
<u>Appendices</u>		
A	Sydney Conservatorium of Music Summary report of findings	17
B	Sydney Conservatorium of Music Self Evaluation Report	20
C	Sydney Conservatorium of Music Teaching & Learning Plan	29

1. INTRODUCTION

An Academic Board Review Team visited the Sydney Conservatorium of Music¹ on Tuesday 11 December 2001 as part of the review and evaluation of teaching, learning and research training within the Faculty.

After an initial discussion with the Principal, Professor Sharman Pretty, the Review Team held interviews with the following groups:

- Principal Professor Sharman Pretty with senior academic staff:
 - Assistant Principal
 - Associate Dean, Teaching
 - Chairs of Departments (2)
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students (6)
- Faculty staff (9)

Note: The timing of the visit, at the end of Semester and exams, limited the range of undergraduate and postgraduate students that were available for interview. There were no postgraduate research students present at the students' interview.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE REVIEW TEAM

Professor Judyth Sachs	<i>Chair, Academic Board (Chair)</i>
Professor Paul Ramsden	<i>Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)</i>
Associate Professor Anne Reynolds	<i>Nominee of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)</i>
Dr Rosanne Taylor	<i>Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Veterinary Science</i>
Associate Professor Brad Buckley	<i>Sydney College of the Arts</i>
Rachel Symons	<i>Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning) (Secretary)</i>

Observer

Associate Professor Michael Prosser *Director, Institute of Teaching and Learning*

3 SELF EVALUATION REPORT – SPECIAL MENTION

The Review Team would firstly like to congratulate the Conservatorium on the excellence of its self evaluation report. The layout and style could be used as a example of best practice for other faculties. The inclusion of an *Evaluation* section at the end of each aspect was particularly useful to the Team, and showed that the Conservatorium had been examining its teaching, learning and research training practices pragmatically and drawing its own conclusions as to where improvements needed to be made, or where they were following good practice. The report has been used as an example of a good report in all Review Team training sessions.

¹ Hereafter called The Conservatorium

D FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The Review Team interviews centred around eight main areas:

- Quality of teaching and learning;
- Achievements in teaching and learning;
- Curriculum design/redesign;
- Research-led teaching;
- Assessment;
- Evaluation;
- Monitoring of student progress; and
- Research supervision and training.

In the course of the interviews the themes of change, communication and staffing were mentioned. Since these occurred under most of the above mentioned areas of concern, they have been assigned separate areas within the report.

The final concluding section of the report shows those areas of good practice, and areas of consideration for improvement, that were conveyed to the Faculty in the *Summary Report of the Findings of the Review Team*.

a Change at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music

In July 2001 The Conservatorium underwent a major physical change in that all departments moved into the re-developed Greenway campus after twenty years in separate locations around Sydney. The Review Team were interested in ascertaining how both staff and students had reacted to the relocation, what opportunities this move had already offered and what might be offered in the future.

The Review Team found that all parties had reacted positively to the move, and that the Principal saw it as a uniting exercise and a tremendous morale builder. Senior staff saw opportunities in the bringing together of the disparate areas of performance and research, with daily contact making this more of a reality and more productive for students and staff. Staff had yet to explore the opportunities offered by students being in one location for the whole day, but are interested in seeing what they could be.

Another recent initiative is the commencement of a revised Bachelor of Music degree in 1998. The Review Team were interested to learn that this was another positive aspect of how change occurred at the Conservatorium. All staff mentioned that the Conservatorium had to be responsive to various changes across the music industry in its various forms and in so doing needed to be ahead of these changes in order to equip their graduates for future careers. This was recognised as one of their strengths – that the Conservatorium was responsive to change and readily adapted to this change to ensure that graduates were able to follow their chosen careers once they had graduated.

b Achievements in teaching and learning

The Review Team was interested in discovering what the staff and students of the Conservatorium thought were their major achievements in teaching, learning and research training. What they found was that a more reflective teaching culture has been developed, mainly due to the work of the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning and the leadership role of the Principal and senior staff, who were well respected across campus.

The Review Team were impressed with the links with the music industry that had been developed by the Conservatorium. These ranged from tapping into the huge professional community in Sydney to provide the best teachers for their students and give them a wide range of opportunities, to developing links with the Sydney Symphony, the Australian Opera and other professional organisations. The Team were of the view that these links were beneficial to both staff and students. When the students were asked about the philosophy of teaching and learning at the Conservatorium, they replied that they gave students access to the most professional performers and teachers across Sydney. The interviewed students told the Review Team that they appreciated how many of their teachers led by example, providing them with good examples of teaching and learning.

c Curriculum design/redesign

As already mentioned, the degree program at the Conservatorium was reviewed and changed in 1998. The Self Evaluation Report mentioned that this award was scheduled to be reviewed again in 2002 as part of a regular review of all awards offered. The University Generic Attributes of Graduates statement was one of the sources used to develop Rationale and Outcome. The Review Team was interested in learning about the philosophy underpinning the redesign of the curriculum, how it translated into learning objectives and outcomes, and the relationship between generic attributes, aims and outcomes and lifelong learning and communication skills.

The Review Team found that the new degree had been designed to meet the needs of students, society, the discipline and the University. The aim had been to broaden the training and open up the degree ensure that it reflected current developments in the music world. The students who were interviewed had had no input into the design of the curriculum, though they were aware that there was a student body that met every six months for this purpose.

The Team also ascertained that the Conservatorium had plans to review the aims and objectives of all units of study, and were aware that the large number of units, over 900, posed a management problem. Part of this review would be the alignment of generic skills with the objectives within each unit of study.

On the basis of the interviews and other information it was clear that the Conservatorium focussed more on the specialist skills its students needed to enter the music profession, and that students were often unable to identify how they were developing generic skills during their course. Staff felt that the students came to a gradual realisation that they were developing these skills and gave the example of researching and writing program notes for performance as one way in which students developed their generic skills. Students could not recall having been specifically told about the Graduate Attributes. They mentioned that they would appreciate being given public speaking and essay writing courses. The Team acknowledges that the Conservatorium has identified the university generic skills as an area to be focussed on during 2002 and recommends that the Conservatorium look at ways to integrate them into the curriculum.

In the area of performance assessment, there were differing views between staff and students. On the one hand staff indicated that there had been a major change in the criteria of performance assessment, with seven clear criteria identified. On the other hand students who were interviewed were unaware of these criteria. The Conservatorium needs to look at remedying this situation.

d Quality of teaching and learning

The Review Team were interested in four main areas relating to the quality of teaching and learning at the Conservatorium - the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee, in particular the teaching days; ways in which good teaching was rewarded; peer review; and benchmarking activities.

Teaching and learning is a core value of the Conservatorium, with strong leadership from the top deserving special mention. The Teaching and Learning Committee was seen to be the most effective of all committees at the Conservatorium. Staff considered that the teaching days were very valuable, providing a useful forum for the goals of the Teaching and Learning Plan to be communicated. Attendance at these fora was increasing as more and more staff became aware of their importance and interest. The value and importance that the Conservatorium put on encouraging casual staff to attend teaching days was also recognised by the Team.

The Team congratulates the Conservatorium on the effectiveness and high profile of the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Team believed that this committee provides intellectual and professional leadership across the Faculty. The teaching day is also to be praised. The Team was of the view that it was instrumental in producing a more reflective culture in teaching at the Conservatorium, as well as providing the means of sharing and recognising good practice in teaching.

In the area of rewarding good practice in teaching the Team ascertained that no actual awards were given. The Principal did not like awards, though she had encouraged staff to apply for university awards. On the other hand, staff told the Team that though they were aware of university awards, they found it hard to find the time to do apply for them. All staff and students interviewed felt that there were more subtle ways in which good teaching was being rewarded in the Conservatorium. Due to the nature of teaching at the

Conservatorium, students were free to choose their teachers for one-to-one work - if a teacher was good, they had more students asking to be in their classes. Good teaching was also apparent by the quality of performances at concert practices. Students felt that good teaching was rewarded by attendance and enthusiasm in class, and the quality of work produced.

