

**ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW
PHASE TWO**

**SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
21 SEPTEMBER 2004**

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sydney College of the Arts (SCA) is well-integrated into both its College (CHASS) and the University, both strategically and practically. In spite of its remote location, SCA participates and exploits opportunities for growth (in both quality and funding) provided by the University committees and CHASS. To signal this integration, SCA committee structure is based on those of the University and College.

Integration with the University and its faculties has also been achieved by SCA through collaboration in the provision of postgraduate coursework programs:

- *Master of Contemporary Art for Educators* first offered in 2004 in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Social Work
- *Master of Film and Digital Image* will be offered for the first time in 2005 in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and using electives from the Faculty of Architecture

SCA differentiates itself from other art schools in Australian Universities by its method of teaching, learning and research based on discipline-specific studios. Studio-based teaching provides SCA with the highest student endorsement across the University in the SCEQ Good Teaching Scale. SCA is seeking to protect this competitive advantage by liaising with various levels of the University and government to gain access to further studio teaching space on its campus at Rozelle.

However, in spite of this lobbying activity SCA is not focussed on protecting the status quo. The Faculty is focussed on growth, having developed new marketing brochures and set itself targets. Growth is planned in the areas of postgraduate coursework (the two courses mentioned above) and research student numbers. A growth in student numbers will also grow the SCA budget, which was felt to be detrimentally affected by an inappropriate funding categorisation. SCA claims teaching methodology equivalence with laboratory-based scientific disciplines and the funding associated with this categorisation. All levels of SCA staff interviewed were aware of the funding implications of this “inappropriate” banding.

Staff were also aware of the funding implications of the narrow definition of “research” by both the University and DEST. The University has commenced addressing this issue by including “creative works” in its definition of research for academic promotion.

Commendations

- 1 *The Review Team commends SCA for developing collaborative strategies with other faculties and programs. (Section 2.4)*
- 2 *The Review Team commends SCA for the multiple actions taken to help ease the problems of lack of space. (Section 2.7)*
- 3 *The Review Team commends SCA for its Self-Evaluation Report and for its responsiveness to recommendations from the Phase 1 Review. Results can be seen in SCEQ responses to the Generic Skills Scale (Recommendation 1), the branding developed in marketing brochures and the SER itself (Recommendation 6) and the widespread understanding by students of the concept of research-led teaching (Recommendation 12). (Section 3.1.3)*
- 4 *The Review Team commends SCA for its responsiveness to student feedback. (Section 3.4.3)*
- 5 *The Review Team commends SCA for its responsiveness to Recommendations of the Phase 1 Review, especially for the development of relevant Graduate Attributes and their planned integration with Grade Descriptors and assessment in 2005 to achieve moderation and consistency across studios. (Section 3.5.4)*
- 6 *The Review Team commends SCA for its support of international students, but felt the sustainability of this individual and highly personalised approach should be monitored as international student numbers increase. (Section 7.1.3)*
- 7 *The Review Team commends SCA for its leadership, engagement and developmental role with ARIs (Artists-Run-Initiatives). (Section 10.1.3)*

Recommendations

1. *The Review Team recommends that, given the University's acknowledgement of the equivalence of creative works with research in the criteria for Academic promotion, that the Faculty seek to lobby the College for an equivalent change in the budget formula. (Section 3.2.3)*
2. *The Review Team recommends that SCA liaise with the Koori Centre and other relevant indigenous bodies, to devise mechanisms to encourage the participation of indigenous Australian students. (Section 5.1.4)*
3. *The Review Team recommends that SCA proceed with its planned evaluation of its flexible entry admissions process and that measures for equity categories be established and monitored. (Section 5.2.5)*
4. *The Review Team recommends that SCA increase the number of places for SSP Leave as a means of increasing the research climate of the faculty. (Section 6.2.2)*
5. *The Review Team recommends that SCA provide a more systematic and equitable access to teaching for PhD students. (Section 6.5.2)*
6. *The Review Team recommends that SCA consider greater use of internships and opportunities for practical engagement for students with their industry and professions. (Section 8.2.3)*
7. *The Review Team recommends that the Dean provide a regular "state of the union" address to both staff and students to communicate his vision for SCA. (Section 9.1.3)*
8. *The Review Team recommends that SCA continue to review its Workload Formula. The current average of eighteen teaching contact hours per FTE is high relative to the rest of the University. (Section 9.2.4)*
9. *The Review Team recommends that SCA monitor the effect of the new staff positions on service provision and culture in the admissions and enrolments processes. (Section 9.5.4)*

Note: This report draws on the information provided in the documentation considered by the Review Team as well as discussion with staff and students. In some places, material from the Self-Evaluation Report has been incorporated directly into the text.

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Review Team

Professor John Carter (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of the Academic Board
Professor Tim Hirst	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Professor Judyth Sachs	Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
Dr Michael Halliwell	Sydney Conservatorium of Music
<u>Review Team Secretary</u>	
Ms Barb McLean	Executive Officer (Quality Assurance)
<u>Observer</u>	
Ms Rachel Symons	Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)

1.2 Senior Faculty representatives

1.2.1 The Review Team met the following Senior Faculty representatives during the first interview:

Professor Ron Newman	Dean and Director
Assoc Prof Tom Arthur	Pro Dean
Assoc Prof Brad Buckley	QA Coordinator & Chair, SCA Board
Dr Eril Bailey	Assoc Dean, Research
Mr Steven Lojewski	Assoc Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Dr Ann Elias	Sub Dean, Postgraduate Research
Mr Michael Goldberg	Sub Dean, Postgraduate Coursework
Ms Charlene Griffiths	Faculty Manager

1.3 Staff

1.3.1 The Review Team met with fifteen members of Academic and General Staff.

1.4 Students

1.4.1 The Review Team met three groups of students: thirteen undergraduate students; six postgraduate research students; and twelve postgraduate coursework students. One of these students had attended the Phase One Review. There were no Open Interviews requested.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Phase Two review complements the Phase One review, following up its recommendations and the continued development of Phase One commendations. It also considers the Faculty's activities and quality assurance arrangements in relation to the seven goals of the University's Strategic Plan.

