

**FACULTY OF LAW**

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

**FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2002**

**FINAL REPORT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following Academic Board Review Team visited the Faculty of Law at the Law campus on Friday 25 October 2002 as part of the review and evaluation of teaching, learning and research training in all faculties within the University.

Chair

*Professor Ann Brewer*

*Assistant Pro-Vice-Chancellor*

Team members

*Professor Paul Ramsden*

*Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)*

*A/Professor Anne Reynolds*

*Deputy Chair, Academic Board*

*A/Professor Tony Masters*

*Faculty of Science*

*Dr Henry Collins*

*Faculty of Veterinary Science*

Observer

*Dr Ann Elias*

*Sydney College of the Arts*

Administrative Officer

*Rachel Symons*

*Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)*

- 1.2 During the visit the Team interviewed the following groups of staff:
- Dean Professor Ron McCallum and Senior Academic Staff
    - A/Professor Donald R. Rothwell, Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs)
    - A/Professor Barbara McDonald, Pro-Dean (Staff Development)
    - Dr Belinda Bennett, Acting Associate-Dean (Postgraduate Coursework)
    - Dr Isabel Karpin, Associate-Dean (Postgraduate research)
    - Mr Graeme Coss, Associate-Dean (Undergraduate)
  - Committee Chairs
  - Student Administration
  - Undergraduate Students
  - Postgraduate Coursework Students
  - Postgraduate Research Students
  - Other Academic and General Staff
- 1.3 The self-evaluation document provided by the Faculty to the Review Team prior to the visit is at Appendix Three.
- 1.4 The findings of the Review Team in relation to the teaching and learning and research training activities of the Faculty, based on the above documentation and interviews conducted during the visit are included in the following report, which address the Team's deliberations under eight main headings:
- Background, Achievements and Hallmarks of the Faculty
  - Communication
  - Implementation of Academic Board Policies and Guidelines
  - Graduate attributes, aims and outcomes
  - Teaching and Learning
  - Research and Research Training
  - Benchmarking and Quality Assurance Processes
  - Student Progression

The Areas of good practice and Areas for consideration for improvement identified by the Panel are provided in the conclusions at the end of the Report in sections 12 and 13. The conclusions are cross-referenced with the full text of the report.

## **2 BACKGROUND, ACHIEVEMENTS AND HALLMARKS OF THE FACULTY**

### ***Background***

- 2.1 In 1999, the Faculty of Law combined its various Departments of Law and Jurisprudence so as to remove the Departmental governance structure. Faculty governance is primarily conducted through the Dean and two Pro-Deans (one addressing Teaching Programs, and the other Staff Development). Additional assistance is provided by the Faculty Manager, Associate Deans, Program Coordinators, Committee chairs and Directors with specific portfolios.
- 2.2 The Faculty has two very popular undergraduate programs, Graduate Law LLB (three years) and Combined Law LLB (five years). The combined five year program with its 2002 UAI entry score of 99.4, a score significantly higher than its competitors, is in high demand. The Bachelor of Law graduate course is an intensive undergraduate program for students who already hold a degree in another discipline. The Faculty has 1654 undergraduate students.
- 2.3 The Faculty also has a wide range of options in postgraduate courses. It has 25 postgraduate coursework programs, making it the largest postgraduate coursework program in Australia. It also has four postgraduate research programs (2 Doctoral and 2 Masters), Graduate Diplomas which support eight of the Masters by coursework programs and a Continuing Legal Education program for the legal profession. The Faculty has 1071 postgraduate coursework and 87 postgraduate research students.
- 2.4 The Faculty has been located on St James Campus for over 100 years. The current facilities have resulted in significant difficulties with teaching, making programs less attractive compared to local competitors. The move to a new building should alleviate some of these problems. The Faculty has signed off on a building proposal “Campus 2010” for the building of a new Law School on the site of the Edgeworth David building on the Camperdown Campus.
- 2.5 The Faculty has 70 full-time academic staff and 70 part-time lecturers. Since 1997 the Faculty has restructured a number of academic offices and committees, and its internal administrative procedures so as to promote better teaching quality and provide better services to students.
- 2.6 In summary, the Faculty of Law has given increasing attention to teaching and learning over the past five years, including a significant restructuring of undergraduate teaching, adjustments to the LLB curriculum, expansion and development of the postgraduate coursework program, and the creation of new offices dedicated to the oversight and management of teaching. The Faculty encounters impediments to change because of its current physical facilities, some of which will be alleviated with the move to the new building later in the decade.

### ***Achievements***

- 2.7 The Faculty has reconsidered its approach to teaching, introducing a seminar-mode of undergraduate teaching in groups of about 40 to 50 students, with the aim of keeping the numbers under 30 for introductory first year subjects. The increased interaction and discussion resulting from the seminar-mode has been well received by students. Student feedback has improved greatly since 1997.
- 2.8 The Faculty reports a strong commitment to teaching excellence. It has established a number of initiatives to encourage teaching excellence by providing teaching staff with a ‘Law Faculty Teaching Handbook’, funding to attend workshops and teacher-training courses, and the establishment of a ‘Faculty Teaching Excellence Award’ and a ‘Faculty Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund’.
- 2.9 The Faculty has introduced a Foundation program for the LLB (Combined Law years One, Two and

Three; Graduate Law Year One) involving significant change to the way in which foundation units are taught.

- 2.10 The Faculty has improved the staff-student consultation processes through more regular liaison between the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and Sydney University Law Society (SULS).
- 2.11 The Faculty restructured its Teaching and Curriculum Committee to include student representatives. The Committee focuses on the improvement of teaching and the encouragement of high-quality teaching.
- 2.12 The Faculty has introduced initiatives to improve teaching and learning for postgraduate students, including:
- Establishing a Postgraduate Coursework Committee to manage all aspects of coursework programs, in conjunction with the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs).
  - Establishing a Postgraduate Research Committee, responsible for research candidates, the oversight of Legal Research One, Two and Three, and annual reviews of all research candidates.
  - Publishing a Postgraduate Supervisor's Handbook.
- 2.13 The Faculty has a long-established and strong affiliation with professional bodies and organisations. Most of the part-time lecturers in the postgraduate programs are professional lawyers. The Faculty also conducts a Continuing Legal Education program for the legal profession, and has miscellaneous in-house training programs.

### ***Hallmarks***

- 2.14 The Faculty of Law has the largest postgraduate coursework program in Australia.
- 2.15 The Faculty has a high-quality and successful doctoral program.
- 2.16 The Faculty maintains small group teaching up to the final year of the degree.
- 2.17 The Faculty has successfully introduced research-led teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, with positive feedback from students about exposure to research in their courses.
- 2.18 The Faculty has excellent teaching staff who aim to inspire students to learn.

### ***See Commendations 1 to 8 and Recommendation 1***

## **3 IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC BOARD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

- 3.1 All staff are required to submit copies of their unit of study outlines to the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and compliance with the Academic Board policy is reviewed accordingly.
- 3.2 The Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) examines new Academic Board policies on teaching and assessment in coursework programs and on the management of teaching, and takes responsibility for disseminating them throughout the Faculty. The Review Team was advised that new Academic Board requirements were communicated to staff on 30 May 2001.
- 3.3 Copies of relevant Academic Board policies are printed in the Faculty Handbook, on the web and in all course outlines. The Teaching Handbook also contains copies of Academic Board policies. The Review Team found that undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research students were aware of Academic Board policies.

- 3.4 The Review Team found that there were some shortcomings in the implementation of Academic Board policy in relation to support for research higher degrees. These are discussed in section 9 below.

#### **4 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES, AIMS AND OUTCOMES**

##### ***Graduate attributes in unit of study outlines***

- 4.1 The Team was advised that information about courses and units of study is found in the Faculty Handbook, available on the web and in hard copy. The Faculty of Law requires that units of study outline aims and objectives, which is reinforced by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Handbook.
- 4.2 The Faculty has mechanisms in place to ensure students receive face-to-face advice, information and feedback on their units of study. Associate Deans, academic advisers as well as undergraduate and postgraduate advisers are available to provide students with advice.
- 4.3 All compulsory subjects (which are taught in multiple groups) have a co-ordinator who is usually the Faculty's senior person in the field. The unit of study co-ordinators fulfil the first line of management responsibility and they play an important role in the maintenance of quality in the Law programs. If students have difficulties or concerns about their academic progress, these are most often handled by the relevant unit of study or course co-ordinator.
- 4.4 The Review Team was informed that all new units of study are carefully examined to ensure that the assessment regime is suited to achieving the desired outcomes. Proponents of new units are required to explain how the learning outcomes are to be achieved. In existing units, the Faculty promotes the importance of articulating unit goals and of linking assessment to the achievement of those goals.
- 4.5 The Faculty clearly has good practice in some areas in relation to helping students achieve learning outcomes through clear articulation of unit of study outcomes and assessment processes. The Review Team encourages the Faculty to extend this good practice more widely.

*See Recommendations 2 and 3*

##### ***Generic and Disciplinary skills***

- 4.6 The Faculty states that it has taken the initiative to integrate clinical studies into the curriculum. It appointed a Director of Clinical Programs in 1996 who has the responsibility of developing and integrating clinical studies into the LLB curriculum. In 2001 the Faculty also established and implemented a planned and co-ordinated process for the development of generic and disciplinary skills across the undergraduate curriculum. The first stage of the process was the implementation of the Foundation program, which aimed to develop generic skills in units within the first year. The second stage will integrate further generic and disciplinary skills in the remaining core and elective units in the LLB program. The Faculty acknowledges that some of the above initiatives raise staffing and funding issues. During the Review Team's discussion with undergraduate and postgraduate students, the students voiced the need for more clinical and practical experience in their studies.
- 4.7 The Faculty has specific compulsory subjects devoted to legal research and legal writing. The results from the SCEQ indicated that students were satisfied with the opportunity to develop their research and writing skills in specific classes. The Review Team's discussions with undergraduate and postgraduate students confirm the students' appreciation of these subjects.
- 4.8 The Faculty reports that it has assigned unit of study co-ordinators to ensure and maintain the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate programs. All compulsory subjects have a co-ordinator who is usually the senior expert in the field. The co-ordinators are often the first base of contact and handle any

difficulties or concerns the students may have about their academic progress.