The Review Team recommends that the Conservatorium should give some consideration to the provision of awards for outstanding teaching. If actual awards are not appropriate, then some other means should be investigated such as official recognition and feedback to the lecturer.

In discussing peer review of teaching with both staff groups, the Team ascertained that there were many opportunities for this to happen. Staff discussed what they were doing with each other, they sat on each other's lectures, and read colleagues' articles and conference papers. One staff member particularly mentioned the good learning experience received from team teaching with another colleague, and mentioned that they thought it could be done more.

The Review Team was very impressed with the Conservatorium's benchmarking activities, in particular bringing in performers from outside the institution, staff being invited to interstate institutions to sit in on graduate recitals, professionals from other universities being present at the Conservatorium's senior finals recitals, and the holding of regular master classes with overseas performers. These activities were very strong with all academic staff, and were a lesson for other faculties.

e Research-led teaching

The Conservatorium Self-Evaluation Report mentioned that all academic staff were selected on the basis of their achievements in research and creative work, and their ability to teach in specific areas of the awards. In addition, teaching days were used to communicate and share research evidence and knowledge amongst staff.

The Review Team were interested to see how this worked in practice, whether or not the staff felt supported in their research activities, and the student experience of research-led teaching. They discovered that all students benefited from the research interests of staff since all staff were involved in teaching all undergraduate levels of students. The Review Team felt that this was an example that should be followed by other faculties within the university. Students appreciated the fact that all teachers were also performers and/or researchers in their field. This meant that they were always up-to-date with what was going on in both academic and performance areas of the curriculum. On the other hand, staff felt that their research activities were being curtailed by the lack of support and encouragement from Executive. In addition, staff told the Team that the heavy administrative load occasioned by the small proportion of full time staff compared to casual staff reduced the time they had to undertake research.

f Assessment

As the Conservatorium had identified the area of assessment as one that concerned them and that they were working towards improving, the Review Team focussed on this aspect during the interviews. They wished to inquire further into the proposed review of the Unit of Study Outline policy, and into the perception of staff and students towards assessment process and standards in general.

They found that senior staff were unsure about the scope or the intended outcomes of the review, but eventually a new policy for performance assessment would be introduced. This would be mounted on a new teaching and learning website that was being created by the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning.

In the area of performance assessment, the Team found that although the staff indicated that criteria existed and that they were in the course outlines, students expressed the desire to be marked against criteria instead of just a mark out of ten. The Team were concerned at this slippage between what the staff knew and what the students understood about assessment.

g Evaluation

Closely related to assessment is evaluation and the Review Team was interested in exploring how this was regarded by both staff and students. The senior staff acknowledged that they had identified evaluation as an area requiring attention at the Conservatorium. Up to recently every subject had been evaluated every semester and students were suffering from evaluation fatigue. This had now been changed. Staff said that the students had responded well to the evaluation as they understood its importance. The students who were interviewed reported that they had noticed and appreciated that their evaluations were listened to and changes made accordingly. Particular mention was made by both students and senior staff of the Orchestral Studies Committee which had been formed by the students as a mechanism for reporting issues to senior management, and providing a link between themselves and the staff. The senior staff acknowledged that there was a lot of work to be done in the area of assessment, particularly in the area of one-to-one teaching. When staff were asked what other models of evaluation, apart from formal questionnaires could be used, they told the Review Team that they had discussions with students and that one of the virtues of one-to-one and small group teaching was that the students told teachers exactly what they thought.

The Review Team was pleased with the way in which the Conservatorium used student evaluations to improve practice, and that students were able to see evidence of their evaluations being responded to positively. The Conservatorium should be encouraged to investigate researching the relationship between staff and student in one-to-one and small group teaching.

h Monitoring of student progression

In the self evaluation report the Conservatorium acknowledged that although students at risk were quickly identified, there were occasions when students claimed that they did not receive sufficient advice and support. It was hoped that now they were all in one campus the situation could be monitored and processes improved for identifying these students. The Review Team was interested in discovering how both staff and students felt about the current situation in this area.

Everyone who was interviewed was positive about the current situation. Staff said that students were encouraged to approach them if they had any problems, and that due to the nature of one-to-one and small group teaching, they were always in touch with any problems in this area. Staff appreciated the fact that all staff were very approachable and that they could discuss any problems that arose during the course of their studies. They said that they could go to the Chair of Unit if they wanted to change their teacher due to problems. However, they did express concern about what they could do if the Chair of Unit was the teacher that they wanted to change. Students also mentioned that the Conservatorium brought in outside counsellors if the problem was non-academic related.

i Research supervision and training

After discussing the area of research supervision and training with the Principal and senior academic staff, the Review Team endorsed the Conservatorium's own findings that they needed to do more work in this area. Since there were no research higher degree students in the group interviewed, the Team was unable to ascertain their views on this matter.

The Review Team recommends that the Conservatorium continues to monitor the supervision and progress of postgraduate research students, that it continues to hold postgraduate seminars, and that it investigates the College of Science and Technology 10 point plan for the supervision of higher degree students.

j Communication

In talking to all groups, it was obvious to the Review Team that the whole area of communication was an issue which was seen either positively or negatively according to the group.

Communication with staff on the whole is to be commended. Senior staff were aware that this was an area where there had been problems in the past, especially in the communication of teaching and learning achievements. It was hoped that this would improve now that everyone was co-located in the new building. The Review Team found that there were effective structures and strategies in place to communicate information to staff, especially through the Chair of Unit structure, the website, manuals for casual staff and Teaching Days.

However the Review Team felt that communication with students, especially the postgraduate students, could be improved. They found that students felt that they received differing degrees of information depending on the Unit they were in; within each group there was good transmission of information but this did not occur for the student body as a whole entity. The students told the Review Team that they were sure that there could be a lot of good experiences if there was more communication between the groups and everyone got together and worked together. They also thought that a whole student forum, preferably at the end of semester, would be a good idea.

The Conservatorium Self Evaluation Report mentioned that one of the three guiding values that underlie their teaching program was *Student autonomy so that students become self-reliant learners and musicians*. The Review Team felt that this contributed to the fact that students, especially the postgraduates, were out of the communication loop. They found that the postgraduate students did not feel part of the Conservatorium, and that they thought that were not given the same information or opportunities as the undergraduates. Examples of the latter included not being included in the Orchestra and not being given a tour of the new building.

The Review Team congratulates the Conservatorium on the way in which it handles communication with and between staff. However it recommends that improvements should be made in the way in which information is communicated to the students, in particular the postgraduates. It suggests that the Conservatorium consider convening a staff/student forum once a semester as a means of overcoming this gap in communication.

k Casualisation of staff

During interviews with staff the Review Team found that there were some problems inherent to the employment of a large amount of casual staff by the Conservatorium, comparative to the number of fulltime staff. It should be noted here that there were no casual staff in the group of staff interviewed as part of the review process.

Senior Management saw the employment of such large numbers of casual staff as advantageous to maintaining the diversity and currency of the teaching at the Conservatorium. They told the Team that it gave students a variety of opportunities which would not be present with more fulltime professors and less casuals. On the other hand, as already mentioned in the previous section, staff themselves felt that the huge casualisation of staff increased the administrative load for the fulltime staff.

The other issue of concern to the Review Team was the feeling that casual staff were out of the communication loop, and did not always feel part of the community. They were told that whilst there is a constantly updated manual on teaching practices for casual staff, communication between Chairs of Units and their casual staff varied. Other staff had heard from casual staff that they needed to feel more appreciated, that they felt they were only at the conservatorium for the teaching. It had been noticed that what they said in

meetings was not noted in the minutes which added to their feelings of not really being part of the community.

The Review Team recommends that the whole issue of the casualisation of staff needs investigating, especially where it impacts on the administrative load and lack of research time for fulltime staff. More thought should be given as to bringing casual staff wholly into the communication loop.