2.2 The Academic Board Phase 2 Review occurred at a time when the Sydney College of the Arts (SCA) student profile was changing; with undergraduate numbers decreasing and postgraduate coursework and research numbers increasing:

Student Numbers	2002	2003	2004
Undergraduate	538	491	470
Postgraduate Coursework	45	52	61
Postgraduate Research	64	70	78
TOTAL Postgraduate	109	122	139
TOTAL Students	647	613	609

2.3 SCA anticipates that this trend will continue in 2005 when the new Master of Film and Digital Image (MFDI) commences. This follows the commencement in 2004 of the Master of Contemporary Art for Educators (MCAE). Both of these programs are collaborations with other faculties from different Colleges across the University.

2.4 *The Review Team commends SCA for developing collaborative strategies with other faculties and programs. (Commendation 1)*

2.5 Overall, SCA is seeing an increase in students that are more resource-intensive – postgraduate students and international students. While International students were 14% of the student body in 2001; they are 16% of the student body in 2004. The SCA has almost equal numbers of Undergraduate International students (50) and Postgraduate International students (48.5).

2.6 The staff workload problems identified in the Academic Board Phase 1 Review have been exacerbated by the demand on staff to supervise and mentor the increasing research and international cohorts. Studio space is also an issue. SCA competitive advantage of having campus-based studio teaching is under threat and multiple actions have been put in place to increase access to studio space, viz:

- Partition the stage area of the auditorium for use as studios
- Secure funding, develop design and costings and Submit a Development Application to Leichhardt Council to refurbish Building 11
- Petition the State Government to agree a new lease to access all “locked” and vacant buildings on site

2.7 *The Review Team commends SCA for the multiple actions taken to help ease the problems of lack of space. (Commendation 2)*

2.8 Representatives of all student cohorts were unanimous that SCA Campus was magnificent and in spite of less than ideal studio spaces, separation from Camperdown and its services was a small price to pay for such a setting.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1 The Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

- 3.1.1 The Review Team found that SCA's Self-Evaluation Report was timely, attractive, readable and well-consulted. The SER complies with the visual identity developed for use on all SCA communications materials; including new marketing brochures focussed on the international market.
- 3.1.2 The SER was three months in development, and was coordinated by the QA Coordinator and the Faculty Manager. Individual staff members were responsible for each goal area; with drafts emailed to staff for their input. The final version was signed off at an all-staff meeting.
- 3.1.3 *The Review Team commends SCA for its Self-Evaluation Report and for its responsiveness to recommendations from the Phase 1 Review. Results can be seen in SCEQ responses to the Generic Skills Scale (Recommendation 1), the branding developed in marketing brochures and the SER itself (Recommendation 6) and the widespread understanding by students of the concept of research-led teaching (Recommendation 12). (Commendation 3)*

3.2 Benchmarking

- 3.2.1 Benchmarking data with the Go6 do not appear favourable, at least on paper. The only area SCA appears to be excelling in is RHD Completions and Completions Weighted. While SCA is successfully achieving Australia Council Grants and academic staff are creating, selling and exhibiting work; DEST has yet to define "creative works" as research.
- 3.2.2 SCA income is suffering both from the time delay in paying for student numbers and the definitional problem mentioned above. Staff argued strongly that definitionally they had more in common with laboratory-based Science subjects than the Arts and Humanities band where they are currently categorised. This is recognised at Melbourne where the SCA equivalent is funded at \$8,000 per undergraduate EFTSU (SCA is funded \$5334 per EFTSU).
- 3.2.3 *The Review Team recommends that, given the University's acknowledgement of the equivalence of creative works with research in the criteria for Academic promotion, that the Faculty seek to lobby the College for an equivalent change in the budget formula. (Recommendation 1)*
- 3.2.4 SCA sees its natural benchmarking partners as ANU and the University of Melbourne – other members of the Go8 with a pure studio-based research program. They do not categorise themselves amongst the (applied) creative industries, as taught at QUT. Benchmarking is undertaken informally with the University of Auckland through the reciprocal use of staff as postgraduate examiners and course reviewers, and with other institutions internationally by exchange programs. Internationally SCA looks to institutions in the US and UK to benchmark, as European studio-based Art Schools do not have a course and grade system.

3.3 Evaluation of Studio Units

- 3.3.1 The Review Team was keen to find out how SCA evaluates studio units as other faculties have struggled with this issue. For SCA, studios are core business and hence for meaningful student feedback studios have to be evaluated. SCA uses the base (ITL) SCEQ questionnaire with the addition of specific questions to evaluate Studio Units. These questions relate to the central goals of the Foundation Program and the BVA and are also usually allied to Graduate Attributes and the criteria for assessment. The same questions are used every semester and hence feedback is developmental.
- 3.3.2 While Studio cohorts are small and there are possibilities for statistical aberrations, systemic issues are revealed. Within this context, SCA responds to systemic issues. All student feedback data comes back to the Teaching and Learning Committee as a checking mechanism.