*See Commendation 9 and Recommendation 4*

## **5 BENCHMARKING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

- 5.1 The Faculty relies on their international exchange programs as one form of benchmarking. Feedback from students and lecturers taking part in exchange programs provides an insight into other top universities and how they perform compared to the University of Sydney.
- 5.2 The Faculty has identified a need to do more benchmarking. It would like to undertake more external reviews of postgraduate programs and do more to benchmark undergraduate programs both internationally and within Australia, for example with Monash, UNSW, ANU and the University of Melbourne.
- 5.3 The Faculty acknowledges that it needs to benchmark itself against other law schools in Australia.
- 5.4 The Review Team was made aware that the Faculty was not conforming to Academic Board policy in relation to research higher degree support. Students reported variable frequencies of contact with their supervisors. Faculty policies and procedures should be reviewed to ensure consistency.

*See Recommendation 5*

## **6 COMMUNICATION**

- 6.1 Interaction between staff and students has increased due to smaller class sizes. Staff report that they had increased communication with students and that they are better able to identify and recognise students
- 6.2 The Faculty has attempted to further develop staff-student consultation through more regular liaison between the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and SULS. The Review Team was informed that no formal staff-student liaison group exists in the Faculty.
- 6.3 Students have the opportunity to communicate their grievances once a semester in a forum setting. However, students reported that this has not taken place this year. Students also requested more feedback on assignments, marks and progress.
- 6.4 Staff are not provided with adequate opportunities to provide feedback to management about new initiatives or proposals. Whilst there are meetings where staff are invited to contribute, many staff do not have the time to attend them. Staff also claim that coordinators of units work autonomously, implying that there is lack of communication between coordinators and staff. It is recommended That the Faculty set up a process through which staff can provide feedback at their discretion, either via email or personally.

*See Commendation 10 and Recommendation 6*

## **7 QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### ***Structures for monitoring and improving teaching quality***

- 7.1 The Faculty has gone through some important changes in recent years. Following a number of internal reviews of the LLB program, the Faculty has invested a great deal of effort since 1997, in improving its teaching. Initiatives have included:
  - Introduction of a seminar-based mode of undergraduate teaching in groups of about 40-50 students,

with the associated aim of keeping numbers under 30 for introductory first year units.

- Introduction in 2001 of a Foundation program for the LLB (Combined Law Years One, Two and Three; Graduate Law Year One) involving significant changes to the way in which foundation units of study are taught, and supported by the Teaching Improvement Fund
- Continued support and funding for staff to attend the week-long Australasian Law Teacher's Association Law Teachers' Workshop.
- Teacher-training days conducted within the Faculty.
- Development of Law Faculty Teaching Handbook.
- Establishment of a Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, and a Faculty Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (\$15,000 per annum).
- Development of a Postgraduate Supervisors' Handbook.
- Requirement that all new academic appointees provide a teaching portfolio.

- 7.2 The Faculty's Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) is responsible for all aspects of the teaching program, including teaching quality. The Pro-Dean (Staff Development) is also involved with teaching improvement, particularly counselling staff where there are student complaints or personal or other difficulties. The Pro-Deans work in conjunction with the Postgraduate Coursework Committee in the development and management of the postgraduate coursework programs.
- 7.3 The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee includes student representatives and is concerned with the encouragement of high-quality teaching.
- 7.4 The Faculty has appointed a Director of Teaching Development, who is responsible for mentoring junior academic staff, promoting teaching development through teaching seminars and attendance at the ALTA Law Teachers' Workshop, the teaching induction program for new members of staff, and ensuring that the Faculty 'Teaching Handbook' reflects new developments in legal education.
- 7.5 The Faculty has indicated that it is experiencing significant difficulties with teaching facilities in the current campus, making its programs less attractive than those of local competitors. Student views reflect this problem. Many student comments mentioned the building and teaching facilities as areas for improvement.
- 7.6 The Review Team commends the Faculty for its initiative in supporting staff development in teaching skills. However, it recommends that the Faculty establish a mentoring program for new staff, with individual staff assigned a mentor who is available to assist the new staff member in his or her role.

### ***See Commendation 11 and Recommendation 7***

### ***High-quality teaching in the Faculty***

- 7.6 The Review Team received mixed reports regarding the standards of teaching based on discussions with students and the SCEQ results. Comments from the SCEQ Undergraduate Students results mainly revealed satisfaction with the quality of teaching, with approximately 49 separate statements listing quality of teaching as one of the best aspects of the course. There was also positive feedback on the high-quality of some teaching staff. However, there were approximately 22 comments highlighting quality of teaching as an area that needs improvement. Students indicated that there was inconsistency in teaching quality. Postgraduate students expressed a high level of overall satisfaction with teaching quality. However, they also indicated some variations in the quality of teaching. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the positive aspects of student feedback on teaching standards overall.
- 7.7 The Review Team was informed that the Faculty believes firmly in academic freedom and that it does not prescribe particular teaching methods/styles for its staff. Academic freedom is seen as a precursor to the emergence of innovative programs and it is held that, if the delivery of teaching were to be

standardised, this would result in senior staff dictating the program until they leave the University. The Review Team acknowledges that whilst this approach to teaching encourages autonomy and innovation, it suffers in the area of quality control, with staff having little knowledge of what other staff are doing. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider ways to monitor variability in the quality of teaching and ensure consistent quality of delivery in all units of study.

*See Commendation 12 and Recommendation 8*

### **Teaching delivery**

- 7.8 An important development in the Faculty in recent years has been the introduction of a seminar-based mode of teaching. Students described both positive and negative experiences of this form of teaching. Overall it is favourably received. Students indicated appreciation of the smaller, more interactive learning setting. However, a point of dissatisfaction reported was the large student numbers in some seminars. Students reported seminar class sizes of 60 to 90, where they expected 40 to 50. Students claimed that large classes decreased opportunities to interact closely with lecturers. Teaching staff provided very positive feedback about the smaller class size, citing increased interaction, identification of students, and opportunity to communicate with students and have discussions. However, they also highlighted the difficulty in keeping some seminar classes below 40. They explained that they could not avoid class sizes of more than 40 students in some units.
- 7.9 One of the aims of the introduction of seminar-mode classes was to give students the opportunity to get involved and participate in discussions. The Review Team received mixed feedback from students. Although some students reported feeling less anonymous, other students still felt anonymous in the smaller classes. The sense of anonymity was attributed to two factors. First, people with dominant or more confident personalities dominated class discussions. Second, class sizes as reported by students were not always small enough to allow for individual involvement. It is recommended that the Faculty considers these comments when attempting to ensure class sizes remain within the 40 to 50 limit and when applying participation assessment marks in some units. Students report that participation assessment is not appropriate when they have little opportunity to participate.

*See Recommendations 9 to 11*

### **Feedback to students on assessment work**

- 7.10 The Faculty is encouraged through the Teaching and Curriculum Committee to provide early and relevant feedback on assessments. Student views on the appropriateness of the amount and speed of feedback on assessment were generally negative. Undergraduate students commented in the SCEQ that staff did not provide speedy and detailed feedback on assessments, particularly written assessments. They described long delays in receiving marked assignments and not receiving marked assignments before an exam. Students also commented that the feedback received was sometimes too late to be of any value for the next assignment. Postgraduate students similarly indicated a need for more feedback and reported delays and lack of detailed feedback on assessments. The issue of feedback was not covered with staff during the meetings.

*See Recommendation 12*

### **Clarity of expectations in assessments and more varied assessments**

- 7.11 The Faculty's Foundation program for the LLB has, since 2001, sought to ensure a spread and variety of assessment tasks which are linked to skills development. However, student comments in the SCEQ indicate a lack of variability and over-reliance on 100% examination assessment. Many undergraduate and some postgraduate students requested more variety in assessment. Students would like to have more

continuous assessment. Some students indicated their preference for take-home exams and the option of doing an assignment or exam as the final assessment.

- 7.12 Staff expressed concern about assessment variation in the Faculty. The Review Team was informed that the Teaching and Curriculum Committee has been working on the issue for the past year. A need has been identified for a co-ordinated approach to assessment methods in the Faculty's units, in particular within the compulsory parts of the curriculum. The Foundation Director would play a key role in this. Staff informed the Review Team that some students expressed concern about plagiarism in assessments such as take-home exams and research essays. Staff acknowledged that this is an area that needs to be addressed by educating students about the Academic Board Academic Honesty policy and setting up a process to handle plagiarism. Staff also acknowledged that combined degrees and graduate programs had different needs.
- 7.13 The Faculty has been promoting greater use of standards-based assessment since 2000. Specific information on what is required in assessment tasks is conveyed by setting out the criteria for assessment in advance of the assessment task. The Institute for Teaching and Learning led a seminar in 2000, and a research assistant was appointed in 2001 to develop examples of best practice in standards-based assessment. Feedback from a few undergraduate students indicates that they were positive about the information provided about assessments. However, there was no substantial feedback on how standards-based assessment was received by the staff and students.
- 7.14 The Faculty conducted an Internal Audit and Review of their examination and assessment systems in 2000 and reported on it in 2001. The process made a number of useful recommendations to which the Faculty is presently responding.
- 7.15 The Faculty has policies to ensure consistency and fairness in marking. Some of these include: faculty policy on examinations; coordination of assignment submission dates and workload through the Student Liaison Administration Group; unit co-ordinators are required to ensure a reasonable degree of parity between separately assessed groups; double-marking of all fails; cross-marking of a sample of each grade within units of study where there are multiple streams; review of all end-of-semester grades by Committee of Examiners; and availability of the Associate Deans and Pro-Deans for student consultation.
- 7.16 The Faculty attempts to ensure clarity in assessment expectations by making assessment information available in unit of study outlines. It believes that criterion-based assessment should ensure that the standards and requirements are made known in advance of the assessment task. Consultation on assessment issues often takes place at the commencement of each semester, while clarification of assessment issues is also provided in class. Some students commended the information provided while others noted the need for more information on the standards required in assessments. Some students have requested more examples of past assessments and clearer criteria. Staff informed the Review Team that the format for essay options is provided in an eight-page document showing essay questions, assessment criteria, and descriptions of the distinguishing features of a Pass, Credit, Distinction and High Distinction grade. The Review Team could not ascertain whether this was standard practice across all units of study. If it is not, the Review Team recommends that all units of study adopt it.