I Messages to the Dean from staff and students

At the end of each interview, the undergraduate and postgraduate students and the staff were asked what message they would like to give to the Dean. The following responses were received:

Students

- More than satisfied. Quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Would like a student forum
- Communication needs looking at.
- Also want clarity of expectations of what is expected of them as students.
- Need better relationships with the broader university. See the main university as being foreign. Students feel isolated and more a part of the Conservatorium than the university. Could do more concerts on main campus. Nothing is done to promote the Conservatorium in main campus.

However

- Some students thought it was good to be separate from the main university, as it was more intimate and there was a different atmosphere.

Staff

- Casualisation of staff needs to be addressed. It affects the time of fulltime staff who have to do more administration work.
- There needs to be more training in certain areas eg technology.
- Casual staff should be made to feel part of the institution. They feel that they are really just here for teaching. They need to feel appreciated more. What they say in meetings is not noted in minutes.
- Need more effort and energy put into corporate image. It is very fragmented.
- A strategy should be developed to disseminate staff and students research and teaching expertise and achievements .

m Concluding Comments

The Review Team considered the results of the interviews, the Self-Evaluation Report and the Teaching and Learning Plan and concluded that the Sydney Conservatorium of Music was following good practices in the areas of teaching and learning practices, leadership, communication with staff, links with the music industry, student evaluation

and benchmarking. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty should give consideration to improving practices in the areas of communication with students, teaching awards, casualisation of staff, assessment and performance feedback and postgraduate supervision. These were conveyed to the Principal of the Conservatorium at the end of the visit, as well as in the *Summary report of the findings of the Review Team*, sent to the Principal on 6 February 2002.

5 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Based on the Faculty Self Evaluation Report, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Plan and the findings of the Review Visit, the following areas of good practice in teaching, learning and research training have been identified within the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

a. Teaching and learning practices across the Conservatorium

The Conservatorium is to be congratulated on the importance that is placed on teaching and learning by both staff and students. It was evident from all interviews that the Teaching and Learning Committee was the most effective in its work, and that it has a high profile across the Conservatorium. It provides intellectual and professional leadership, and supports and recognises good practice.

The Teaching Days were highly regarded by all staff as being an important arena for discussing, sharing and learning about teaching and learning. They had led to a more reflective culture of teaching and learning being present at the Conservatorium. They were also an area where good practice was shared and recognised.

The practice of all staff teaching all undergraduate students is one that should be followed by all faculties within the university. It allowed students to gain the benefit of research being undertaken by the staff.

b. Leadership of Dean and senior staff

Special mention should be given to the strong leadership exhibited by the Principal, Professor Sharman Pretty, and her senior staff. They were highly regarded across campus. In particular, the more reflective culture in teaching and learning now present in the Conservatorium can be attributed to the excellent work of the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning.

c. Communication with staff

Effective structures and strategies are in place to communicate faculty and university policies with all full time staff. This is achieved through a policy website and through manuals for all new staff, as well as through the previously mentioned Teaching Days.

d. Links with the music industry

The links that the Conservatorium has with the music industry are very impressive. They bring students into touch with their profession on a daily basis, and are of mutual benefit to both staff and students. Staff and students can take up opportunities with Opera Australia, Sydney Symphony and the Sydney Symphony Sinfonia. Conversely professional musicians are able to input into course development as well as learn about the training given to musicians. The professional community is also tapped into through the appointment of casual staff and the holding of educational concerts.

e. Student evaluations

The Conservatorium is to be commended for the active way in which it uses student evaluations to improve practice. The students were able to see changes that had been made as a result of their evaluations and appreciated that their comments were recognised as valuable.

f. Benchmarking

Benchmarking was another area of good practice that should be communicated to other faculties. The Conservatorium is not only invited to other interstate universities to sit in on graduate recitals, but also invites other professionals to be present at their senior recitals. There are regular master classes with overseas and Australian performers.

6. AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following areas that might be considered for improvement were identified by the Review Team from the self evaluation report, the teaching and learning plan and the interview process. Some of these had already been identified by the Conservatorium staff during the interviews and in the self evaluation report.

a. Communication with students

The Conservatorium needs to consider ways of improving communication with students. This may be easier to achieve now that all students and staff are on the one campus and not spread around the city. Part of the problem may lay in the value expressed by the Conservatorium of autonomous learning by students. They expect to be spoon-fed and not have to look for information themselves. It was apparent that different schools within the Conservatorium have different levels of communication with their students and that the messages received by the latter are inconsistent. In addition, postgraduate students expressed the feeling that they did not feel that they were part of the same communication loop as the undergraduates and therefore did not receive all the information they should receive. The Review Team recommends that the Conservatorium take advantage of the fact that everyone is now in the same location to hold an all-student forum as a means of communicating important information. They might also like to consider introducing a staff newsletter as a means of communicating with all staff.

b. Teaching awards

The Review Team was concerned that there are no mechanisms in place within the Conservatorium to officially recognise good teaching. Thought should therefore be given to addressing this deficiency and putting in place a structure to reward good teaching. It is not enough that good teachers are informally recognised by the number of students who attend their classes compared to other teachers. Support should also be given to those staff who wish to apply for University teaching excellence awards.

c. Casualisation of staff

The Conservatorium needs to address the problems which arise due to its policy of employing a large number of casual staff. Some of the problems which were identified by the Review Team include the large administrative load being imposed on the relatively small number of fulltime staff, and communication with casual staff. The fulltime staff feel that the large administrative load they are being asked to carry is affecting their capacity to undertake research effectively. This impinges on their ability to include up-to-date information in their classes, in particular in the area of technology. Casual staff need to be made aware that they are part of the Conservatorium staff, and be included in the communication loop.

d. Assessment and performance feedback

The area of assessment and performance feedback, particularly the self assessment and performance assessment have already been identified by the Conservatorium as a problem area and are working towards improvement in this area.

The Conservatorium will need to remedy the situation where students and staff have differing knowledge about the criteria for assessment. Work also needs to be done on integrating the university generic attributes of graduates into the specialist skills required by Conservatorium graduates.

e. Postgraduate supervision

The Conservatorium Self Evaluation Report recognised that this was an area that needed to be addressed. The recommendations that it developed as a result of the report are endorsed by the Review Team:

- i. that the Graduate Studies Committee review its processes and procedures in the light of the four questions asked in this section of the self-evaluation;*
- ii. that consideration be given to more integration of the weekly Student Research Seminars and that the seminars be more widely and consistently advertised;*
- iii. that a representative of the Teaching and Learning Committee be a member of the Graduate Studies Committee.²*

² Sydney Conservatorium of Music Self Evaluation of Quality Assurance Systems. Page 6

It is also recommended that the Conservatorium obtains a copy of the College of Science and Technology 10 point plan for postgraduate supervision and use this as a starting point.

Prof Judyth Sachs
Chair, Academic Board
Chair, Review Team

APPENDIX A

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC SUMMARY REPORT OF FINDINGS OF REVIEW TEAM

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC ACADEMIC BOARD FACULTY REVIEW VISIT

TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2001

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The Academic Board Review Team visited the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on Tuesday 11 December 2001 to review and evaluate academic planning and quality assurance systems within the Conservatorium. Interviews were held with the following groups:

- Principal Professor Sharman Pretty and senior academic staff
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Faculty staff

This report is a short summary of the main findings of the Review Team as reported to the Principal of the Conservatorium, Professor Sharman Pretty, at the end of the visit.

AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Teaching and learning practices across Faculty
 - the importance of teaching and learning is a core value of the Conservatorium
 - strong leadership from the top deserves special mention
- Teaching and Learning Committee
 - effective in its work and has a high profile in the Conservatorium
 - provides intellectual and professional leadership across the Conservatorium
 - supports and recognises good practice
- Teaching Day
 - its importance is recognised by all staff
 - staff want to attend because it is worthwhile
 - produces a more reflective culture in teaching

- good practice is shared and recognised at this day
- Leadership of Dean and senior staff is respected across campus
- Communication with staff
 - There are effective structures and strategies in place, which are achieved well through website and guides
 - Teaching Day is a good means of communication
- Links with the music industry are of mutual benefit to staff and students
 - links with Opera Australia, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Australia involve both students and staff
 - tapping into the professional community through teaching and educational concerts
- Student evaluations are used to improve practice
 - students able to see changes being made as result of evaluations eg the Orchestral Students Committee
 - there is systematic collection of data from students about units of study
- Benchmarking is a great strength and includes
 - bringing performers in from outside the Conservatorium
 - invitations from interstate to sit in on graduate recitals
 - professionals from other institutions present at senior final recitals
 - regular master classes with performers from overseas

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION


The Review Team identified the following areas that might be considered for improvement:

- Communication with students is not happening because of value of autonomous learning. Students expect to be spoon-fed.
 - different schools receive different information. Need to ensure a consistent message across the whole of the Conservatorium.
 - need to ensure that all students have access to information – postgraduates did not feel part of the same communication loop as undergraduates.
 - need to take opportunities to convene a student forum now that everyone on the same campus
- There needs to be a structure in place to reward good teaching at the Conservatorium
- Casualisation of staff increases administrative load on permanent staff. Casual staff need to feel that they are part of the Conservatorium, for example being included in the information loop

- This was a big issue with fulltime staff who talked about the administrative load resulting from the large number of casual staff
- Assessment and performance feedback
 - identified as problem in self-evaluation report, especially the areas of self-assessment and performance assessment.
 - staff know about criteria, students do not – needs to be remedied
 - need to work on integrating university generic attributes into the curriculum
- Postgraduate supervision
 - identified in self-evaluation report as an area to be investigated in 2002; aware that need to monitor supervision more closely.
 - suggest obtain copy of College of Science and Technology 10 point plan for postgraduate supervision

Professor Judyth Sachs
Chair, Academic Board
Chair, Review Team

6 February 2002



APPENDIX B

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC SELF EVALUATION REPORT



The University of Sydney SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC



SELF-EVALUATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

The Sydney Conservatorium of Music, a faculty within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, is one of the oldest music schools in Australia and has more than five hundred undergraduate students and fifty postgraduates. Having been located on two campuses for the past twenty years, the whole Conservatorium is in the throes of returning to the redeveloped Greenway building in Sydney in July 2001.

The mission of the Conservatorium is to sustain and develop the study and practice of music and to serve the music profession and wider community through performance, composition and research, and through the initial and continuing education and training of performers, musicologists, composers and music educators. Three guiding values underlie the Conservatorium's teaching programs:

- teaching and learning of the highest quality;
- flexibility of course structure to cater for individual differences and interests; and
- student autonomy so that students become self-reliant learners and musicians.

The Conservatorium offers the following undergraduate awards.

- Bachelor of Music, a four year course with specialties in Performance, Composition, Musicology and Music Education.
- Bachelor of Music Studies, a three year course in which students are encouraged to pursue interdisciplinary studies along with a special music focus.
- An Associate Diploma in Jazz Studies.
- Diplomas in Music and Opera.

The Conservatorium also offers a number of postgraduate awards.

- Three Graduate Diplomas in Performance, Accompaniment and Opera (currently under review).
- Master of Performance and Master of Performance (Opera) (by course work).
- Master of Music in Composition, Musicology, Music education and Performance (by research).
- Doctor of Philosophy.

1. How does the faculty ensure that each course and unit has an appropriate set of aims and outcomes, clearly communicated to and understood by students, and including generic as well as disciplinary skills?

- The awards at the Conservatorium undergo regular review. For example, the major award, the Bachelor of Music was reviewed in 1997 and the revised award commenced in 1998. As part of this review, an award Rationale was written, outcomes statements were developed, and each unit of study was examined in the light of the Rationale and Outcome statements. The University

Generic Attributes of Graduates statement was one of the sources used for the Rationale and outcomes statements. The Bachelor of Music is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2002.

- The Conservatorium has an Assessment Policy, posted on the Web site, <http://infodesk.conmusic.usyd.edu.au/Policy/Assess1.html> , which states as follows.

2.1 Information to Students

In the first week of each Semester, Unit of Study Outlines will be provided to students for all academic Awards in the Conservatorium. Even where such information is included in the Conservatorium Handbook, it is recommended that unit outlines include:

- a. a rationale which justifies the content of the unit and includes the broad aims of the course and its place of the Award
 - b. a list of specific objectives (where applicable);
 - c. an outline of the content of the course and the sequence of lectures and seminars;
 - d. the method of assessment to be used for the course which will include the criteria, date due and late penalties for assignments, and criteria for semester examinations;
 - e. the percentage of marks allocated to each component of assessment, for example, examination, assignment, seminar presentation;
 - f. whether there are some parts of the course which must be passed;
 - g. a list of prescribed texts and references (where applicable).
- Staff and student attention is drawn to the Assessment Policy at regular intervals, particularly at the beginning of Semester.
 - As part of the regular evaluation of teaching, unit of study outlines are collected by the Teaching Committee and feedback is given to members of staff. The unit of study outlines were last collected in 1998. It is planned that they will again be surveyed in 2002 when one of the focusses will be upon the consideration of the University's generic skills statement in the development of the lists of outcomes.
 - So that students will understand the process through the degrees, Course Advisers are allocated to each specialty in each award. These advisers are introduced to students at assemblies of students each year.
 - The Conservatorium Handbook contains clear information regarding the requirements and content for each unit of study.

Evaluation

Two factors indicate the need for review in the area of unit of study outlines and information to students. First, the University "Management and Evaluation of Teaching" document, recently approved by the academic board, contains policies regarding unit outlines which are not included in the Conservatorium Assessment Policy. Second, a recent survey of some unit of study outlines demonstrated that not all unit outlines follow Conservatorium policy. It will be necessary to include in the operational teaching and learning plan for 2002 a review of the Conservatorium Assessment Policy, and of the procedures for communicating this policy to teaching staff.

- 2. How does the faculty ensure integration of research, including both disciplinary research and evidence about effective learning and teaching, into its undergraduate and postgraduate courses?**

2.1 Integration of disciplinary research into undergraduate and graduate courses.

- Academic staff are selected on the basis of achievements in research and creative work and their ability to teach in specific areas of the awards. That this policy has been effective is evident in the development and teaching of units of study. For example, Music History 5 and 6, which cover music of recent decades, could only have been taught by musicologists who are currently researching and writing in that area. Other examples of such integration are as follow.

Performing staff involved with producing and recording new interpretations of standard repertoire use that creative work to inform their teaching. Many of the skills needed by performers at a high level can only be taught by those who have done it themselves and those people are also able to apply what might best be called advanced problem solving skills on a practical and artistic level.

In Music Education, staff involved with the study of pedagogic processes of Balinese gamelan musicians, teach courses in Comparative Music Education and Multicultural Studies.

- The Conservatorium has the policy that all levels of academic staff teach at all undergraduate levels. Thus, for example, eminent, practising composers instruct students at all levels of tertiary study and a Reader in Musicology will teach units of study attended by junior undergraduates. This facilitates the integration of disciplinary research into undergraduate courses.

2.2 Integration of evidence about effective learning and teaching into undergraduate and graduate courses.

- The principal means of ensuring integration of evidence about effective teaching and learning into courses has been through the Conservatorium's Annual Teaching Day. At this forum a combination of lectures, seminars and discussions is used to communicate research evidence to staff and for staff to share their knowledge of research with other members of the Faculty.

For example, at the 2001 Teaching Day, the Music Performance Assessment Research group presented two papers on the processes of performance assessment. These presentations were followed by sessions which sought to apply the findings of the research to Performance Assessment practices. (See Appendix 1)

It is planned that, in 2002, when the Conservatorium Faculty is settled on one site, there will be more regular teaching forums, at least two each semester.

- Evidence of effective learning and teaching is provided by the regular student evaluations which the Conservatorium conducts. For example, the Web sites used in Harmony and Analysis undergo regular revision on the basis of information received from student evaluations.
- The Conservatorium provides financial support for members of staff to attend teaching and learning conferences.

Evaluation

While it is difficult to "ensure" the integration of research into teaching, the Conservatorium does have policies and procedures which encourage such integration.