3.4 Responsiveness to Feedback

- 3.4.1 The Faculty was questioned about the plateauing of student satisfaction with the Foundation Program. Staff were aware of this and had analysed the causes (which were related to one Unit of Study) and had implemented remedies. Undergraduate students verified that the program was excellent and that when lecturers from one block ran over time and assessment tasks were unclear the Foundation Coordinator responded to student feedback.
- 3.4.2 Staff had also responded to student feedback about formative assessment being received too late in semester, by rearranging semester dates and alerting the students to the changes made.
- 3.4.3 *The Review Team commends SCA for its responsiveness to student feedback. (Commendation 4)*

3.5 Graduate Attributes, Grade Descriptors and Assessment

- 3.5.1 Recommendation 1 of the Phase 1 Review recommended that SCA develop relevant Graduate Attributes and that these be communicated with the students. Through membership of ITL's Graduate Attributes Working Party and refinement by SCA's Teaching and Learning Committee, the University's Generic Graduate Attributes are being adapted to a studio teaching program.
- 3.5.2 Graduate Attributes are being included in Unit of Study outlines and linked to Grade Descriptors and studios. Each studio had a staff meeting to discuss this linkage and because SCA uses team-teaching, all student assessment is the result of agreement between teachers from different studios. This method of assessment achieves moderation of grades and assists in ameliorating any potential for subjectivity.
- 3.5.3 Undergraduate students were aware of the method of assessment of studio units and were well satisfied; whereas postgraduate coursework students in Painting were unclear on the method of their assessment. Neither undergraduate students or postgraduate coursework students recognised the phrase "Graduate Attributes" but

undergraduates reported that the Unit of Study outline was fully discussed on the first day of semester and they were aware of what was expected of them.

- 3.5.4 *The Review Team commends SCA for its responsiveness to Recommendations of the Phase 1 Review, especially for the development of relevant Graduate Attributes and their planned integration with Grade Descriptors and assessment in 2005 to achieve moderation and consistency across studios. (Commendation 5)*

4. Goal One: Quality Teaching and Learning

4.1 Good Teaching

- 4.1.1 Along with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, SCA has the highest positive student feedback across the University in the Good Teaching Scale of the SCEQ. When questioned about this, undergraduate students reported that they were treated as artists, i.e. a peer, a less developed peer. Small group teaching in studios and the consequent pastoral care were also contributing factors. Postgraduate coursework students were aware of staff workloads but noted that there were still opportunities to make an appointment for an interview.
- 4.1.2 Both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students noted the positive contribution of technicians in the studios. The Review Team was told by General Staff that three quarters of the General Staff at SCA are also practising artists, which reinforced the sense of community. SCA has the second highest SCEQ across the University in the area of Learning Community.
- 4.1.3 In addition to the strong sense of inclusion in a learning community, the Review Team noted a high awareness amongst students of Research-led Teaching. Students were very aware of the research/creative works of their lecturers, their websites and when they had exhibitions. Postgraduate coursework students positively commented on the mix of theory and practice, noting that SCA “was not like other Art Schools” however they (Multi-Media students in particular) felt their courses should be extended to encompass more practical effort and a work placement.
- 4.1.4 Undergraduate students in the Jewellery Studio reported a lack of coordination in their studio.

4.2 Student numbers, Space and Resources

- 4.2.1 In addition to the increase in postgraduate numbers (as mentioned in Section 2), staff were often unaware of final student numbers due to the lack of a cut-off point for student enrolment. Lack of studio space is compounded by a lack of information about the relative demand for the different studios. This has not only resulted in overcrowding but also the need to swap some studios once semester had commenced. SCA is undertaking a space audit to better utilise the current space it holds and as mentioned in 2.6 has taken multiple steps to increase access to studio space.
- 4.2.2 While the impact of staff workload was not yet felt by students, students (especially postgraduate coursework students) were very aware of overcrowding and lack of access to resources in the studios. Students could not understand why there were empty buildings on campus and SCA was dividing up the stage area of the auditorium.

- 4.2.3 The provision of late night access to studios was applauded by students, especially those approaching the graduation exhibition; as was the recent replacement program for computers. However access to and age of printers and scanners was a problem. Students of Multimedia also commented that there were no PCs (as opposed to the uniform Macintosh platform) on campus to test how their websites and programs displayed.
- 4.2.4 Research students felt constrained by being limited to work only in one studio – they felt that this inhibited interdisciplinarity and limited their access to equipment, software and technicians available in other studios. They had to wait for a time when there was no studio-specific demand and then prove that they could use the equipment before they were given access. The main issue was that more often, than not Studio Technicians were too stretched to assist with demand from outside their Studio.

4.3 Inter-Faculty Programs

- 4.3.1 Recommendation 4 of the Phase 1 Review suggested that SCA develop links with the Camperdown campus. Since then SCA has commenced the Master of Contemporary Art for Educators (MCAE) in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Social Work and in 2005 will commence teaching the Master of Film and Digital Image (MFDI) in collaboration with the Faculties of Arts and Architecture. In Semester 1 2004 there were 2 inter-faculty students serviced by SCA; by Semester 2 there were 10.
- 4.3.2 Students in the new MCAE course reported that the workload in the Education and Social Work units of study was unrealistic and did not leave part-time students with adequate time to do their practical work. Communication was also a problem with students who crossed campuses – they missed notification of when lectures were cancelled and missed the deadline for the submission of forms for the final exhibition.
- 4.3.3 Staff felt little ownership with inter-faculty programs. There was a view expressed that it was an imposition on staff whose work had intensified significantly over the past few years. In contrast, the Faculty Executive saw these courses as better performers in terms of space usage, as they were not studio degrees.
- 4.3.4 SCA students were ambivalent about further integration with Camperdown. As mentioned in 2.8, students appreciated the natural beauty of their campus. However, they felt that more art work could be displayed to ameliorate the tendency of campus building stock to look like hospital buildings. Students noted that whilst they paid fees they had to pay extra to access Camperdown sporting facilities and they were not given access to any of the Camperdown galleries to exhibit their work. Students would appreciate being alerted to seminars especially in the Fine Arts and Multi Media areas. They were very aware of the recent Verge Festival and felt that they could have been more included.