***See Recommendation 13***

### ***Learning resources: Library and IT resources***

- 7.17 The Law library, housed at the St James Campus, has staff with a high level of subject expertise. They make an important contribution legal research training in the Faculty, both within the unit of study 'Legal Research' and in an ongoing 'refresher' program. Students indicated that the library staff were helpful. The library has recently expanded with the development of a new teaching computer lab. The Review Team learned of a number of complaints about the resources available at the library through

discussions with students and the SCEQ results. Complaints related mainly to the availability of course materials, and missing journals and books. Students suggested that the library needs to buy more books, make more copies of course materials, and provide electronic subscription to journals to enable all students to access relevant reading materials. Some students indicated that the library and internet services were inadequate and that the library needed more computers. Postgraduate students made similar comments.

- 7.18 The Faculty reports that there are extensive ICT resources to assist student learning, ranging from unit of study outlines and related lecture materials being available on the Faculty website to the use of WebCT and Bulletin Boards. In addition, an on-line learning trial is being conducted in the postgraduate Tax program. Students acknowledge and appreciate the use of IT resources for teaching in some areas. However, undergraduate students requested greater use of IT resources in teaching, such as making course notes and unit of study outlines available on the internet for all units. Students claim that this would be a valuable support tool in their learning as it would save time and enable them to focus on the content of seminars and lectures. Postgraduate students requested that IT technology in teaching be used for virtual lectures and web-based discussions. Staff informed the Review Team that the building facilities impeded their efforts to teach using new technologies.
- 7.19 The Faculty has a dedicated Postgraduate Research Room which provides computer and locker facilities for research students. Research students advised the Review Team that although the room provided Internet and email access, often the computers did not work and there was a lack of fresh air and ventilation in the room (see 9.6 below).

*See Recommendations 14 to 16*

#### **Student support: staffing**

- 7.20 Feedback from students in the SCEQ surveys contained both positive and negative statements about the supportiveness and accessibility of the teaching staff. Undergraduate students reported that some staff were inaccessible. Postgraduate students, however, found teaching staff to be flexible, accessible and eager to listen and assist in academic matters. Discussion with undergraduate students confirmed the variability in staff accessibility. The Review Team draws these comments to the Faculty's attention, for its consideration.

#### **Self-Evaluation Report**

- 7.21 Staff were pleased to have been involved in the process of preparing the Self-Evaluation Report. During discussion with the Review Team, staff reported that they were satisfied with its contents and considered that it reflected their views.

#### **International students**

- 7.22 The Faculty acknowledged the management and support of international students as a targeted area for improvement. The increase in the Faculty's international student numbers (230 students in 2002) presents specific challenges, mainly due to the different expectations of many international students in relation to teaching styles. Some complained about digression and lack of focus in lectures. International undergraduate students commented that they do not know who to contact in the Faculty if they were experiencing problems. The Faculty has recently appointed an Associate Dean for international and exchange students and created a student liaison officer position in an effort to provide more focused support.

*See Recommendation 17*

### ***International exchange partnerships***

- 7.23 During discussion with the Review Team, staff explained the mechanism of international exchange partnerships and claimed that it was an effective way to enhance teaching and learning. The Faculty is linked with ten overseas law schools. International exchange is very popular with University of Sydney students, particularly undergraduate students. The Faculty focuses on partnerships with universities of equivalent standing. The international exchange program also provides a form of benchmarking based on student performance and feedback.

## **8 EVALUATION**

- 8.1 The Review Team was informed that all units of study in every course are evaluated every semester. Students are asked to complete the evaluation form in the absence of the lecturer. The forms are then collected by the students and taken to the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) for evaluation. The evaluations are returned to lecturers after submission of exam results. Lecturers are expected to demonstrate how they have responded to comments. The Review Team noted that the Pro-Dean does not provide official feedback on the forms.
- 8.2 The President and Vice-President (Education) of SULLS meet with the Faculty management regularly to receive and provide evaluation based on student feedback and SULLS observation.

## **9 RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-LED TEACHING**

- 9.1 Faculty staff teach in their research areas as far as possible. The Faculty attempts to meet the needs of the compulsory curriculum and the specialist postgraduate programs through providing teaching by specialist researchers. Lecturers in the elective undergraduate units have previously or are currently conducting research in the fields of study, or are senior judges/legal practitioners.
- 9.2 The Faculty has effectively incorporated student research into the curriculum. There is a high proportion of units of study in the LLB undergraduate elective program and the postgraduate coursework program in which students may engage in research-based activities (student journals, bibliographical exercises, project work) and/or where research/inquiry or research skills are a major component. Three postgraduate programs require students to complete major independent research projects whilst LLB candidates can elect to undertake supervised research projects. Student feedback on research-based learning tasks has been positive.
- 9.3 The Faculty's Centres also have an important outreach role in this process, in the communication of current research to students and their oversight of degree programs related to the centre's area of speciality.

*See Commendation 13*

### ***Research supervision and training***

- 9.4 The Team welcomed comments from the Faculty that there are specific arrangements to ensure a high standard of supervision. These include: a handbook on research supervision, produced and distributed to all staff; annual confidential interviews conducted with all research candidates to discuss the standard of supervision being provided; supervisors being required to document all formal meetings with research candidates to monitor their progress; and the Postgraduate Research Committee oversight of the quality of research supervision.
- 9.5 The Review Team received positive feedback from research higher degree students. Students commented on the usefulness of the compulsory research courses, and the success and usefulness of

postgraduate fellowships.

- 9.6 The Faculty advised that research students had access to essential facilities like desks, computers, printing and phones. However, students made a number of negative comments as follows: the research room needs improved maintenance and upkeep; not all students have office space; office space is allocated to all teaching fellows, but can be difficult to obtain; allocation of library carrels is ad hoc, and there are not enough of them; there is variation in advice provided regarding available funded scholarships (many students were unaware of them); there is inconsistency in the provision of funds for research, travel and communication.
- 9.7 Research students considered the annual review process to be a useful mechanism for encouraging progress and obtaining feedback.
- 9.8 The Faculty reported that completion rates had improved in recent years. The Review Team noted that the Faculty's 2001 completions (13 doctoral students graduated) were a considerable achievement. The Review Team considered that the improvement may be linked to the mechanisms put in place by the Faculty to ensure effective completion and retention. The mechanisms were: high standard of intake; the requirement for annual reports on progress; student participation in annual reviews of their candidature with two members of the academic staff; encouragement of students to present work-in-progress and/or conference papers at faculty seminars, University conferences and external conferences. Students reported that they would like the Faculty to provide more opportunities to attend conferences in their area of study and to present their work more regularly to the Faculty.
- 9.9 The Review Team noted that contact between supervisors and research student varied considerably between individual supervisors. Some students reported meeting with their supervisors a few times a year while others reported meetings once every 1 to 2 weeks. Students were not aware of the code of practice for supervisors. Some students reported not having clear expectations of what was involved in supervision, not receiving active support from their supervisors, and having to take the initiative in approaching their supervisors for more frequent contact.
- 9.10 The Dean acknowledged students' concerns with variation in the quality of supervision and reported on plans to rectify the situation. The Review Team noted the Dean's initial ideas for intervention, including conducting an advanced supervisor workshop and developing a model that would ensure a more equitable supervision load. The Review Team recommends these and other mechanisms to improve the quality of supervision.
- 9.11 The Faculty encourages research students to be involved in the life and work of the Faculty by participating in research seminars and gaining teaching experience. The Faculty currently has five Associate Lecturers/Teaching Fellows on 0.5 fractional appointments, who are engaged in postgraduate research programs. Students welcomed the postgraduate fellowships and reported that they are working well. However, the students would welcome more support in developing their teaching skills, possibly through a formal mentorship scheme.

*See Commendation 15 and Recommendation 18 and 19*

### **Postgraduate Coursework**

- 9.12 Postgraduate coursework students reported highly interactive teaching sessions and expressed their appreciation of the benefits of small classes and group discussions. Students expressed the view that some lecturers deviated from their topics and wasted time with discussions that were not relevant to the course.
- 9.14 The Faculty acknowledged that, since the postgraduate coursework program includes specialist courses that admit non-lawyers, there is a need to support these students in becoming familiar with legal

systems. The Faculty provides introductory courses for most specialist programs for students without a law background.

- 9.15 Students appreciated the availability of various forms of teaching sessions, ranging from night classes and weekend classes to intensive units.
- 9.16 The Review Team considered that the Faculty has effective support mechanisms for postgraduate international students. Students reported being able to approach their lecturers to discuss coursework and other matters. These mechanisms will be further enhanced by the appointment of an Associate Dean for international exchange students and an international student liaison officer (see section 7.22)
- 9.17 The Dean expressed the view that he intended to undertake reviews of postgraduate coursework as part of the benchmarking processes of the Faculty.

### ***See Commendation 16***

## **10 STUDENT PROGRESSION**

- 10.1 The Faculty considers that it has effective processes in place to identify students at risk and to assist them. The Faculty has on-going class assessments and a minimum attendance requirement to help identify students experiencing difficulties.
- 10.2 The Faculty has appropriate procedures in place to monitor students' progress throughout their degree. All new students must undertake a diagnostic assessment of writing ability. Students with difficulties are referred to the Learning Centre and other resources. Similar strategies are now being adopted in foundation units in some of the specialist Master's programs. The postgraduate research program uses the core units Legal Research I, II, and III to maintain close contact with research candidates and assist in monitoring student progression.
- 10.3 The Faculty's Associate Deans and academic advisers (including the Faculty Disability Officer) are actively engaged in identifying students at risk and collaborate with individual lecturers in this regard. There are close relations between the Associate Deans and the administrative staff in Student Services who assist students. The Review Team was advised that the Faculty Handbook directs undergraduate students to seek assistance from Student Administration in the first instance, then the Associate Dean (Undergraduate) before going to Counselling Services. Postgraduate students, however, are advised to go to Student Administration, where staff will try to resolve the problem at this level before referring students to the program coordinator and then to the postgraduate coordinator. Students would like clear and simple information on whom to contact for the various problems they may encounter during the course of their study. Students reported that the present support options were not straightforward or easily accessible. Staff also advised the Review Team that the Faculty needed to encourage more interaction between students. They suggested that space should be provided for postgraduate and international students to meet and socialise helping to build a collegial and supportive environment.
- 10.4 The Faculty has established learning resources and academic support to assist student learning outcomes. Structural changes to courses that support student progression by early development of fundamental skills include making 'Legal Research' and 'Legal Writing' training an integrated component of the LLB course and making the intensive unit 'Legal Reasoning and the Common Law System' compulsory for all commencing postgraduate students without a law background.