3. How does the faculty ensure that student assessment is effective and contributes to learning, and that the assessment process is well understood by students?

3.1 The effectiveness of student assessment

- The Teaching Committee of the Conservatorium conducts staff seminars to communicate to staff the principles of effective student assessment. For example, the Teaching Day in February 2000, focussed on the development and revision of the Conservatorium Assessment Policy. In February 2001, a Teaching Day focussed on the development and use of criteria in student assessment. As part of this seminar, a number of staff presented the criteria they use for assignments and these criteria were critiqued and discussed.
- The Conservatorium is conducting ongoing research into performance assessment (Music Performance Assessment Project: MPARP). Two papers have been presented to staff at seminars:
 - Examiner perceptions of music performance assessment practices at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Stanley, Brooker & Gilbert);
 - Students' perceptions of music performance assessment (Brooker, Stanley & Gilbert).
 These papers have provided the basis for a review of performance assessment. The use of criteria has been thoroughly reviewed, and new criteria, common to all performance units have been developed.
- The special focus of the Conservatorium Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan for 2000 – 2001 is Feedback and Assessment. Coordinators of units of study which were subject to student evaluation in 2000, were asked to report particularly on student responses to Questions 5, 6 and 8 on feedback and assessment. Unit coordinator's reports are summarised in the appended Report on Student Evaluations, 2000. A number of coordinators whose students were not wholly positive in responding to these questions indicated that most of the feedback for their units came at the end of the Semester. The Report on Student Evaluations expressed concern at this emphasis on summative assessment and concluded by stating, " it is vital that lecturers whose principal feedback to students comes at the end of the semester consider whether this process is based on history, or whether it is based on sound educational principles".

3.2 Communication of the assessment process

- As quoted in the response to Question 1 the Conservatorium Assessment Policy lays out the principles of communicating assessment processes to students.
- The Assessment Policy is on the Web, available to staff and students.
- The Conservatorium Strategic Plan requires all unit of study outlines to be on the Web by 2001. These outlines include details of assessment.

Evaluation

Ensuring the effectiveness of assessment of student learning is a complex task which is ongoing. Whether a particular form of assessment is effective is rarely a matter of fact. The Conservatorium Strategic Plan for Teaching and Learning ensures that processes of assessment are continually open to debate and under review.

One area of assessment which requires more attention is that of self assessment and peer assessment. In some specific areas of the awards such as Orchestral Studies and Music Education students are given experience in assessing their own and their peers' work. So that students might better understand the processes of assessment it would be valuable to broaden and further emphasise peer and self assessment.

4. How does the faculty ensure the quality of its teaching and recognise good teaching?

4.1 The quality of teaching

- The Conservatorium conducts student evaluations so that every unit of study is evaluated over a three year period.

- A number of student evaluation forms have been developed which address the specific needs of the Conservatorium, for example, Student Evaluation of Studio Teaching, Chamber Music, Orchestra, and large Ensemble.
- As referred to in 2.2 and 3.1 (above) the Conservatorium conducts annual Teaching Days for the purpose of staff development.
- The student evaluation process and the Teaching Days are closely integrated. Factors which have arisen from student evaluations and focuses of future student evaluations are emphasised in the forum.
- Staff are encouraged to attend courses conducted by the Institute for Teaching and Learning.
- The Teaching Development Fund of the University has been used for projects to enhance the quality of teaching.
 - i. The Music performance Assessment Project has as its objective the improvement of assessment in performance. Research into the process of performance has been conducted, the results of the research have been communicated to staff, the staff have initiated changes in performance assessment as a result of the research, and a benchmarking project with the University of Melbourne's Department of Music has been proposed.
 - ii. The Video-Link Pilot program commenced in November 2000 to allow regional music students access to the specialist teaching available from Sydney Conservatorium of Music staff. The program uses videoconferencing technology to deliver monthly group lessons to students in a growing number of regional centres in NSW (currently eight). One focus of Video-Link is the evaluation of the value and processes of group instruction in instrumental teaching.
- The Conservatorium has recently piloted the practice of having performers who are proposed as part-time staff give a demonstration lesson before being employed. It is proposed that this trial will be implemented more widely.

4.2 Recognition of good teaching

- The annual Report on Student Evaluations comments on outstanding results for Units of Study.
- The Chair of the Teaching Committee regularly offers personal encouragement to staff whose teaching is highly regarded by students.
- Lecturers who are identified as using innovative or exemplary practices make presentations at the annual Teaching Day.
- The promotion system within the University recognises the quality of teaching as one of the criteria for promotion.

Evaluation

The Conservatorium has adopted policies for ensuring the quality of its teaching which are appropriate for its diverse staff profile. It may be that some consideration should be given to providing awards for outstanding teaching. However, this process has not been productive in the past. It may be more appropriate for the Teaching Committee to provide more encouragement and support for staff to make application for University Excellence Awards.

5. What arrangements does the faculty have in place to monitor and support student progress?

5.1 Monitoring student progress

- A consequence of the Conservatorium emphasis on one-to-one teaching and small group tuition is that students receive considerable personal support and that students at risk are quickly identified.

- Advisers are appointed for each strand of the Conservatorium awards. When unit of study coordinators recognise students at risk they inform the appropriate adviser and encourage the student to meet with that person.

5.2 Supporting student progress

- Each semester the staff are requested to notify the Head of School of students at risk. The head of School organises a mentoring program for students who require some additional one to one coaching.
- Students are provided with considerable personal assistance by teachers and unit coordinators. For example:
 - students are provided with personal instruction and support in their instrumental learning by their studio teacher;
 - in the Historical & Cultural Studies units students are given advice and personal coaching in essay writing;
 - in Aural Perception, special units of study are provided for students with inadequate backgrounds in this area.
- The Conservatorium has two well equipped computer laboratories which are used not only to instruct in information technology but to support students in their learning.

Evaluation

While the Conservatorium does have processes in place to monitor and support student progress, there remain examples of students who claim they do not receive sufficient advice and support. One concern of students has been access to advisers. It is hoped that, when the Conservatorium is united at the Greenway precinct, that the processes in place will be more effective. The situation will be monitored and the processes reviewed over the next twelve months.

6. How does the faculty ensure the quality of research supervision and training?

6.1 Arrangement for ensuring high standards of supervision

- The Conservatorium has a Graduate Committee which oversees all aspects of graduate studies. The Committee requires that all supervisors have appropriate expertise and/or qualifications in the candidate's research area.
- Supervisors are encouraged to attend seminars and workshops organised by the Institute of Teaching and Learning and the Chair of Graduate Studies.
- Supervision of research students is included in the workload determinations.

6.2 Mechanisms in place for ensuring effective completion and retention

- The Conservatorium follows University policy which requires that faculties:
 - undertake annual reviews in which a paper reports are circulated to candidates, supervisors, postgraduate coordinators and Head of School.
 - undertake a first year review before a panel of three including the Head of Department.
- The Conservatorium extends the first year review to all students. In this review each candidate is given an opportunity to comment on the areas of, i. progress to date, ii. resource issues, iii. supervisory issues, iv. other issues. These are usually constructive sessions which assist in identifying potential problems.
- The Musicology, Music Education and Composition units all conduct weekly Student Research Seminars and Workshops at which student discuss common issues and present progress reports.

6.3 The use of student views to improve research students' experience

- As stated above, in the annual review, the candidate is given an opportunity to comment on supervisory issues (in the absence of the supervisor), and other issues.
- The Conservatorium has conducted one postgraduate conference and, in the redeveloped facilities intends these to be a regular feature of the post-graduate program, possibly incorporating them into the staff research seminars.

Evaluation

In the process of writing this report it became apparent that there is some inconsistency amongst Conservatorium units in following the mechanisms which are apparently in place. Research in the areas of Performance, Composition, Musicology and Music Education takes place in a variety of ways and contexts. Thus, it is difficult to develop policies which suit each approach. Three recommendations arise from this self-evaluation:

- i. that the Graduate Studies Committee review its processes and procedures in the light of the four questions asked in this section of the self-evaluation;
- ii. that consideration be given to more integration of the weekly Student Research Seminars and that the seminars be more widely and consistently advertised;
- iii. that a representative of the Teaching and Learning Committee be a member of the Graduate Studies Committee.