4.4 Information Literacy and the Library

- 4.4.1 Students reported that the physical resources of the library were a “bit sad”, but the facility of having resources delivered from the whole of the University Library network was appreciated. However lack of access to the resources of Schaeffer Library was an issue with students.

- 4.4.2 All student groups commended the customer focus of the Library staff, mentioning the willingness of library staff to follow up group classes in use of online journals with one-on-one tuition.

5. GOAL TWO: DIVERSITY, ACCESS AND EQUITY

5.1 Diverse Learning Community

- 5.1.1 All student groups interviewed agreed that at SCA they were part of a diverse learning community (in the areas of age, gender, background and nationality). In comparison, the lack of a significant indigenous presence was of concern.
- 5.1.2 SCA currently has one indigenous student and one physically disabled student. Some upgrades have been undertaken to buildings to improve access. The Faculty Disability Officer liaises with the University Disabilities Officer to organise note takers and special equipment and program adjustments.
- 5.1.3 SCA is currently recruiting for a Sesqui Lectureship in Contemporary Australian Indigenous Visual Art Practice, to build on the momentum commenced by an Australia Council grant to fund an indigenous artist in residence.
- 5.1.4 *The Review Team recommends that SCA liaise with the Koori Centre and other relevant indigenous bodies, to devise mechanisms to encourage the participation of indigenous Australian students. (Recommendation 2)*

5.2 Flexible Entry

- 5.2.2 The Undergraduate admissions process used by SCA (UAI score combined with submission of a portfolio, a questionnaire and supplemented by an interview) is designed to facilitate the development of a diverse learning community. Technology is used to include the participation of students at a distance, such as international and rural students, in the admissions process. Mature age entry is facilitated by the “or equivalent experience” requirement.
- 5.2.3 While the process is very labour intensive, staff were of the view that this was the most appropriate way to assess student capability in the visual arts areas. The Review Team was assured that the Flexible Entry process resulted in SCA being one of the 3 best contemporary art schools in Australia. There were no figures supplied to validate the success of the Flexible Entry Scheme in achieving its goals.
- 5.2.4 The Faculty does plan to evaluate its admission process in the near future.
- 5.2.5 *The Review Team recommends that SCA proceed with its planned evaluation of its flexible entry admissions process and that measures for equity categories be established and monitored. (Recommendation 3)*

6. GOAL THREE: EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

6.1 Definition of “Research”

- 6.1.1 Through curated exhibitions and performances in galleries and museums, managing galleries and artists-run-initiatives (ARIs), membership on national and international advisory boards, awards and invitations from overseas organisations, SCA is recognised as being at the forefront of research and research-led teaching in contemporary art, craft and design. Unfortunately SCA research output does not align with DEST-defined categories of research output. As a consequence SCA suffers financially.
- 6.1.2 SCA has been active in lobbying the University to broaden its definition of research to include “creative works”. In 2003, the University’s Academic Board approved adjustment to the PhD to give creative work thesis equivalence. The Dean has also been active in lobbying the DVC (Research and Innovation) to influence both the University and DEST with relation to the definition of research outputs and hence the amount of research funding accessible to SCA.

6.2 Research Productivity

- 6.2.1 While allowing for the definitional differences above, it still appears that SCA research productivity has faltered. Staff relate this to high staff workload and to inaccurate and missing data. To increase research climate, SCA, with the assistance of CHASS, has established a Research Activity Group. In addition a Research Incentive Scheme and Dedicated Reader Program provide resources to assist staff develop new competitive grant applications. Four members of staff per annum are selected by the Research Committee for SSP Leave.
- 6.2.2 *The Review Team recommends that SCA increase the number of places for SSP Leave as a means of increasing the research climate of the faculty. (Recommendation 4)*
- 6.2.3 As research (publications quantum) in the form of creative works is not yet funded by the University, SCA staff see no financial reward (i.e. an increase in funding to reduce teaching load) for reporting their activity with the Research Office. The Review Team were told that solo exhibitions were not even given the value of a chapter of a book. Instead of staff being rewarded for an increase in their research output (defined as creative works), they receive negative incentives in the form of increased workload.
- 6.2.4 Of the eight regular attendees of the Research Activity Group five managed to submit grant applications; it was claimed the others were swamped by teaching workload requirements.

6.3 Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students

- 6.3.1 In response to Recommendation 2 of the Phase 1 Review, SCA now complies with the Higher Degree Training Policy, whereby every candidate has both a Supervisor and an Associate Supervisor. Staff reported that they found the role of Associate Supervisor an extra requirement – with some staff reporting the support of up to 7 and

8 students in this role. It appeared to the Review Team that University Policy was being misapplied – there is no policy requirement that Associate Supervisors must come from the candidate's home faculty.