### ***Combined degrees***

- 10.5 The Review Team was pleased to note that comments from the SCEQ and discussions with students from combined degrees indicated a high level of overall satisfaction. However, some students reported

a lack of support and did not identify themselves as Law students due to being based at the Camperdown campus. Students also advised that they required more information on elective 4th year Law subjects and requested an information session to be provided in 3rd year on the options available.

See *Commendation 17 and Recommendations 20 - 23*

## **11 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

- 11.1 The Review Team commended the Faculty's commitment to continuous improvement of teaching, learning and research training. It noted that changes made in recent years had been favourably received by staff and students. Much valuable work has been done to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in relation to the significant restructuring of undergraduate teaching, adjustments to the LLB curriculum, and expansion and development of the postgraduate coursework program. The creation of new positions dedicated to the management of teaching and quality assurance was highlighted as a successful initiative. Undergraduate and postgraduate students were generally positive about these initiatives and expressed satisfaction with the high-quality of the teaching staff. Points of commendation are provided in Section 12 below.
- 11.2 The Review Team also identified a number of areas where further changes would contribute to the Faculty's progress and improvement. An area of concern to the Review Team was the maintenance of small seminar classes. The Review Team welcomes the Faculty's advice that it is aware of the problems and that it is giving attention to maintaining workable limits. Details of recommendations are provided in Section 13 below.
- 11.3 These findings were communicated to the Dean through the brief report of the findings of the Review Team that was sent to the Faculty on 15 November 2002.

## **12 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE (COMMENDATIONS)**

Based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the Teaching and Learning Plan and the findings of the Review visit, the following areas of good practice have been identified within the Faculty of Law.

### **Commendation 1**

It was apparent to the Review Team that the Faculty had made general improvements in many areas in a relatively short time. The process of change within the Faculty has produced favourable outcomes and positive feedback from students. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the progress it has made, academically, philosophically and structurally. (*See Section 2*)

### **Commendation 2**

The Faculty is commended on the range of courses offered at undergraduate and postgraduate level. (*See Section 2.2-2.3*)

### **Commendation 3**

The Faculty has identified the need to improve the building facilities and has a major refurbishment program for the improvement of the building and access to certain facilities, such as computers and audio visual material. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students have also commented on the problems with the building and the insufficient supply of computers. The Faculty's initiative to improve these facilities in these areas is commendable. (*See Section 2.4*)

#### **Commendation 4**

The Review Team commends the Faculty on its increased emphasis on teaching and learning. *(See Section 2.6)*

#### **Commendation 5**

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the successful move from lecture-mode to seminar-mode undergraduate teaching, and the increased interaction and discussion in class. *(See Section 2.7)*

#### **Commendation 6**

The Review Team commends the Faculty on its attempts to decrease class sizes in tutorials and seminars. *(See Section 2.7)*

#### **Commendation 7**

The Review Team commends the Faculty on its strong emphasis on teacher training through workshops and forums. It also commends the Faculty on its support and encouragement of teaching excellence through awards and funding. *(See Section 2.8)*

#### **Commendation 8**

Faculty staff members are commended on their efforts to listen to students and respond to their needs. *(See Section 2.10-2.11)*

#### **Commendation 9**

The Faculty is commended on its efforts to introduce practical experience into its programs. A recent example is the development of a skills and clinical program in the LLB in collaboration with the SULS skills program. *(See Section 4)*

#### **Commendation 10**

The smaller class sizes have improved communication between staff and students. Recognition and individual interaction between staff and students appear to be highly valued by both parties. *(See Section 6)*

#### **Commendation 11**

The Faculty is commended for its support and recognition of good teaching through grants and awards. *(See Section 7.1)*

#### **Commendation 12**

The Faculty is commended for its high-quality teaching staff. Feedback from students indicates a high calibre of teaching that has contributed to an overall positive student experience. *(See Sections 7.6-7.7)*

#### **Commendation 13**

The Faculty is commended on its research-led teaching initiatives in both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. *(See Sections 9.1-9.3)*

#### **Commendation 14**

The Faculty is commended on its introduction of compulsory research courses for research students which are likely to have contributed to an improvement in PhD completions. *(See Section 9.5)*

#### **Commendation 15**

The Faculty is commended for its efforts to ensure postgraduate research students have the opportunity to present their work to wider audiences. The Faculty is commended for hosting the postgraduate conference and work-in progress seminars. *(See Section 9.8)*

#### **Commendation 16**

The Faculty is commended for its efforts to support postgraduate coursework students who do not have a law background. *(See Section 9.16)*

#### **Commendation 17**

The Faculty is commended on the procedures it has put in place to enhance student progression and retention. The support provided to students is exemplary. *(See Section 10)*

### **13 AREAS OF CONSIDERATION FOR IMPROVEMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS)**

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

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Review Team acknowledges that the Faculty has a very positive system of recognising and rewarding good teaching. However it recommends that the Faculty encourage its teaching staff to apply for University wide teaching awards. *(See Section 2.8)*

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Faculty should consider the further development of methods ensuring that courses and units of study facilitate students in achieving intended learning outcomes. Intended learning outcomes need to be made clear to students in all unit of study outlines. *(See Sections 4.1-4.5)*

#### **Recommendation 3**

The Faculty is encouraged to make all unit of study outlines available on the internet. Currently students report that only 15 units have their outlines on the internet, and other outlines are only available in hard copy. *(See Sections 4.1-4.5)*

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Faculty needs to assess the amount of practical courses/skills being taught at the Faculty, in order to respond to student requests for more clinical and practical experience. *(See Section 4.6-4.8)*

## **Recommendation 5**

The Review Team recommends that benchmarking strategies for quality assurance should to be established in various aspects of the Faculty's work: undergraduate and postgraduate courses, postgraduate supervision, teacher training, student performance and student support and assessment standards. The Review Team particularly recommends that methods for supporting research higher degree students should be benchmarked against another suitable faculty and another research university. *(See Section 5)*

## **Recommendation 6**

As part of an attempt to enhance interaction between staff and students, the Faculty should retain its regular liaison with SULLS. However, in accordance with Academic Board policy, the Faculty should in addition operate effective staff-student consultative committees (see section 2, *The Management and Evaluation of Teaching*) *(See Section 6)*

## **Recommendation 7**

The Faculty is encouraged to establish a formal mentoring program for new teachers (full-time, casual, part-time and postgraduate fellowship teachers). The mentor program should assign an established staff member to act as mentor to a new staff member, providing support and guidance during their initiation into the position. *(See Section 7.5)*

## **Recommendation 8**

The Review Team recommends that the Faculty should implement a strategy to monitor disparities in the quality of teaching and to regulate progress in teaching development. The Faculty should continue to encourage all new and existing staff to attend teaching workshops and skill development sessions in order to maintain and ensure a level of consistency in teaching standards. *(See Section 7.7)*

## **Recommendation 9**

The Faculty is encouraged to continue to refine small group teaching. It needs to consider reducing class sizes in some areas and increasing the number of seminar sessions conducted during the week. *(See Sections 7.8-7.9)*

## **Recommendation 10**

The Faculty needs to take into consideration that some students feel anonymous in seminar classes due to large class sizes. Since assessment of participation in seminar classes is seen as unfair by some students, the Faculty needs to consider another form of assessment or implement processes to ensure that participation assessment is fair and equitable for all students. *(See Sections 7.8-7.9)*

## **Recommendation 11**

The Faculty is encouraged to arrange effective processes which enable students to report unsatisfactory teaching or unfair practice. Troubleshooting processes in this regard need to be more transparent. *(See Sections 7.8-7.9)*

## **Recommendation 12**

The Review Team encourages the Faculty to set a timeframe for the return of assessable work, which should be preferably within 2 to 3 weeks of the submission date. Teaching staff should ensure the return

of assessment marks and comments well before the next assessment, so as to allow students to benefit from their feedback. It is recommended that feedback should be constructive and detailed. *(See Section 7.10)*

### **Recommendation 13**

The Faculty is encouraged to consider ways to respond to the student dissatisfaction with the lack of variability in assessment. It needs to consider alternatives to inflexible types of assessment such as 100% exams or essays. *(See Sections 7.11-7.16)*

### **Recommendation 14**

The Faculty is encouraged to assess the Law School library resources and availability of current books and journals. It is recommended that the library consider subscribing to journals used frequently by students and the transfer of course materials online. *(See Section 7.17)*

### **Recommendation 15**

The Faculty should consider setting up an online discussion page linked to its website. The Faculty should make full use of the central facilities provided for ICT training in the use of learning management systems through ITL and the flexible online learning project, and consider running in-house ICT training. *(See Section 7.18)*

### **Recommendation 16**

The Faculty is encouraged to consider the views of postgraduate research students that their research room is in need of maintenance and upkeep. *(See Section 7.19)*

### **Recommendation 17**

The Faculty is encouraged to acknowledge the needs of international students and to make possible avenues of problem resolution clearly available to them. It needs to ensure that communication with international students is high, and that the purpose of the course and its structures are well explained to them. The Faculty needs to take into consideration cultural variation in expectations of teaching and learning. *(See Section 7.22)*

### **Recommendation 18**

Annual reports and reviews submitted by research students is one effective way of monitoring progress. However, this should be accompanied by regular meetings with the supervisor. *(See Section 9.8)*

### **Recommendation 19**

The Review Team found that arrangements for the supervision of research students do not conform to Academic Board policy. The Faculty should review inconsistencies in the frequency and quality of supervision. The Faculty should make the Code of Practice for supervisors available to all postgraduate students. The Faculty needs to ensure that supervisors are clear about the expectations of their role and their responsibilities to research students. *(See Section 9.9-9.10)*