7. What are the faculty's arrangements for evaluation and quality improvement, including the use of student and graduate feedback and other performance indicator data to monitor and enhance performance?

7.1 Mechanisms for collecting and acting on results of student evaluations

- The procedures used in distributing and analysing and responding to student evaluations are as follows:
 - The Administrative Assistant in the Pitt St building is responsible for distributing and collecting student evaluations.
 - Student evaluations are sent to the Department of Chemistry for analysis.
 - Lecturers examine their own student evaluation forms, including written comments by students, and the survey analysis, then report to Chairs of Units. These reports from lecturers indicate perceived strengths and weaknesses of the courses, and actions to be taken to remediate weaknesses.
 - The Chair of the Teaching Committee examines and reports upon the student evaluations of large ensembles.
 - The Chairs of Units make reports to the Chair of the Teaching Committee based upon data supplied by the Lecturers.
 - The Chair of the Conservatorium Teaching Committee reports to the Principal of the Conservatorium, the College Board and the Students' Association.
 - Where significant areas of concern are noted, a representative of the Teaching Committee discusses with the academic staff the appropriate remedial action and initiates follow-up student evaluations.
 - Unit Coordinators are requested to indicate to students, at the beginning of a semester unit, the steps which have been implemented in response to student evaluations.
- The Chair of the Teaching Committee writes an annual Report on Student Evaluations which summarises the results of the student evaluations, indicates overall trends, and recommends means of improving teaching.
- The Report on Student Evaluations is presented to the College Board, sent to the Conservatorium Students Association, and posted on the Web.

7.2 Arrangements for applying University performance indicator data to improving educational quality.

- The data from CEQ and SCEQ are presented to staff at Teaching Days.
- The SCEQ data are used when developing the Strategic Plan for Teaching and learning. For example, items under the Good Teaching Scale and Appropriate Assessment Scale have been a focus of the 2000 – 2001 operational plan. It is planned that Generic Skills will become a focus in 2002.
- During the course reviews of 2001 – 2002 it is planned that focus groups will be interviewed regarding the quality of the awards. During these interviews some of the questions on the SCEQ on which the Conservatorium does not do well will be put to the students in order to assist in understanding the basis of specific student concerns.
- Other Performance Indicator Data such as Student progress Rate and First to Second Year retention are addressed earlier in this report.

7.3 Consistency between University requirements and faculty QA and improvement mechanisms.

The Conservatorium Representatives on the Academic Board, the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the EQA Committee have acted to ensure that there is no apparent inconsistency between the University requirements and faculty QA and improvement mechanisms.

7.4 Methods used to monitor progress towards goals specified in Strategic Plan for Teaching and learning

- The Conservatorium Teaching and Learning Committee reviews the operational plan at each meeting and acts to ensure progress is being made.

Evaluation

While the process of student evaluations appears to have worked well in the academic area of the Conservatorium, it has only been partially helpful in providing feedback in the area of one to one studio teaching. In studio teaching, each lecturer has only a small number of students and it is impossible to ensure anonymity for respondents. Thus, a whole unit, such as keyboard, is evaluated. But this means that the feedback to staff is non-specific and it appears that teachers find the feedback rather remote. The Teaching and learning Committee will consider this problem in Semester 2, 1991.

On a separate issue, it is difficult to understand what changes in SCEQ results means. For example, while the Conservatorium does relatively well on most measures on the SCEQ, the 2000 results indicated a drop of 4 or 5 points on each major scale. If this drop is significant, it seems difficult to believe that the Conservatorium suddenly deteriorated in all areas, especially when staff are working so hard to improve teaching and learning. The fact that there was a decrease on almost every question brings into question the validity of the individual scales. It may be that students were responding to the frustration of working on two separate campuses. It may be that students are not satisfied with one aspect of the award and this affects their overall response. As indicated in 7.2 the data collected for the review of award may illuminate the situation.



APPENDIX C

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

TEACHING AND LEARNING PLAN

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING 2000-2004

The Sydney Conservatorium of Music, a faculty within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, is one of the oldest music schools in Australia and has more than five hundred undergraduate students and fifty postgraduates. It is currently located on two campuses, the performance staff and administration at the Australian Technological Park, Redfern, and the academic staff, finance section and library at 109 Pitt St Sydney. It is planned that the whole Conservatorium will return to the redeveloped Greenway building in Sydney in March/April 2001. (Move complete, July 2001)

The mission of the Conservatorium is to sustain and develop the study and practice of music and to serve the music profession and wider community through performance, composition and research, and through the initial and continuing education and training of performers, musicologists, composers and music educators. Three guiding values underlie the Conservatorium's teaching programs:

- teaching and learning of the highest quality;
- flexibility of course structure to cater for individual differences and interests; and
- student autonomy so that students become self-reliant learners and musicians.

The Conservatorium offers the following undergraduate awards.

- Bachelor of Music, a four year course with specialties in Performance, Composition, Musicology and Music Education.
- Bachelor of Music Studies, a three year course in which students are encouraged to pursue interdisciplinary studies along with a special music focus.
- An Associate Diploma in Jazz Studies.
- Diplomas in Music and Opera.

The Conservatorium also offers a number of postgraduate awards.

- Three Graduate Diplomas in Performance, Accompaniment and Opera.
- Master of Performance and Master of Performance (Opera).
- Master of Music in Composition, Musicology, Music education and Performance.
- Doctor of Philosophy.

This Teaching and Learning Plan is based upon the objectives of the University's Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan and outlines the Conservatorium's priorities in achieving its mission in teaching. The plan is divided into the following sections.

- Part 1 **a. Conservatorium Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to Teaching and Learning**
 b. Objectives and Strategies 2000 – 2004
- Part 2 **Faculty Operational Plan for Teaching and Learning 2000-2001**

Part 1

a. Conservatorium Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in Relation to Teaching and Learning

Strengths

- A feature of the Conservatorium is one-to-one and small ensemble teaching. The flexibility, ability to adapt to individual learning patterns, and continuous feedback and support provided by one-to-one teaching make it the accepted mode of delivery internationally for music tuition. Feedback from student evaluations suggest that the emphasis on such teaching contributes towards the Conservatorium's above average 1st to 2nd Year retention rates (89%).
- The students participating in the awards at the Conservatorium are highly qualified and well motivated. Market research suggests that Conservatorium students often make their degree and career choices at year 10 or earlier, and maintain a high morale and commitment to their art throughout their course.
- An emphasis in recent years has been the developments of professional links supporting the practical elements of the program. The Conservatorium has joint program arrangements with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (through the Sinfonia program) and Opera Australia (through our Opera Encounters program) which reinforce performance teaching with relevant contemporary professional practice. In addition the Conservatorium employs high profile professional musicians in leadership roles on a fractional basis as well as employing a large number of practicing musicians on its part-time staff.(See University Strategic Objective 3).
- The high quality staff of the Conservatorium provides the capacity for cross-fertilisation of different creative and scholarly areas of music. Unlike its major competitors, the Conservatorium offers majors in performance, composition, music education, musicology and jazz improvisation. In addition, individual units of study offer further opportunities for diversity, with, for example study in multicultural, popular and traditional music, and the ability to specialise in electronic music. Such diversity offers the opportunity for students to discover creative or innovative links between separate creative and academic traditions.

Weaknesses

- Given the emphasis on one-to-one and small group teaching, the Conservatorium's performance on the national *Course Experience Questionnaire* and the Sydney University *Student Course Experience Questionnaire* is not as good as might be expected. For example, on the CEQ *Good Teaching* scale, which includes items on explaining, motivating, and providing feedback, the Conservatorium's rating is right on the national mean of Music Departments and Conservatoriums (-0.1 from National Average of 13, S.D. 41). On the *Generic Skills* scale, which focuses on encouraging the development of analytic and problem solving skills, the Conservatorium rates slightly below the national mean. The emphasis on one-to-one teaching and small group teaching provides Conservatorium staff with the opportunity to excel on the above scales and it may be that a systematic staff development program will assist in realising that potential.