- 6.3.2 It is difficult for staff to address the workload issue and continue to maintain their creative productivity; indeed some staff reported to the Review Team that they are transferring to part-time status. This was negatively impacting on their availability to supervise their research students. The Review Team noted a decrease in the SREQ results for Quality of Supervision.
- 6.3.3 SCA has been working with the Dean of Graduate Studies to improve the quality of supervision. Supervisors are alerted to ITL training and have regular workshops on best practice. Assoc Prof Brad Buckley was awarded a CHASS Excellence in Supervision Award in 2004.

6.4 Support of Research Students

- 6.4.1 SREQ results show an increase in research student endorsement for the Quality of Infrastructure following financial inputs from CHASS and the Research Postgraduate Infrastructure Scheme in 2003 and 2004. Funds have enabled a refit of the Conference Room and the provision of a Common Room for P/G students. Access to computers is not an issue but printing is a problem for students. As mentioned in Section 2.6, SCA is attempting to access further buildings on the campus, in order to improve access to medium-specific studio space.
- 6.4.2 However, research students whose work crossed discipline boundaries could not gain access to equipment or programs housed in other studios, or other faculties. They suggested that SCA implement a system for hire or bookings for access to equipment and programs and the advertising of workshops at which undergraduate students are taught to use such equipment and programs.
- 6.4.3 The issue of separation from the Camperdown campus was also an issue for SCA students with relation to access to the resources sited on that campus – access to exhibition space (the Sir Herman Black Gallery in Wentworth was particularly mentioned), access to sporting facilities, access to Schaeffer Library, and access to SUPRA (see Section 4.3.4).
- 6.4.5 In order to increase the research climate for staff and research students alike SCA has introduced a Faculty Seminar Series. SCA has also arranged for the Learning Centre to offer on-campus support to RHD students to develop generic research skills.

6.5 RHD students' access to Teaching

- 6.5.1 Recommendation 14 of the Phase 1 Review dealt with the employment of postgraduate students as tutors as a developmental and mentoring strategy. This continues to be an issue for SCA. The impact of the lack of funding for teaching relief for staff supervision also impacts on RHD students by reducing their access to teaching opportunities. Currently access to teaching opportunities depends on the discipline/studio to which RHD students are attached. Only 6 of the 78 RHD population in 2004 (61 MVA and 17 PhD students) had access to teaching opportunities.

- 6.5.2 *The Review Team recommends that SCA provide a more systematic and equitable access to teaching for PhD students. (Recommendation 5)*
- 6.5.3 SCA report that postgraduate students will be employed as tutors in the new electives to be offered in 2005.

7. GOAL FOUR: INTERNATIONALISATION

7.1 International Student Support

- 7.1.1 As mentioned in Section 2.5, SCA has a significant international student presence. In response to Recommendation 5 of the Phase 1 Review SCA appointed a member of academic staff with the responsibility for developing a support structure for international students. A weekly coffee group and mentoring session has been instituted to provide an informal conduit between formal University services and SCA international students.
- 7.1.2 While attendance is low, regular attendees appreciated the personal contact and reported that such support would not be available in their home institutions. Postgraduate Research students tended to use their supervisor in this support role.
- 7.1.3 *The Review Team commends SCA for its support of international students, but felt the sustainability of this individual and highly personalised approach should be monitored as international student numbers increase. (Commendation 6)*

7.2 Off-shore Programs

- 7.2.1 SCA has formal university approved exchange agreements with 13 institutions in nine countries and students receive SCA, International Office and CHASS scholarships to participate in exchange opportunities. Students were under the impression that these scholarships were means tested and hence only young people would be successful. Students also felt that they had to organise the exchange themselves; reporting that the International Office did not know about SCA scholarships – there appeared to them to be no formal process around student exchange.
- 7.2.2 In addition to international exchanges SCA is planning the development of off-shore offerings in the P/G coursework area. The Dean is planning for a pattern where students study in the partner institution for semester 1 and travel to SCA for their second semester.
- 7.2.3 The plan is to join with three partner institutions (one in China, one in South America, and another in Europe) and develop an on-going relationship. The aim of this strategy is to concentrate marketing around quality students and quality institutions rather than a scattergun approach to marketing at international fairs. This approach is also planned to develop a steady income stream.

7.3 “Sightseeing” Exhibition Exchange

- 7.3.1 SCA cemented its relationship with the Central Academy of Fine Arts (COFA), Beijing by an exchange exhibition of staff works entitled “Sightseeing”. While works from COFA were exhibition in the SCA Gallery under the title “Sightseeing from Beijing”, works from SCA staff were exhibited in COFA under the title “Sightseeing from Sydney”.

8. GOAL FIVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY AND THE PROFESSIONS

8.1 *The Arts Sector and the Commercial Sector*

- 8.1.1 SCA teaching, learning and research is changing from a single focus on the “traditional” gallery-based environment to a dual focus which includes the commercial sector. Masters by coursework programs cover the two cultures and students are trained to be artists and employees. Classes for P/G coursework programs focussing on the commercial sector are held in the afternoon in response to market requirements.
- 8.1.2 Staff are actively involved in peak industry bodies from both sectors, such as the National Association for Visual Artists (NAVA) and the Australian Interactive Media Industry Association (AIMIA).
- 8.1.3 Membership of the SCA Board does not yet reflect this dual focus but the increasing maturity of engagement with the commercial sector can be seen in the area of research. In 2003 SCA was awarded its first ARC Grant – to lecturer Ms Josephine Stars to carry out research into digital games and gender and investigate and develop ideas for digital games specifically oriented to young female players. In the long term the project aims to produce, test and refine game prototypes that will create opportunities in the future development of industries based on new media.