### **Recommendation 20**

Available support mechanisms and resources for students with personal or academic problems should be clearly communicated to all students by the Faculty. The information should be readily available on the

Law website and Faculty handbook and brochures should also be provided to students. *(See Section 10.2-10.3)*

### **Recommendation 21**

The Faculty is encouraged to consider ways of developing more interaction among local and international postgraduate students. It needs to consider staff suggestions about creating a space in the building where students can meet and socialise in order to promote a collegial and supportive student environment. *(See Section 10.3)*

### **Recommendation 22**

The Faculty needs to consider setting up an information session for students going into 4th year Law to highlight their options and assist them in making appropriate choices. *(See Section 10.5)*

### **Recommendation 23**

The Review Team encourages the Faculty to devise strategies to ensure that students in combined degrees identify as law students in the first three years of their Law degree. *(See Section 10.5)*

Professor Ann Brewer  
Chair, Academic Board Review Team

19 December 2002

**FACULTY OF LAW      ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW VISIT    FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2002****BRIEF REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM****1.      Introduction**

- 1.1      The Academic Board Review Team, chaired by Professor Ann Brewer, deputising for the Chair of the Academic Board, visited the Faculty of Law on Friday 25 October 2002 to review and evaluate academic planning and quality assurance systems within the Faculty.
- 1.2      The Review Team conducted interviews with the following:
- Professor Ron McCallum (Dean)
  - The Pro-Deans and senior Faculty staff
  - Undergraduate students
  - Postgraduate coursework students
  - Postgraduate research students
  - Other academic and general staff

**2.      Areas of good practice**

- 2.1      The restructuring of teaching from lectures to seminar groups.
- 2.2      Strategies to decrease class sizes in tutorials and seminars.
- 2.3      Strategies to increase interaction and discussion in class.
- 2.4      Introduction of the compulsory research courses for Research PhD students, associated with an increase in PhD completions.
- 2.5      Hosting of the postgraduate conference and lunch in progress seminars, even more opportunities to present would be welcomed.
- 2.6      Extended range of courses available at the Law Faculty.
- 2.7      Strong emphasis on teacher training through workshops and forums and concomitant positive feedback about the high-quality of teaching staff being flexible and approachable
- 2.8      Increasing use of IT for administrative and teaching purposes relating to students.
- 2.9      Provision and support postgraduate fellowship scheme.

**3.      Areas of consideration for improvement**

- 3.1      Need to consider the establishment of more variety in subject choice, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- 3.2      In order to introduce more practical experience to students, there is a need to assess the generic and applied skills learning by students.

- 3.3 Consider ways to respond to undergraduate concerns about the large class sizes, the lack of variety in assessment (too much reliance on exams as the largest percentage of the assessment mark.), the high workload, particularly heavy reading load.
- 3.4 Continue to review policies on ways to provide students with timely and detailed feedback on work, particularly focusing on the time laps between submission and feedback, especially that provided at a time that would benefit the students understanding and equip them for the next assessment would be welcomed.
- 3.5 Consider ways to improve the effectiveness of the link between main campus and the city campus
- 3.6 Continue to develop the use of IT in the organisation and teaching of courses.
- 3.7 Continue to consider ways to modernise and improve the teaching facilities in the Law building, update the library, expand the collection at the library, increase the number of computers available to students, and free access to computers for research purposes.
- 3.8 Consider ways to expand the variety of organisations invited to the law careers day.
- 3.9 Continue to refine small group teaching, particularly seminar groups, consider things like reducing class size, putting a cap on enrolment numbers, increase the number of seminar sessions conducted during the week.
- 3.10 Consider another form of assessment or ways of ensuring participation assessment is fair and equitable for all students.
- 3.11 Continue to encourage all new and existing staff to attend teaching workshops and skill development session in order maintain and ensure a level of consistency in teaching standards.
- 3.12 Continue to create ways of recruiting and supporting Broadway students, International students and Indigenous students.
- 3.13 Consider providing students with sample answers for assessments, in order to improve their understanding of what is required in assessments.
- 3.14 Consider establishing more effective channels for students to be able to report unsatisfactory teaching in a timely way.
- 3.15 Consider assessment of research students' supervisors' performance and support of student, eg. Supervisor workshop, and ensuring students are aware and comply with Academic Board policy.
- 3.16 Continue to monitor and provide support to students who are showing signs of having problems with the load, material or any other issues. Ensure that students are made aware of the code of practice for supervisors.
- 3.17 Need to create a mentor program, where established staff act as mentors to new staff members.
- 3.18 Attempt to increase the communication between staff and students, such as a formalised staff and student consultation session(s).
- 3.19 Ensure that communication with international students is high, and the purpose of course structures is explained to international students. Should take into consideration cultural variation in teaching expectations.
- 3.21 Ensure consistency of teaching policy and standards for internal and external staff.

Professor Ann Brewer  
Chair, Review Team

15 November 2002

1. Self-Evaluation Report with following appendices: (See Appendix Three)
  - Faculty of Law Strategic Teaching and Learning Plan 2002
  - Faculty of Law Academic Administration Structure
  - Faculty of Law Administrative Structure
2. An Assessment from the Sydney University Law Society (SULS)
3. Dean's notes from the review meetings.

## APPENDIX THREE FACULTY SELF EVALUATION REPORT

### ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE FACULTY OF LAW SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2002

#### **Academic Programs, Students, Staff and learning resources**

The Faculty of Law is located on the St James Campus where it has been based for over 100 years. In 1999 the Faculty combined the Departments of Law and Jurisprudence so as to remove the Departmental governance structure. Faculty governance is now conducted primarily through the Dean and two Pro-Deans – one addressing Teaching Programs, and the other Staff Development. Additional assistance is provided by the Faculty Manager, Associate Deans, Program Coordinators, Committee Chairs and Directors with specific portfolios.

The Faculty offers 2 undergraduate Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree programs, 25 postgraduate coursework and research programs, 2 joint postgraduate programs, has 1654 undergraduate students, 1071 postgraduate coursework students, and 87 postgraduate research students taught by 70 Academic Staff (57.2 FTE) and 70 part time lecturers (mostly professional lawyers who are active in the postgraduate coursework program). As at 20 September 2002, the Faculty had a total EFTSU of 1334.69. In 2003 it is currently proposed that 101 streams of 12 compulsory undergraduate units of study will be offered, 50 elective undergraduate units of study, and 114 postgraduate units of study.

The Faculty of Law has four main programs of study:

1. Bachelor of Laws (LLB) – a combined five year program with partner faculties in Arts/Economics/Engineering/Science: this involves teaching the three year foundation program of the LLB on the main campus to students who are engaged in studies in other disciplines, and the final two years at the St James campus where students merge with those undertaking the graduate law program. For many years direct HSC entry to the LLB at this university has been seen as the premier undergraduate law program in New South Wales. Its 2002 UAI entry score was 99.4, significantly higher than our competitors.
2. Bachelor of Law (LLB) – the Graduate Law program. This is an intensive three year undergraduate program for students who already hold a degree in another discipline. The foundation program is completed in Year One, and in Years Two and Three students merge with those undertaking the combined program to complete the remaining core and elective units of study. Equivalent 2002 UAI entry score was 93.11.<sup>1</sup>
3. Postgraduate coursework programs based around the Master of Laws (LLM) and related specialist postgraduate degrees. The Faculty has by far the largest postgraduate coursework law program in Australia including:
  - Master of Laws (LLM)
  - Master of Criminology (MCrim)
  - Master of Labour Law and Relations (MLLR)
  - Master of Taxation (MTax)
  - Master of Environmental Law (MEL)
  - Master of Jurisprudence (MJur)
  - Master of Health Law (MHL)
  - Master of Administrative Law and Policy (MALP)
  - Master of International Law (MIL)
  - Master of International Taxation (MIntTax)

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is a notional composite of the UAI (weighted 25%) and the GPA for tertiary record (weighted 75%).

4. Eight of these Masters programs are supported by Graduate Diploma programs, and in addition there exists specialist Graduate Diplomas in Corporate, Securities and Finance Law, and Commercial Law. The Faculty also conducts partner postgraduate programs with the faculties of Science (Masters of Environmental Science and Law) and Economics (Masters of International Business and Law – from 2003). Most of the specialist postgraduate programs are open to non-lawyers.
5. Postgraduate Research programs – of which the Faculty has four:
  - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
  - Doctor of Juridical Studies (SJD)
  - Master of Laws (LLM)
  - Master of Criminology (MCrim)

The SJD is a professional doctorate and was one of the first of its type offered in Australia. Both the PhD and SJD are supported by dedicated legal research programs specifically designed for doctoral candidates.

In addition the Faculty also conducts a Continuing Legal Education program for the legal profession, and has miscellaneous in-house training programs conducted by Faculty Centre's and some postgraduate programs. A wide range of information about the faculty's programs, units of study, admission, enrolment, timetables, progression, examinations, scholarships and prizes and much more can be found by visiting the Faculty web site at <[www.law.usyd.edu.au](http://www.law.usyd.edu.au)>.

## **Summary of recent Teaching improvements and Structures for monitoring and improving teaching quality**

### **1) Teaching improvement**

The Faculty of Law is strongly committed to teaching excellence. Following a number of internal reviews of the LLB program, the Faculty has invested a great deal of effort since 1997 to the improvement of its teaching and there are tangible signs that these efforts are being rewarded. Initiatives to improve teaching have included:

- ◆ Introduction in 1997 of a seminar-based mode of undergraduate teaching in groups of about 40-50 students. In the introductory first year subjects of both the combined LLB and graduate LLB it is aimed to keep groups under 30;
- ◆ Introduction in 2001 of a Foundation program for the LLB (combined Law Years One, Two and Three; graduate Law Year One) involving significant changes to the way in which foundation units of study are taught. This followed a year long teaching audit, which reported at the end of 1999<sup>2</sup>;
- ◆ Continued support for and funding for staff to attend the week-long Australasian Law Teacher's Association (ALTA) Law Teachers' Workshop;<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Teacher-training days conducted within the Faculty, the most recent of which was held in July 2002 for new members of Faculty (both permanent appointments and part-time teachers);
- ◆ Development of a skills and clinical program in the LLB in collaboration with the Sydney University Law Society skills program;
- ◆ Improvement of staff-student consultation processes through more regular liaison between the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and Sydney University Law Society;
- ◆ Partial delivery of the postgraduate Tax programs through WebCT to external candidates;
- ◆ Development of a Law Faculty Teaching Handbook;
- ◆ Establishment of a Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, and a Faculty Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (\$15,000 per annum);
- ◆ Development of a Postgraduate Supervisor's Handbook and annual review of postgraduate candidates and the quality of supervision;

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<sup>2</sup> The authors of this report were awarded a Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award.