- **The lack of full-time staff means that there is an unreasonable administrative load on a very few. This administrative load leaves less time for preparation of teaching and providing feedback to students. There is a need to have more staff involved outside their specific teaching area.**
- It is generally accepted that there is not sufficient communication between units of the Conservatorium, and the potential for cross-fertilisation of the performance, scholarly and creative areas of music has not been fully realised. This relative lack of communication means that students are not able to take full advantage of the diversity of staff skills. Lack of communication also leads to problems in giving advice to students. Staff tend to be relatively unaware of areas outside their immediate concern thus few staff are able to give advice on students' progress through the various awards. To a large extent this lack of communication has been a product of the split campus over the last twenty-five years. However, it is realised the proximity provided by the redeveloped Conservatorium will not, of itself, provide a solution and planned strategies will need to be implemented

Opportunities

- A crucial element in the planning for high quality teaching and learning over the next five years, is the redevelopment of the Conservatorium building on the Greenway site in Macquarie St. This development, due for completion in the latter half of 2000, will, for the first time since 1973, bring the whole of the Conservatorium together in the one building. The development will provide vastly improved performance spaces and lecture theatres, a modern library complex and state of the art technology facilities. In particular the development will facilitate communication amongst staff and provide the opportunity to ensure that the potential for flexibility in the new awards is efficiently realised. It will be the responsibility of faculty to make the optimum use of this building in the continuing effort to improve teaching and learning.
- As indicated above, the redeveloped Conservatorium will bring the Conservatorium staff together for the first time since 1973. The lack of communication amongst staff has been a continuing problem. The new proximity, together with carefully planned strategies, will enable better cross-fertilisation of ideas amongst performers, composers, musicologists, and music educators.
- Improved technology facilities in the new redeveloped Conservatorium will provide opportunities for innovation and flexibility in learning. A fast network will provide easier contact with the University and the World Wide Web. There will be the capability to do live to air broadcasting and the possibility of broadcasting live to the Internet. A large amount of teaching information is already provided to students electronically and the possibilities in this area will be increased. The three new computer laboratories will permit the continued development of music technology courses. For the first time the Conservatorium is expected to have proper recording facilities.
- In recent years the Conservatorium has strenuously pursued links with the principal professional bodies in the music profession, integrating its teaching programs with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (and the umbrella organisation to which it belongs, Symphony Australia), Opera Australia and setting up research links on aspects of the music profession with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The move back to the cultural precinct in Macquarie St will facilitate the growth of such links and create the opportunity for a more focussed use of educational and artistic development funds and greater continuity between tertiary education and professional development.

- In 1998 the Conservatorium significantly revised its undergraduate award programs. A new award, the Bachelor of Music Studies, was introduced for those students who did not wish to specialise in performance, musicology, composition or music education, but wished to gain a more general qualification comprising studies in a variety of music and other tertiary areas. The Bachelor of Music and the Bachelor of Music Education were integrated into a single Bachelor of Music degree with specialties in Performance, Musicology, Composition and Music Education. At the end of 2001 the first cohorts in the new awards will have completed their studies. Thus, in 2002, the Conservatorium, having settled into the new facilities, will be able to review the awards to assess whether the principles which underpinned the programs have been implemented.

Threats

- **The impact of funding pressures has provided a threat to the traditional modes of delivery of music instruction (one-to-one and small ensemble tuition) and on international competitiveness. While the benefits of one-to-one and small ensemble teaching (described above under “Strengths”) make it the internationally accepted delivery mode for instrumental, vocal and ensemble tuition, it has three impacts on the funding process: (a) it has a high unit cost per student (b) it requires correspondingly higher teaching loads (500 - 550 hours per year is the accepted norm in most institutions worldwide) leading to less time per staff member for creative work/research and administration (c) the large number of staff involved in one-to-one tuition can disadvantage the Conservatorium against other faculties in cases where funding is allocated on the basis of output data divided by FTE staffing numbers. If such pressures resulted in a reduction in one-to-one tuition, this would lead to a corresponding reduction in international competitiveness.**
- **There is competition from other providers of tertiary music instruction operating under different industrial, quality control and fee-paying regimes. There are currently seven providers of tertiary music instruction in the Sydney metropolitan area some of which are not subject to the limitations on collection of fees currently existing in the HECS funded sector. Some are able to offer teaching apprenticeships in lieu of fees which, though not consistent with good notions of quality control, can be attractive to students.**

b. Objectives and Strategies 2000 - 2004

Objectives	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide diverse and flexible awards which meet the needs of students and assist them in their growth as life-long, autonomous learners. (University Objectives 2 & 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reliable, accessible academic advisory systems. • Conduct a review of major undergraduate awards in 2002 • Conduct a review of the Associate Diploma in Jazz, the Diploma of Music and Diploma of Opera by January 2001. • Audit units of study offered by former Conservatorium and former Music Department with a view to (a) offering enriched program to students in other faculties, particularly those taking a major in music as part of a BA. (conditional on proposed merger between Music Department and Conservatorium going ahead) • Review the double degree offerings offered by the former Music Department with a view to taking students in 2003 or 2004. (conditional on proposed merger between Music Department and Conservatorium going ahead) • Provide consistent, transparent systems to ensure the quality of research supervision and training. • Maintain existing links, streamline existing collaborative projects and develop new initiatives with professional music organisations.
<p>2. Provide a high quality of teaching which maximises the potential of one-to-one and small group teaching . (University Objectives 2 & 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff in the development of pedagogical skills, particularly those emphasised in the Course Experience Questionnaire. • Support staff in the development of Unit of Study materials which communicate clearly to students. • Further develop staff knowledge of feedback and assessment policy, processes and practices.
<p>3. Use the redeveloped Conservatorium to encourage a wide understanding of awards and to more fully realise the potential for cross-fertilisation amongst academic units. (University Objective 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise a program of commissioning and occupation of the redeveloped facility fully involving staff to encourage collective ownership and maximum utilisation • Formalise the research seminar series piloted in late 1999/early 2000 as a regular feature of the calendar. • Devise international marketing strategy for study abroad and international student recruitment. • Explore possibilities for new course offerings offered by redeveloped building • Explore and develop further unit of study offerings for the University of Sydney Summer School • Position the Concerts Committee to provide strong artistic and academic leadership in the development of the concert program.
<p>4. Improve teaching and learning, through the development and implementation of teaching innovation, particularly through the use of technology. (University Objectives 2, 4 & 5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop on-line teaching materials particularly for skills-based courses. * Foster academic discussion among graduate students. * Explore alternative teaching methods and models particularly in resource-intensive courses.

Part 2

Faculty Operational Plan for Teaching and Learning 2002

A number of factors have influenced the development of the Conservatorium of Music Operational Teaching and Learning Plan for 2002.

- The Conservatorium has moved into its redeveloped facilities and is able to fully implement strategies related to Objective 3 of its Strategic Plan, namely, *Use the redeveloped Conservatorium to encourage a wide understanding of awards and to more fully realise the potential for cross-fertilisation amongst academic units.* All of the Strategies and Procedures related to this Objective, set out in the 2000 – 2001 Plan, were carried out, and the Targets achieved. The Year 2002 will be a period of consolidation in which advantage will be taken of the opportunities for communication in the new facilities.
- The proposed amalgamation of the Department of Music with the Conservatorium means that the major review of awards outlined in the Strategic Plan will now be more complex. Not only does the Conservatorium need to revise its awards in line with current thinking in the music profession, changes in society, and its own students' perceptions, but consideration needs to be given to the needs of students who might have originally enrolled in the Department of Music. Given this complexity, and the uncertainty relating to the proposed amalgamation, target dates indicated under Objective 1 must be considered to be tentative.
- The original Strategic Plan for Teaching and Learning and its associated Operational Plan for Teaching and Learning 2000-2001 has not proved to be totally adequate or valid. Examples such as the following have led to changes in the Plan.