8.2 *Applied case studies and Industry-based projects*

- 8.2.1 At the level of students and courses, engagement with industry and the professions is achieved by both formal and informal means. Informally, students are encouraged to exhibit and volunteer in Artists run Initiatives (ARIs) – see Section 10.1.2. Formally, some Undergraduate courses provide the opportunity for professional practice (e.g. the mid-semester break industry placement for Glass Studio) and field trips. The trip to the Victoria College of the Arts studios and Melbourne galleries was particularly praised by students because of the personal introduction to the art community provided.
- 8.2.2 While Masters by Coursework students in the new media (Master of Multimedia Design) like the structural division of the course into theory and practice; they felt that the course should be extended to encompass more practical work, such as a work

placement or an internship. This external experience was felt by students to make them more employable.

- 8.2.3 *The Review Team recommends that SCA consider greater use of internships and opportunities for practical engagement for students with their industry and professions. (Recommendation 6)*

8.3 Visiting Scholars and Artists

8.3.1 Another means of engaging with their industry and profession is by the visiting artists program launched in 2003. The value of the visit of Assoc Prof Lev Manovich was increased by organising a public symposium Software Aesthetics: Art and Culture in the Digital Age.

8.3.2 Masters by Coursework students endorsed the lunchtime lecture series by visiting artists and scholars as well as the presentations by SCA's own PhD students. Whereas Undergraduate students called for greater exposure to professional artists, noting that the studio visits occur now only in 3rd year.

8.4 Alumni Relations

8.4.1 A significant professional group for SCA is its own alumni – both in terms of marketing the success of graduands as well as potential sources of benefaction. SCA has appointed a marketing and communication manager to develop all external communications. A budget has also been allocated for updating the AIMS database in collaboration with the Development Office, with a view to developing a more formal approach to tracking alumni.

9. GOAL 6: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

9.1 Internal Communication Processes

9.1.1 Recommendations 3 and 7 of the Phase 1 Review recommended an improvement in quality of SCA internal communication processes especially as they relate to Faculty policies and procedures. Section 3.1 has already commended the Faculty on its internal communication processes surrounding the development of the SER. The Review Team was similarly impressed with the broad knowledge, across academic and general staff interviewed, of SCA budgetary issues – especially related to income and SCA non-alignment with University and DEST funding categories.

9.1.2 While staff are aware of the drivers to attract more fee-paying students, students are mostly unaware of the academic environment of SCA and the Dean's vision for SCA. Students felt that the Dean should be more accessible, visiting studios and explaining his vision for SCA.

9.1.3 *The Review Team recommends that the Dean provide a regular "state of the union" address to both staff and students to communicate his vision for SCA. (Recommendation 7)*

9.2 Staff Workload

- 9.2.1 Recommendation 9 of the Phase 1 Review noted the heavy staff workload. Workload continues to be an issue for staff due to the resource-intensive nature of the student population. The budget for sessional staff has been cut and hence casuals have not been paid to attend meetings. This increases the administrative load of the full-time staff and impinges on the ability of staff to change from their CAE roots to a requirement to participate in research/creative practice in addition to teaching.
- 9.2.2 The College (CHASS) plans to establish a Workloads Committee with the remit of establishing a formula on which to dispense teaching relief. Currently there is relief from teaching for Assoc Dean, Sub Dean and Studio Supervisor, while the planned increase in student numbers is for non-studio intensive students.
- 9.2.3 SCA has developed a draft workload model which includes the teaching relief mentioned in 9.2.2 above. The aim in the mid-term is to reduce the load to 15 contact hours in the studios.
- 9.2.4 *The Review Team recommends that SCA continue to review its Workload Formula. The current average of eighteen teaching contact hours per FTE is high relative to the rest of the University. (Recommendation 8)*

9.3 Faculty Structure

- 9.3.1 SCA has two over-arching committees with academic oversight: the Board of the Sydney College of the Arts and the Dean's Advisory Committee; and an Occupational Health and Safety Committee with campus oversight. Below these there are seven committees; six focussing on academic matters and one focussing on campus matters.
- 9.3.2 The Dean acknowledges that the current Faculty structure is designed to be appropriate for a student cohort of 800-900. It facilitates integration with University and College requirements in addition to meeting the faculty and campus management requirements. Staff were questioned as to whether the complex management structure negatively impacted on workload. There was a feeling amongst staff interviewed that this was the case. The Review Team was advised that as committees align with either University and/or College committees there is little opportunity for simplification – except in the studio structure. And the collapsing of studios is not to be countenanced by staff.

9.4 Marketing

- 9.4.1 Recommendation 6 of the Phase 1 Review recommended that SCA consider promotion and branding. SCA has developed new promotional materials for each course offered and has launched a new website. Brochures have been provided to International Agents who have given positive verbal feedback but it is too early to evaluate the impact on admissions, however the website is getting a high hit rate.
- 9.4.2 Students thought the marketing was excellent, however the reality did not always live up to their expectations.