<sup>3</sup> All recently appointed junior members of staff at Level A and B are encouraged to attend this workshop; approximately 50% of the current Faculty have attended this workshop since 1988.

- ◆ Requirement that all new academic appointees provide a teaching portfolio;
- ◆ Restructuring the Student Services Division to provide better administrative support to students.

There are also a number of areas which we need to work on, and we are conscious that certain efforts we have made have been undermined by funding cuts and lack of funding to cover salary increases in recent years. This has many adverse effects, including difficulties in both recruiting and retaining staff, and maintaining the commitment to the small group teaching model. In particular the Faculty is experiencing significant difficulties with the teaching facilities of our current campus, making our programs less attractive compared to local competitors.

## ***2) Structures for monitoring and improving teaching quality***

In conjunction with the adjustments which began to take place in 1997, the Faculty has restructured a number of academic offices and committees, and its internal administrative procedures so as to promote better teaching quality and provide services to students. These initiatives have included:

- ◆ Appointment of a Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs): in 1999, the Faculty abolished departments and divided the Head of Department's role into two. It created one Pro-Dean with responsibility for all aspects of the teaching program (including teaching quality) and another with responsibility for staff development, including mentoring. While the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) has systemic responsibility for the program, the Pro-Dean (Staff Development) is also involved with teaching improvement, particularly in counselling staff where there are complaints or difficulties;
- ◆ Restructuring of the Faculty Teaching and Curriculum Committee which includes student representatives and which has a wide brief concerned with the improvement of teaching and the encouragement of high-quality teaching;
- ◆ Creation of a Postgraduate Coursework Committee which has responsibility for all aspects of the development and management of the postgraduate coursework program in conjunction with the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs);
- ◆ Creation of a Postgraduate Research Committee which is responsible for research candidates, the oversight of Legal Research One, Two and Three, and annual reviews of all research candidates.

## **Aspects of academic quality improvement systems – including self evaluation**

### **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?**

All new Degree Programs/Units of Study must be approved by the Teaching and Curriculum Committee and these issues need to be addressed in the proposal. All unit of study outlines are required by the Academic Board document, the Management of Coursework Teaching, to convey the aims and objectives of the Unit and to explain the connections with the development of generic skills. It has long been the practice of the Faculty of Law to require units of study to outline aims and objectives and this is reinforced by the Faculty Teaching Handbook. The new Academic Board requirements were conveyed to staff on 30 May 2001, together with the University's policy on generic skills of graduates. All members of staff are required to submit copies of their unit of study outlines to the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and compliance with the Academic Board policy is reviewed accordingly.

### **8 Systems for informing students about course and unit expectations and ensuring that students understand them:**

Information about Courses and Units of Study is found in the Faculty Handbook, available on the Web and in paper format. Associate Deans, academic advisers, and the undergraduate and postgraduate advisers, are available to give interviews to students or to answer queries on course progression and other such issues. Expectations in units of study are conveyed through the unit of study outline concerning the expected outcomes

of units of study. Many of these outlines are available on the Faculty Homepage.

9 Ways in which relations between generic and disciplinary skills in the curriculum are monitored:

The Faculty has since 1996 had a Director of Clinical Programs who has had ongoing responsibility for the development and integration of clinical studies into the LLB curriculum. More recently, in 2001 the process began of implementing a planned and co-ordinated approach to the development of generic and disciplinary skills across the undergraduate curriculum. The first stage of this process was the implementation of the Foundation program in the LLB (Years 1-3 – Combined Law; Year 1 – Graduate Law). One of the aims of this is to develop different skills in different subjects within the first year program. The implementation and monitoring of this is the responsibility of the Foundation co-ordinator. The next stage in this process will be to integrate further generic and disciplinary skills in the remaining Core units of the LLB program, and eventually to elective units in the LLB program. However, some of these initiatives have significant staffing and funding implications, and resources will need to be carefully deployed to achieve a fully integrated program.

In addition to this program, the Faculty has for a long time had specific compulsory subjects devoted to legal research and legal writing. The skills taught are both generic and discipline-specific. Legal Research training is extensive, while other skills are developed through teaching and assessment practices in compulsory units of study (e.g. *Litigation*) as well as in optional subjects (*Advanced Public International Law, Family Law, External Placement Program, Practising in the Public Interest*) and specialist skills units (e.g. *Advocacy, Interviewing and Negotiation, Dispute Resolution, Jessup International Law Moot, Sydney Law Review*) where the Director of Clinical Programs plays a pivotal role.

10 Methods for ensuring that courses and units of study enable students to achieve intended learning outcomes:

**The Unit of Study co-ordinators play an important role in the maintenance of quality in our programs. They are the first line of management responsibility. All compulsory subjects (which are taught in multiple groups) have a co-ordinator who is usually the senior expert in the field. Postgraduate course co-ordinators also play a very important role in ensuring the success of the programs. If students have difficulties or concerns about their academic progress these are most often handled by the relevant unit of study or course co-ordinator.**

**New units of study are vetted to ensure that the assessment regime is suitable to achieve the outcomes. Proponents of the new unit proposals must explain how the learning outcomes are to be achieved. In existing units, the most effective means of achieving this goal is to promote awareness of the importance of such matters as articulating one's pedagogical goals and tying one's assessment to the achievement of those goals.**

11 Methods for providing coherence between units of study and courses:

This is the responsibility of the Teaching and Curriculum Committee. New unit of study or course proposals must address the relationship with existing units of study or courses and proponents must consult with other staff interested in the area. In relation to the first year program, co-ordination is ensured by the Foundation Co-ordinator, implementing the agreed Foundation program. When new postgraduate courses are proposed, primary responsibility rests with the Postgraduate Coursework Committee.

**Evaluation**

All units of study include aims and outcomes which are clearly communicated to students at the commencement of each semester. The LLB Foundation program has assisted in further integrating generic and disciplinary skills which is now being extended to remaining core LLB units. Some coursework and research postgraduate programs have successfully integrated generic and disciplinary skills.

## 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?

(a) How links between current disciplinary research and the research expertise of staff and the curriculum are managed:

The Faculty believes that the most effective way of ensuring that research is incorporated into teaching is to ensure as far as possible that staff teach in areas in which they are also research active. This is self-evident, but it is easier said than done in the LLB program where two-thirds of the degree is prescribed by the profession, and where some subjects tend to attract research interest much more than others. We manage the issue by ensuring that in our recruitment practices, the needs of the compulsory curriculum and our specialist PG programs have a central place. Consequently, it is almost unknown for staff not to have a significant degree of their teaching in their research area, even in compulsory units which are primarily led by research-active specialists in the field.

There is a high proportion of units of study in the LLB undergraduate elective program and the postgraduate coursework program where students engage in research-based activities (student journals, bibliographical exercises, project work) and/or where research/inquiry, or research skills is a major or an assessed component. Two units offer the opportunity for student participation in Faculty-based academic journals.<sup>4</sup> LLB candidates can also elect to undertake a supervised Independent Research Project, while three postgraduate coursework programs require students to complete major independent research projects.<sup>5</sup> It is not uncommon for student research to result in publication.

The Faculty's Centres also have an important outreach role in this process, in both the communication of current research to students and in their oversight of degree programs related to the Centre's area of specialty (i.e. Institute of Criminology/Masters of Criminology).

(b) How links between developments in the theory and practice of university teaching and learning and the curriculum are managed:

We encourage the integration of research-based insights into teaching and learning primarily through:

- ◆ Faculty teaching workshops led by teachers with expertise in the theory and practice of legal education;
- ◆ Provision of funding to permit attendance in the week-long Australasian Law Teachers' Association teaching workshop;
- ◆ Encouraging staff at all levels, but in particular more junior levels, to participate in Institute of Teaching and Learning workshops;
- ◆ Discussion of the pedagogy of legal education at the annual Faculty Retreat;
- ◆ The ongoing work of the Director of Teaching Development who is responsible for mentoring junior academic staff and promoting teaching development through teaching seminars, attendance at the ALTA Law Teacher's Workshop, the teaching induction program for new members of the teaching staff, and responsibility for ensuring the Faculty 'Teaching Handbook' reflects new developments in legal education.

### **Evaluation**

Large components of the Faculty's undergraduate elective units of study and the postgraduate program are shaped by disciplinary research and effective teaching and learning research. A high proportion of the teachers in these units have previously or are currently conducting research in the fields of study, or are senior judges/legal practitioners.

<sup>4</sup> Sydney Law Review, Asia Pacific Journal of Environmental Law.

<sup>5</sup> Masters of International Law, Masters of Criminology, Master of Jurisprudence.

**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?**

(A) Methods for ensuring that assessments enable students to achieve intended learning outcomes:

- ◆ All new units of study must demonstrate the linkage between the proposed assessment and intended learning outcomes;
- ◆ The Foundation program for the LLB has since 2001 sought to ensure a spread and variety of assessment tasks which are linked to skills development;
- ◆ Skills based units of study are expected to include assessment tasks which focus on the skills which have been taught (i.e. *Advocacy, Dispute Resolution*)

(b) Methods for ensuring that assessment practices and standards are fair and equitable:

Since 2000 the Faculty has been promoting the greater use of criterion-based assessment.<sup>6</sup> Specific information on what is required in assessment tasks is conveyed through setting out the criteria for assessment in advance of the assessment task. A seminar led by the Institute for Teaching and Learning was held in 2000, and a research assistant was appointed in 2001 to develop examples of best practice in criterion-based assessment.