The process of writing the *Self Evaluation of Quality Assurance Systems* revealed areas such as, the quality of research supervision and training, which needed attention and inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

In some parts of the plan, strategies and procedures were confused.

Some of the strategies indicated are now considered inappropriate.

This Operational Plan is based on the rationale and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2000 - 2004, but some of the original strategies have been revised.

Objective 1: Provide diverse and flexible awards which meet the needs of students and assist them in their growth as life-long, autonomous learners. (University Objectives 2 & 3)

Strategies	Procedures	Targets	Target Date
Provide reliable, accessible academic advisory systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Review the roles of course and subject coordinators (including Chairs of Units). * Provide regular seminars and training for all Chairs of Units, and course and subject coordinators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Present revised role statements to College Board. P / HOD* * Academic advice and leadership seminars to be held annually from 2001. P/HOD 	December 2002
Conduct a review of the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music studies awards in 2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use qualitative open response data from SCEQ 2000, 2001. * Consult with External Advisory Council regarding significant issues to be examined in the review. * Set up Award Review Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Analyse open response data by June 2002. TC * Develop terms of reference for the review of each major undergraduate award, and establish membership of review teams, by June 2002. UGS 	<p>June 2002</p> <p>June 2002</p>
(conditional on proposed merger between Music Department and Conservatorium going ahead) Audit units of study offered by former Conservatorium and former Music Department with a view to (a) offering enriched program to students in other faculties, particularly those taking a major in music as part of a BA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Working Party of former Music Department and Conservatorium staff established to evaluate student response to units of study, audit existing offerings, evaluate student interest in other faculties in new areas of study and make recommendations on new offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Working Party established by UG Studies Committee * Interim report to UG Studies Committee on 2002 offerings: * Interim report to UG Studies Committee on 2003 offerings * Final report to UG Studies Committee on 2003 offerings 	<p>October 2001</p> <p>End November 2001</p> <p>April 2002</p> <p>June 2002</p>
(conditional on proposed merger between Music Department and Conservatorium going ahead) Review the double degree offerings offered by the former Music Department with a view to taking students in 2003 or 2004.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Initial Course review committee to be established by UG Studies Committee to evaluate options * Implementation group (Course review committee or course development committee or Implementation Committee) to be established depending on outcomes of Initial Course Review Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Terms of reference and membership of committee established * Report of review committee on potential for taking students in 2003 and other options. * Establishment of implementation group (either course review committee, course development committee or implementation committee) setting objectives, time lines and terms of reference for further development HOD 	<p>October 2001</p> <p>Early March 2002</p> <p>April 2002</p>

<p>Provide consistent, transparent systems to ensure the quality of research supervision and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Review processes of Graduate supervision. * Reform processes where they are deemed to be inconsistent. * Consider the integration of weekly Student Research seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete review by June 2002. * A summary document which sets out mechanisms for ensuring effective completion and retention and procedures and improving the integration of Graduate programs.GS 	<p>June 2002</p>
<p>Complete the review of the Associate Diploma in Jazz and the Diploma of Opera.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue review committee meetings. * Develop revised course structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete review by July 2002 for implementation in January 2003. UGS 	<p>July 2002</p>
<p>Maintain existing links, streamline existing collaborative projects and develop new initiatives with professional music organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Review the Opera Encounters teaching model as part of the review of opera courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conduct further interviews with former students and current professionals on operatic training needs * Complete the review of the Diploma of Opera, including the Opera Encounters project. UGS 	<p>December 2002</p>

Objective 2

Provide a high quality of teaching which maximises the potential of one-to-one and small group teaching. (**University Objectives 2 & 3**)

Underlying this objective is the concern that staff need to take full advantage of the one-to-one teaching and small group settings which characterise teaching at the Conservatorium.

Strategies	Procedures	Targets	Target Date
Support staff in the development of pedagogical skills, particularly those emphasised in the Course Experience Questionnaire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conduct staff seminars on the development of generic skills. * Encourage staff to undertake Graduate Certificate at Institute for Teaching and learning. * Conduct student seminars on essay writing skills * Continue research into Performance Assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All Unit of Study Outlines to contain objectives related to generic skills. HOD / TC * All new, inexperienced staff to undertake courses at ITL. * Materials developed for staff training in Performance Assessment. TC * Improved ratings on the <i>Good Teaching Scale</i> of the <i>Course Experience Questionnaire</i>. 	<p>December 2002</p> <p>December 2002</p>
Support staff in the development of Unit of Study materials which communicate clearly to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conduct staff seminars on Unit of Study Outlines. * Teaching Committee to Monitor Unit of Study Outlines * Review and Revise Conservatorium Assignment Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All Unit of Study Outlines to follow University guidelines. TC * Revised assignment guide distributed to students and faculty. TC 	<p>August 2002</p> <p>February 2002</p>
Further develop staff knowledge of feedback and assessment policy, processes and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue research to focussed on improving reliability and validity of performance assessment. * Continue development of training methods and materials for use in Performance Assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improved reliability figures for Performance Assessment. * Papers published in the area of Performance Assessment. TC 	<p>December 2002</p> <p>December 2002</p>

Objective 3

Use the redeveloped Conservatorium to encourage a wide understanding of awards and to more fully realise the potential for cross-fertilisation amongst academic units. (University Objective 6)

Strategies	Procedures	Targets	Target Date
Continue the research seminar series piloted in late 1999/early 2000 as a regular feature of the calendar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the research seminar series over the full academic year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish dates and presenters prior to the commencement of Semester 1 each year. RC 	February 2002
Devise international marketing strategy for study abroad and international student recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Office to gather data on study abroad, and international student demand in existing markets in Hong Kong, and Singapore, and gather information on new markets in US (Study Abroad), Korea and South America (International students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact finding tour Report on marketing and recruitment options Implementation working party on international marketing Implementation report DM 	December 2001 February 2002 March 2002 June 2002
Explore possibilities for new course offerings offered by redeveloped building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish working party to explore potential for new courses. Target areas: music technology and recording; community music and communication technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working party membership and terms of reference established Working Party report Evaluation by UG or PG Studies Implementation Committee/s established Report of Implementation Committee/s 	December 2001 March 2002 May 2002 July 2002
Explore and develop further unit of study offerings for the University of Sydney Summer School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Summer School Working Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working party established to examine options (and review international and new course reports) Summer School Working Party reports on units of study for 2003 Summer School HOD 	March 2002 May 2002

Objective 4

Improve teaching and learning, through the development and implementation of teaching innovation, particularly through the use of technology. (University Objectives 2, 4 & 5)

Strategies	Procedures	Targets	Target Date
Develop on-line teaching materials, particularly for skills based courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Staff training in computer and multi media technology. * Adaptation of existing courses to online format. * Review and revise the Conservatorium "InfoDesk" so that teaching and learning materials are more readily accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop on-line teaching materials in most discipline areas. TC * Revised "Info Desk".TC 	<p>December 2002</p> <p>February 2002</p>
Foster academic discussion among graduate students.	* Establish mailing lists and online discussion groups.	* All graduate academic courses to have online discussion groups. GS	December 2002
Explore alternative teaching methods and models particularly in resource-intensive course units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use the Video Link program to analyse the value of small group teaching. * Establish video link steering committee * Evaluate video link program * Expand and modify video linke program according to modifications * Trial alternative teaching methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * More variety in the presentation of course units. TC * Initial Video-link report * Evaluation report on Video-link project. * Research paper comparing videolink and conventional music teaching methodologies.TC * Modification and expansion of Video-link program, based on research findings TC 	<p>December 2002</p> <p>October 2001</p> <p>December 2001</p> <p>March 2002</p> <p>February 2002</p>

* Indicates person or group responsible for reaching target.

P – Principal;

HOD – Head of Department;

DM – Development Manager

RC – Research Committee

TC - Teaching Committee;
Committee;

UGS – Undergraduate Studies Committee;

GS - Graduate Studies