9.5 Student Administration

- 9.5.1 SCEQ data for Faculty Student Administration show that for Undergraduate students the results are below both College and University averages; while for Postgraduate Coursework students Student Administration results are above College and University averages. The Undergraduate students interviewed reported that enrolment was “a nightmare” taking up to 4 hours. Students seeking advanced standing were moved from queue to queue; others were told that they had to go to main campus. To the students there appeared to be a lack of communication between the Faculty Office, the Student Centre and the International Office.
- 9.5.2 Postgraduate Coursework students could not understand, when the number of students per studio was known, why studios could not be allocated early (and not have studios swapped once semester had commenced). Students were not aware that student numbers kept fluctuating up until the day semester commenced.
- 9.5.3 Since the redundancies resulting from a major restructure of its administration, SCA has been able to claw back one and a half positions, with the aim of increasing the opening hours of Student Administration. This combined with anticipated University-wide improvements in Student Administration systems (the inclusion of the International Office into FlexSIS) should make a positive impact.
- 9.5.4 *The Review Team recommends that SCA monitor the effect of the new staff positions on service provision and culture in the admissions and enrolments processes. (Recommendation 9)*

10. GOAL SEVEN: SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

10.1 Artists-run-Initiatives (ARIs)

- 10.1.1 The cultural community of artists is essentially built upon the work of artists through their exhibitions, performances, screenings and other forms of creative work. ARIs are an important and integral part of the art world as they are generally the first place that a recent graduate exhibits. The strength and financial viability of several ARIs can be attributed to SCA and its engagement with government and its influence over the development of government visual arts and crafts policies and strategies.
- 10.1.2 As mentioned in Section 6.1, students are encouraged to volunteer for ARIs such as Phatspace, Gallery Wren and First Draft and peak bodies such as the Asian Australian Artists Association and Artspace Visual Art Centre.
- 10.1.3 *The Review Team commends SCA for its leadership, engagement and developmental role with ARIs. (Commendation 7)*

Professor John Carter
Chair, Review Team

November 24, 2004

ATTACHMENT A: FOLLOW UP TO PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1	The Review Team recommends that the College develops relevant generic attributes and communicates these to the students.
Action taken by the Faculty	The SCA Teaching and Learning Committee has developed a set of Generic Attributes for all Courses. A final version of these has been widely circulated to staff, feedback received and has been submitted to the SCA Board and then to the University Teaching and Learning Committee.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Now that the SCA Generic Attributes are finalised they have been disseminated widely to students and staff using various mechanisms. They have also been included in all course material published following approval, incorporated in all subjects and course outlines and published on the SCA website.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	SCA will include a series of questions in the next student survey at the end 2004 to ascertain student understanding of the Generic attributes.
Comments	

Recommendation 2	The Review Team recommends that the College complies with the Academic Board code of practice for Postgraduate supervision and provide each postgraduate research student with both a supervisor and an associate supervisor. Associate supervisors may be obtained from another studio within the College or from other faculties within the University, for example the Faculty of Arts.
Action taken by the Faculty	In 2003, the Sub Dean for Postgraduate Research circulated to all academic staff the Academic Board code of practice for Postgraduate supervision. The Sub-Dean chaired a meeting of all potential supervisors and associate supervisors and from 2004; all research candidates will have both a supervisor and associate supervisor appointed.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	As above.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	A regular review of this process by the Sub Dean for Postgraduate Research.

Recommendation 3	The Review Team recommends that the College look at the quality of its internal communication processes, particularly in relation to administration.
Action taken by the Faculty	In 2002 under the direction of the Acting Director, Professor Margaret Harris, a review was conducted of Student Administration. This review resulted in a complete restructuring of the area and the appointment of several new staff members. The Acting Faculty Manager conducted a further review of all communications within SCA and the aim of this review was to improve communication processes across the college. Regular staff meetings have been implemented, as has staff training.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The recommendations of the Acting Faculty Manager were discussed within the faculty management and at the Dean's Advisory Committee for consideration and action. The Faculty Manager return to her position in April 2004 and two new administrative positions have been identified to resolve these issues, these have been advertised and will be filled during semester 2.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The Faculty Manager will review the new processes in late 2004 and late 2005. The Chair of the SCA Board will review student feedback in mid and late 2005 to assess student responses to the changes.

Recommendation 4	The Review Team recommends that the College develop links with the Camperdown campus, for example the Faculty of Arts. This would provide more opportunities for students and avail them of the University of Sydney experience.
Action taken by the Faculty	Collaborations have commenced with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education and Social Work. In 2004, the new postgraduate degree the Master of Contemporary Art for Educators (MCAE) was commenced in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Social Work and in 2005 the Master of Film and Digital Image (MFDI) will be commenced in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts. The inclusion of formal electives in the SCA program and a more flexible credit point system will over time encourage SCA students to enrol in subjects in other departments on the Camperdown campus and students from other campuses to study at SCA. The college notes that it believes and always informs its students that SCA <u>is</u> a University of Sydney experience.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The college is continuing to develop joint programs and to promote the use of its electives to encourage cross campus study.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Student surveys.

Recommendation 5	The Review Team recommends that because of the isolation of international students from the resources of the main campus, the College should consider ways of putting resources, structure and processes in place on site to help these students.
Action taken by the Faculty	An academic responsible for international student liaison has been appointed to provide the development and sustaining of support initiatives for international students on the Rozelle campus . Weekly meetings/drop-in sessions have been organised and these have begun to attract a significant number of students. Additionally the International Office has begun a stronger presence on the campus attending gatherings and informing international students of services available.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	SCA plans to further enhance this role in 2005 to include a comprehensive college introduction and to survey students as to the scope of services required.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Student surveys and focus groups.

Recommendation 6	The Review Team recommends that the College consider promotion of the College to the outside community, emphasising the brand name of the University and the intellectual rigour of the programs offered.
Action taken by the Faculty	SCA's new promotional material has been designed and launched. This includes a range of brochures describing each degree that the college offers, and a completely new website. These initiatives will strengthen the college's image and the University of Sydney brand. Further design and promotional work has been budgeted for 2004, which includes a faculty prospectus, which will be widely utilised in community relations. Sydney College of the Arts has significant contacts in the visual arts community and believes that its and the university's profile is very strong. SCA has gained significant strategic funding to develop its Alumni address list/data base as part of the University "AIMS" project and this project will be complete by the end of 2004.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	SCA has appointed a full time marketing and communication manager to develop all of the external communications of the college. A budget has also been allocated for the further development of the college's alumni database in conjunction with Alumni services in the Development Office in 2005.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Surveying key stakeholders in the visual arts community in 2005.