An Internal Audit and Review of the Faculty's examination and assessment systems was conducted in 2000 and reported on in 2001. That process made a number of useful recommendations which the Faculty is presently responding to. Faculty policies for ensuring consistency and fairness in marking include:

- ◆ Faculty policy on examinations;
- ◆ Coordination of assignment submission dates and workload through the Student Liaison Administration Group;
- ◆ Unit co-ordinators are required to ensure a reasonable degree of parity between separately assessed groups;
- ◆ Double-marking of all fails;
- ◆ Cross-marking of a sample of each grade within units of study where there are multiple streams;
- ◆ Minimum grade levels of High Distinctions (5%)/Distinctions (15%) are subject to explanation by the examiner if minima are not met;
- ◆ Review of all end of semester grades by Committee of Examiners;
- ◆ Faculty policy on uniform penalties for late submission of assignments in UG subjects where no extension has been granted or where no cogent explanation has been forthcoming;
- ◆ Availability of the Associate Deans and Pro-Dean for student consultation.

(c) Methods for ensuring that assessments provide students with prompt and effective feedback on their progress:

- ◆ Faculty encouragement through the Teaching and Curriculum Committee for early, relevant feedback. Variety of assessment tasks especially in Legal Institutions (the first unit in the Foundation program of the LLB) ensure intensive training in basic legal method and writing skills;
- ◆ Integrated and cross-unit assessment in the Foundation program;
- ◆ End of semester assessments finalised within University guidelines.

(d) How information from assessments is used to improve teaching and learning:

This is the responsibility of each member of the teaching staff. It is not something which is readily amenable to managerial control, other than the role of the Unit of Study coordinator in the Foundation and Core programs. However, all results are carefully reviewed by the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and the Committee of Examiners. If there were a significant decline in examination results in a unit of study, an investigation would occur to determine if there was a problem with the teaching of the unit of study or some failure of the examination process. More generally, assessment experience and practices are the subject of discussion at both Faculty Retreats and dedicated Faculty Teaching Forums.

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<sup>6</sup> See Faculty of Law Strategic Teaching and Learning Plan..

(e) Methods for ensuring that students understand the assessment processes:

Information is available in unit of study outlines. Criterion-based assessment also should ensure that the standards and requirements are made known in advance of the assessment task. Consultation on assessment issues often takes place at the commencement of each semester, while clarification of assessment issues is also provided in class.

#### ***Evaluation***

*The Faculty has begun to emphasise criterion based assessment and while this has occurred throughout parts of the LLB program, more effort needs to be made to complete that process and extend it to the postgraduate program. Effective Faculty policies are in place ensuring fair and equitable assessment processes.*

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

(a) Methods for monitoring the breadth, depth, pace, variety and challenge in teaching:

This is achieved through:

- ◆ Review of unit of study evaluations by teachers and Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs);
- ◆ Staff-student consultations each semester;
- ◆ Meetings between Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) and representatives of the Sydney University Law Society (SULS);
- ◆ Regular inclusion of this item on the agenda for the annual Faculty Retreat and/or Faculty ‘in-house’ teaching forums (most recent of which was held on 13 September);
- ◆ General oversight of the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programs by relevant Faculty committees.

(b) How decisions about the selection of particular teaching strategies in relation to student learning outcomes are monitored:

The 1997 decision of the Faculty to abolish large-group teaching and move towards a ‘small-group’ teaching model for the LLB created a new teaching strategy which has been subject to carefully scrutiny and monitoring by the Dean and Pro-Deans. In particular, the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) has responsibility for monitoring and staffing the LLB ‘small-group’ teaching model, including the creation of additional groups of units of study to meet rising EFTSU.

In the LLB Foundation program the Foundation co-ordinator and Unit of Study co-ordinators have general oversight of teaching strategies adopted by individual lecturers. The Postgraduate Research Committee also has general oversight of how research training is being conducted for PhD, SJD and LLM research candidates. In other areas of the Faculty’s programs, this is a matter left to the discretion of the individual lecturers. Nonetheless, the Faculty provides guidance in two ways:

- ◆ through encouragement of participatory teaching and active student learning;
- ◆ through strenuous efforts made to keep classes to a reasonable size.

(c) Methods used to enhance the quality of teaching, including staff development, mentoring and peer review:

- ◆ Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (approximately \$15,000 per year);<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ Teaching portfolio is essential requirement in all appointment processes;
- ◆ Implementation of the Foundation LLB Program
- ◆ Role of Director of Teaching Development to assist staff with their teaching

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<sup>7</sup> This fund has been used to support major projects, including the complete rewriting of the syllabus for the core unit of study Litigation, and the employment of a researcher to develop criteria based assessment pro formas.

- ◆ Organisation of teaching workshops in Faculty (e.g. new teachers' workshop, February 2002 – day-long program for new casual teachers and others)
- ◆ Payment for staff to attend ALTA Teaching Workshop
- ◆ Encourage staff to participate in ITL programs
- ◆ Production of Teaching Handbook
- ◆ “Troubleshooting” by the two Pro-Deans where complaints are made.

(d) How the faculty supports, recognises and rewards good teaching:

- ◆ Faculty has an annual teaching award (value \$3,000);
- ◆ Encouragement of outstanding Faculty teacher's to apply for University-wide teaching awards;
- ◆ Important role of teaching in the promotion process.

#### **Evaluation**

The Faculty has over the past decade placed considerable emphasis on quality teaching and has put in place distinctive mechanisms along with University-wide mechanisms for the monitoring of teaching, including the provision of peer support and the appointment of new Faculty officers. Good teaching is both recognised and rewarded.

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

(a) Arrangements within the Faculty for identifying students at risk of non-completion or failure and the processes used to intervene in these cases:

Associate Deans and academic advisers (including the Faculty Disability Officer) are actively engaged in identifying students at risk and collaborate with individual teachers in this process. There are close relations between the Associate Deans and the administrative staff in Student Services who advise students. Students experiencing difficulties (e.g. serious illness, disabilities) become known through these advice channels and are supported accordingly. There is also a general commitment in the LLB program to continuous assessment, including class participation. The Faculty also has a minimum attendance requirement. As a result, it is normally possible to identify students experiencing difficulties early in each semester. Legal Institutions (the foundation unit in the LLB) plays a crucial role in this process. The course is taught in seminar groups which are usually less than 25 students. There are several writing assignments to allow for early training in legal writing and identification of problems. All students must take a diagnostic assessment of writing ability. Students with difficulties are referred to the Learning Centre and other resources. Similar strategies are now being adopted in foundation units in some of the specialist Master's programs. The postgraduate research program uses the core units Legal Research I, II and III to maintain close contact with research candidates and assists in monitoring student progression.

(b) The use of learning resources and academic support to assist student learning outcomes:

- ◆ Legal Research and Legal Writing training is an integrated component of the LLB program;
- ◆ The intensive unit Legal Reasoning and the Common Law System is compulsory for all commencing postgraduate students without a law background;
- ◆ There are extensive IT resources to assist student learning, ranging from unit of study outlines and related lecture materials being available on the Faculty Homepage, to the use of WebCT, and Bulletin Boards, in addition a trial of on-line learning is being conducted in the postgraduate Tax program;
- ◆ The Faculty was the first Law School in Australia to have a computer lab which was integrated into the LLB teaching program. These facilities have been recently expanded, with the development of a new teaching lab in the law library;
- ◆ The Faculty has a dedicated Postgraduate Research Room which provides computer and locker facilities for research candidates;

- ◆ Law Library, which is housed at the St James Campus, and its staff remain integral to legal research training in the Faculty both within the unit of study Legal Research, and in an ongoing 'refresher' program.

### ***Evaluation***

The Faculty has appropriate procedures in place to monitor student progression through academic advisors, Associate Deans, and administrative personnel in the student division. This process is complicated by some level of 'jurisdictional overlap' between Law and partner faculties in the first three years of the Combined Law program. There has been extensive support given to the development and use of IT in teaching.

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

(a) Arrangements for ensuring high standards of supervision:

- ◆ A Handbook on research supervision has been produced and is distributed to all staff;
- ◆ Annual confidential interviews are conducted with all research candidates and provide an opportunity for discussion of the standard of supervision being provided;
- ◆ Supervisors are required to document all formal meetings with research candidates so as to monitor their progress;
- ◆ The Postgraduate Research Committee oversees the quality of research supervision.

(b) Mechanisms in place for ensuring effective completion and retention:

- ◆ There exist high standards on intake;
- ◆ Research training is an integral aspect of postgraduate research programs and ongoing mentoring is provided in Legal Research I, II and III. These units of study are normally required for SJD and PhD students. In Legal Research III for example, students present the key chapter of their thesis to one another, to their supervisors, and to the lecturers participating in the course for both formal and informal feedback and review;
- ◆ Students are required to complete annual reports on their progress;
- ◆ Students participate in annual reviews of their candidature with two members of the academic staff (the supervisor is not present) at which recommendations can be made to enhance progress towards timely completion;
- ◆ Students are encouraged to present work-in-progress and/or conference papers at faculty seminars and both University and external conferences, including the student-organised national law postgraduate research conference annually hosted by the University of Sydney.

(c) **How the research climate for students and provision of resources to support research are monitored:**

The main means is through the annual reports and reviews. These give each research student the opportunity to comment on such matters and to specify what further support they would like to receive. A dedicated postgraduate research room exists within the Faculty. Students are also regularly advised by email of Faculty events such as forthcoming seminars and discussion forums.

(d) **The use of student and/or graduate views to improve the experiences of research higher degree students:**

This is mainly facilitated through the annual reports and reviews (see above) and also through postgraduate representatives on committees.

Postgraduates are also encouraged to become involved in the life and work of the Faculty by participating in research seminars and gaining some teaching experience (for those wishing to do so). Currently the Faculty has five Associate Lecturers/Teaching Fellows on .5 fractional appointments who are engaged in postgraduate research programs. There has been in recent years an increasing integration into the community of scholars in the Faculty of postgraduate research candidates and this has ensured that the voices of this student cohort are heard.

**Evaluation**

There have been significant achievements in the past decade in raising and monitoring the quality of research supervision, plus in the provision of facilities and opportunities for research candidates. This strategy has produced an increase in timely completions and greater integration of research candidates into the life of the Faculty.

**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? How does it recognise good teaching?**

(a) Mechanisms in place for collecting and acting on the results of student and graduate feedback on teaching, units of study and courses:

- ◆ All units of study are required to be evaluated. These evaluations go to the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) who examines them and will address any specific issues arising from them. All evaluations are then distributed to the lecturers concerned and they can consider what changes to make in the light of those evaluations.
- ◆ Other forms of consultation include:
  - Meetings with the leadership of the Sydney University Law Society, in particular the Vice-President (Education) and the President;
  - Student representation on a range of Faculty committees dealing with teaching and learning issues (i.e. Teaching and Curriculum Committee);
  - Formal staff student consultations once per semester;
  - Review of SCEQ results inter alia by Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs), Director of Teaching Development, and Chair of Teaching and Curriculum Committee with recommendation for action where necessary and referral to appropriate committees or individuals.

(b) Arrangements for applying University performance indicator data to improving educational quality:  
This process is primarily monitored by the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs), Director of Teaching Development, and the Chair of the Teaching and Curriculum Committee. Where necessary, this data is distributed and action discussed at Faculty Retreats and/or Faculty meetings.

(c) How consistency between University requirements and Faculty Quality Assurance and improvement mechanisms is achieved:

Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) has management responsibility for ensuring that University requirements are met. In 2001 the Teaching and Curriculum Committee in conjunction with the Pro-Dean carefully examined new Academic Board policies on teaching and assessment in coursework programs, and on management of teaching. The latter policy was the subject of extensive Faculty-wide debate in 2001/02

(d) Methods used to monitor progress towards goals specified in the faculty's teaching and learning plan:  
The Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) has the principal responsibility for monitoring progression in implementation, adjusting the plan as necessary, and consulting with Faculty management and representative committees when necessary.

**Evaluation**

Since 1999 the office of Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) has had primary responsibility for monitoring and assessing student and graduate feedback, and Faculty progress in meeting goals identified in the Teaching and Learning Plan.

## Summary of Self Evaluation


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The Faculty of Law has given increasing and radical attention to teaching and learning during the past decade, resulting in a significant restructuring of undergraduate teaching, adjustments to the LLB curriculum, expansion and development of the postgraduate coursework program, and the creation of new offices (both academic and administrative) dedicated to the oversight and management of teaching. Within the framework of the Teaching and Learning Plan the Faculty is addressing some systemic problems while also responding to new challenges and demands. While the undergraduate program has been at the centre of these adjustments, similar initiatives have taken place in some parts of the postgraduate coursework program, while the postgraduate research program has benefited from independent but parallel adjustments and modifications. The result has seen a rise in student satisfaction with the Faculty's program and the development of a true 'teaching culture' within the institution and reversal of the 'chalk and talk' reputation. Challenges remain, some of which will be addressed by relocation to a new facility on campus later this decade, while others demand further institutional adjustment. The Faculty is not complacent about these teaching and learning challenges but is confident that processes and procedures are now in place to address them in the immediate and long term future.

### APPENDICES

	ITEM	PAGES
Appendix 1:	Faculty of Law Strategic Teaching and Learning Plan 2002	See Appendix Four
Appendix 2:	Faculty of Law Academic Administrative Structure.	Available from Faculty or
Appendix 3:	Faculty of Law Administrative Structure	Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)

The report of the Teaching Audit and the Teaching Handbook can be made available to the review team on request.





FACULTY OF LAW

2002

Teaching and Learning  
Strategic and Operational Plan

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies 2001 – 2004</b>	<b>Strategies and Targets 2001 - 2002</b>
<p><b>Objective 1</b> Continue to attract entrants of exceptional quality to our Combined Law programs while retaining a strong equity component in those admissions.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 1/1:</b> Promote the advantages of a legal education at Sydney University through visits to schools, revised information leaflets, web-based information and other means of disseminating information.</p>	<p>Continue to focus on selective state high schools in co-operation with the work of the Prospective Students Unit. Visit careers fairs and tertiary information days in Sydney metro area. 2002 target: 7. Redesign web-site to provide better information for teachers by end 2002. Target: Increase fee-paying Combined Law and Graduate Law enrolments in 2002.</p>
<p><i>Cf University Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Objective 1.</i></p>	<p><b>Strategy 1/2:</b> Retain approximately 30/210 of the Combined Law places for Broadway applicants.</p>	<p>Target: maintain number of Broadway admissions and other special admissions students.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Continue to develop the Law School's international profile as a centre for excellence in legal education.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 2/1:</b> Expand the international opportunities for Sydney students through the maintenance and expansion of high-quality international student exchange programs, and through the development of international placements in the external placements program.</p>	<p>Explore suitable exchange partners in the UK. Explore exchange partnership with Paris I (Sorbonne) Promote opportunities for Sydney postgraduate students to study in our LLM program at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany. Further promote and develop Hanoi winter school (commenced 2001).</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies 2001 – 2004</b>	<b>Strategies and Targets 2001 - 2002</b>
<p><i>Cf University Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Objectives 1 and 2</i></p>	<p><b>Strategy 2/2:</b> Expand the numbers of international students through the promotion of the study abroad program, the development of high-quality international student exchange programs and by offering postgraduate programs overseas.</p>	<p>Promote Study Abroad, especially in Scandinavia. Target: 10 Scandinavian students for 2002 academic year. The Dean to visit Norway in October 2001. Commence teaching Legal Reasoning and the Common Law System in Shanghai in 2002. Explore LLM subjects in Hamburg as well as at Jena, Germany. Maintain and develop student exchange agreements as above.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Foster the development of interactive, student-centred teaching methods, and flexible learning, in undergraduate and postgraduate offerings.</p> <p>Cf University Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Objectives 2, 4 and 5.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 3/1:</b> Improve training for new teaching staff in interactive and student-centred teaching methods.</p> <p><b>Strategy 3/2:</b> Make peer review of teaching part of the hiring process.</p> <p><b>Strategy 3/3:</b> Evaluate teaching in other ways besides student surveys, for example through peer review, lesson plan review, self-evaluation against set goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Teaching handbook to be revised by end of 2001. Promote the three day ITL workshop for new staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to explore ways of achieving this in cost effect manner given world-wide recruitment.</li> <li>• Implement Academic Board policy on evaluation of units of study every three years in addition to the student surveys conducted every semester.</li> </ul>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies 2001 – 2004</b>	<b>Strategies and Targets 2001 - 2002</b>
	<p><b>Strategy 3/4:</b> Provide support to assist with the implementation of criterion-based assessment in all units of study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate examples of best practice in criterion-based assessment following completion of research project (2001).</li> <li>• Targets:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) improve overall performance in Unit of Study evaluations on quality of feedback on assessment (2<sup>nd</sup> sem. 1999, 2.7)</li> <li>(b) improve SCEQ rating on appropriate assessment scale (1999+23.6).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategy 3/5:</b> Ensure that all teaching staff are provided with a copy of the Faculty Teaching Handbook</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial distribution Dec 1999. All new full time and casual staff issued with handbook on appointment.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategy 3/6:</b> Continue to expand the use of information technology in undergraduate units as a supplement to, rather than a replacement of face to face teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide seminar for Faculty in use of WebCT before March 2002.</li> <li>• Continue to promote Web-pages for Units of Study.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategy 3/7:</b> Develop the use of information technology to facilitate participate in the postgraduate program from students outside Sydney.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Tax On-line Program in 2002.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategy 3/8:</b> Develop the Faculty's expertise in intensive teaching modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing.</li> </ul>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies 2001 – 2004</b>	<b>Strategies and Targets 2001 - 2002</b>
<p><b>Objective 4:</b> Improve student learning in the early part of the undergraduate degree program through the restructure of the first three years of the Combined Law program, and the first year of the Grad Law program, into a Foundation Law program.</p> <p>Cf University Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Objective 3.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 4/1:</b> Appoint a Foundation Coordinator responsible for overall coordination in the first three years of the Combined Law program, and the first year of the Grad Law program, who would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- liaise with the Pro-Dean (Teaching Programs) to implement, to the extent possible the recommendations contained in Chapter 7 of the 1999 Faculty of Law Teaching Audit final Report (Nov 1999);</li> <li>- meet regularly with unit coordinators in all foundation law units;</li> <li>- oversee the formulation, refinement, and implementation of objectives for the Foundation Law program;</li> <li>- conduct a restructuring of units to allow for greater harmonisation of thematic teaching the Foundation program.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy 4/2:</b> Revise the syllabus for the first year subject, Law, Lawyers and Justice to provide better focus on the role of lawyers, legal ethics, access to justice and regulation of the profession.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented in 2001 academic year.</li> <li>• Target: improvement in performance on overall satisfaction scale in the SCEQ for all first year students (1999, +30.4).</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus revised in 2000.</li> <li>• Further improvements in 2001 in light of evaluations in 2000.</li> <li>• Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) improve overall performance in Unit of Study evaluations on educational value of Unit (1999, 2.5) and clarity of objectives (1999, 3.0).</li> <li>(b) improve overall performance in 2000 SCEQ measure for all commencing first years on clear goals and standards scale 1999, -3.2) and overall satisfaction scale (1999, +29.3).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies 2001 – 2004</b>	<b>Strategies and Targets 2001 - 2002</b>
<p><b>Objective 5:</b> Expand on the range of unit offerings in the Postgraduate Coursework program.</p> <p>Cf University Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Objective 3.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 5/1:</b> Expand the selection of high-quality Postgraduate Coursework units, especially in corporate and commercial law.</p> <p><b>Strategy 5/2:</b> Develop an international visitors program of leading academics from Europe and North America who will be invited to deliver intensive courses in commercial law subjects.</p> <p><b>Strategy 5/3:</b> Improve the promotion of Postgraduate Coursework unit offerings as Continuing Legal Education opportunities.</p> <p><b>Strategy 5/4:</b> Expand the number of collaborative postgraduate programs with other universities, such as the existing Consortium of Australian Taxation Schools, of which the Law Faculty is a leading member.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce new units on E-Commerce and Controlling Liability by Contract in 2002.</li> <li>• Implement Masters degree in International Business and the Law with Faculty of Economics, and in Environmental Science and Law with Faculty of Science.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop International Faculty in Corporate and Securities Law (commenced 2001).</li> <li>• Introduce visitors' program in Commercial law in 2002 (2 overseas visitors).</li> <li>• Continuing. New CLE administrator appointed 2001.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore collaborative arrangements with other universities in relation to the teaching of Asian law subjects and proposed Masters of Indigenous Legal Studies by September 2002.</li> </ul>