Recommendation 7	The Review Team recommends that the development of the College Teaching and Learning Plan should be more collegial and collaborative. It also recommends that improved communication processes should be established to disseminate the plan across the Faculty, and ensure a degree of compliance.
Action taken by the Faculty	A new Teaching and Learning Plan to improve pedagogic strategies has been developed by the college, and has been approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the SCA College Board. This document has also been forwarded to the Academic Board. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies has conducted a series of seminars with academic staff during 2004 to ensure understanding agreement and compliance.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	This document has been placed on the SCA website.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Evaluation of teaching using student surveys and staff feedback from workshops.

Recommendation 8	The Review Team recommends that the College considers the introduction of a formalised process for the recognition of good teaching. It further recommends that staff should be encouraged to apply for University teaching excellence awards.
Action taken by the Faculty	The faculty believes it is too small to establish its own awards for Teaching and Learning and would rather submit staff for external awards, which carry more authority. The faculty proposed successfully one of its staff, Ms Anne Ferran for the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) Excellence in teaching awards (2003). ACUADS is the peak body for schools of art and design in Australia. In 2004, Associate Professor Brad Buckley was proposed for and awarded the CHASS Excellence in Research Higher Supervision award.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	To encourage the submission by academic staff of nominations to University and community teaching awards.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	By the number of staff applying for, and winning awards.

Recommendation 9	The Review Team recommends that the College consider ways of improving the current heavy staff workload
Action taken by the Faculty	Action has been taken to reduce staff workloads, by the development of a draft workload model that allows for regular relief from teaching for administrative tasks. SSP places have also been increased to 4 from 2 in 2003. The Faculty points out that this is a difficult issue in times of reduced budget flexibility, and is focusing on increasing revenue to provide for lower teaching loads. The aim in the mid-term is to reduce the load to 15 contact hours of teaching per week in the studios, with further reductions in concert with the budget. Realistic and comparative funding (to our GO8 competitors) would provide funds for a significant reduction in workloads.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The faculty should consider a small reduction in the teaching hours of the BVA to further reduce faculty wide teaching loads. Further development of the workload formula.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Survey and review of workloads.

Recommendation 10	The Review Team recommends that the College investigate the continued viability of offering a double minor and look at replacing it with the proposed elective stream.
Action taken by the Faculty	The new undergraduate elective stream was introduced in 2004.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	N/A
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Student surveys.

Recommendation 11	The Review Team recommends that the College consider the need for a more consistent message to be conveyed to casual staff regarding standards, policies and practices particularly as they relate to assessment. A more intensive orientation program for casual staff with better coordination between full-time staff, casual staff and students may help to improve this. It further recommends that there is a need for moderation and consistency across studios, and that the College should consider the development of grade descriptors.
Action taken by the Faculty	Implementation, at the beginning of 2004, of faculty workshops conducted by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and the Chair of the SCA Board for casual staff across all studio areas, addressing assessment and a range of University policies. The preparation and issue of a faculty induction brochure.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	While grade descriptors are already in place, the Teaching and Learning Committee has reviewed and will expand them in 2004 and communicate their importance to all academic staff.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies will conduct a series of focus groups with casual staff.

Recommendation 12	The Review Team recommends that the College consider the use of Institute for Teaching and Learning workshops to help staff better understand the teaching research nexus
Action taken by the Faculty	A series of faculty workshops have been conducted previously on the issue and during 2003, the Associate Dean for Research conducted a workshop so that staff better understand the relationship between the process that is already widely practiced in the faculty - research led teaching. Three SCA staff are undertaking ITL programs. The faculty has also taken part in the University wide Research Led Teaching forums to help our colleagues from other faculties understand the nature of research led teaching in the visual arts. Several SCA academic staff are considered national leaders in the field of contemporary visual arts and are at the forefront of this nexus.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A series of workshops conducted by the Associate Dean for Research.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	N/A

Recommendation 13	The Review Team recommends that the College consider the isolation of postgraduate students and investigate ways of improving the situation. In particular, students need to be made aware of SUPRA.
Action taken by the Faculty	In 2003, a new college research students' common room was established with a high level of facilities including several new eMacs, a fax, a photocopier and coffee facilities and was opened to postgraduate access, and this facility is now widely used by postgraduate candidates. SUPRA has been constantly involved with postgraduate students at SCA providing significant support to the end of year exhibition as well as to various visual arts initiatives.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Invite each SUPRA President to the induction session at the beginning of each semester. In the medium term, the college is considering creating a graduate school that would house the majority of candidates in one building. This is a common practice in the best art schools in the USA.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Student surveys.

Recommendation 14	The Review Team recommends that the College give consideration to the employment of postgraduate students in tutoring as a developmental and mentoring strategy.
Action taken by the Faculty	This strategy has been in place for more than a decade however due to budget constants there has been a reduction in the number of candidates employed. However, the college is presently considering strategies for the strengthening and expansion of the employment of postgraduate candidates. At present five postgraduate students are employed casual /part-time by the faculty.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Postgraduate candidates will be employed in a tutoring role in the new electives, which will be offered in 2005.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Statistical information will demonstrate the level of success using this strategy.