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Strategic Planning for 2016-20
Discussion Paper no. 6
September 2015

Improving our organisational design





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Improving our organisational design

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Foreword

As we near the end of our 2016-20 strategic planning process, we turn our attention to ways of simplifying our working environment to enable us better to deliver on our goal of pre-eminence in education and research.

To be a high-performing institution, our academic organisational design needs to support our students and staff to achieve their ambitions. However, in the strategic planning survey conducted earlier this year, only a quarter of respondents said our current structure serves us well, and it is common for people outside the University to remark that our complex design makes us difficult to navigate, not least to know where and how decisions are made.

In this last discussion paper in our six-part series, we examine whether the University's current organisational design is conducive to our pursuit of excellence. It makes the case for a simpler structure to enable better research and teaching synergies, and also to ease the burden of administration in the institution.

I want to thank those staff who have already participated in the consultation that has led to the model proposed in this paper, by attending one of the 20 faculty town hall meetings and related forums that were held and submitting their suggestions on how we could adapt our approach.

Truly great institutions are those that can adapt over time in ways that remain true to their DNA. I look forward to your feedback on the ways in which we can improve our organisational structure to achieve our strategic goals for these next five years.

Dr Michael Spence
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Contents

Foreword	1	4.5 Rethinking our health faculties structure	24
		4.5.1 Nursing and Midwifery	24
1 Introduction	3	4.5.2 Dentistry	24
		4.5.3 Pharmacy	24
2 Our current organisational design	4	4.5.4 The health and medicine options	25
2.1 The sector and how we compare	4	4.6 Summary	29
2.2 Previous attempts at reform	5	5 Making sense of the sub-faculty maze	30
3 The evidence for change	7	5.1 What does this sub-faculty maze look like?	31
3.1 Academic issues	9	5.2 Scope and delegations	37
3.2 Student experience	10	5.2.1 Deputy deans	37
3.3 Administrative and governance concerns	10	5.2.2 Associate deans	37
3.4 The role of faculties, schools and disciplines	11	5.2.3 Faculty managers	40
4 Refining our faculty structure	13	6 Conclusion	41
4.1 Principles for refining our faculty structure	13	6.1 Complete list of proposals for discussion	42
4.2 Models for consideration	14		
4.2.1 The academy model	14		
4.2.2 The US college model	15		
4.2.3 The faculty model	15		
4.3 Improving our existing faculty structure	15		
4.3.1 Preliminaries	15		
4.3.2 Initial assessment	16		
4.3.3 Consultation to date	18		
4.4 Initial decisions	19		
4.4.1 Business	19		
4.4.2 Engineering and IT	19		
4.4.3 Science, Agriculture and Environment, and Veterinary Science	20		
4.4.4 Sydney College of the Arts (SCA)	20		
4.4.5 Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM)	20		
4.4.6 Law	21		
4.4.7 Architecture, Design and Planning (Architecture)	21		
4.4.8 Education and Social Work (E&SW)	22		
4.4.9 Summary of initial decisions	23		

1 Introduction

The Strategic Plan 2016-20 discussion papers on research, education and culture have outlined an ambitious agenda for strategic reform and performance improvement for the University of Sydney. Each has argued that the University, while excellent in many respects, can and must do better if it is to regain its place nationally and improve its place internationally. The critical question this paper addresses is whether the current organisational design of the University is as conducive as it could be to supporting this aspiration.

The challenge of improving our performance requires a range of strategies – in the allocation of research support, in improving research training, in devising a new curriculum for the 21st century, innovative pedagogy, improved teaching performance, a greater focus on student learning and the student experience more generally, and in fostering a more respectful, collaborative and innovative culture. The role of organisational reform is to help liberate the creative energies of staff and students by increasing the opportunities and resources for pursuing excellence and by reducing impediments such as administrative burdens and barriers.

Our benchmarking data with other universities on administrative costs and efficiency indicate that our cost base is higher than many of our competitors. We are spending too much on administration and not enough on our core business of research and education. A major aim of our next strategy, therefore, is to identify ways to channel more of our available resources into education and research, both through process and administrative efficiency and the refinement of our academic structure, which is the subject of this paper.

Our academic structures have been in place for at least 25 years and undoubtedly have delivered significant teaching and research outcomes. But are they equipping us for success in the 21st century? As the landscape of higher education and research continues to evolve, we must ask whether our academic structures should evolve too. This paper focuses on our ‘vertical’ academic structures, the faculties: their number and composition, and their internal workings. Equally important of course are the ‘horizontal’ structures, such as centres, institutes, Strategic Priority Areas for Collaboration (SPARCS) and other multidisciplinary networks of research, as well as collaborations between faculties in the delivery of degrees and programs – particularly so in an era increasingly characterised by a global focus and multidisciplinary forms of collaboration and cooperation in both education and research. But ways of better organising these horizontal structures are the subject of the research and

education discussion papers. So here the focus is on the vertical faculty and sub-faculty structures, which are an integral means of organising academic communities. The challenge is to refine these structures to empower our staff and students to operate more effectively in a collaborative and multidisciplinary world.

Another element of organisational design is the central services that support our research and education objectives. These services are provided by professional support units such as ICT, finance, human resources and infrastructure, as well as by the portfolios (for example research and education support). The effective provision of these services has been the subject of sustained scrutiny and reform in the last three years; SEG has already approved key improvements that will proceed over the next three to five years. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that service reform is proving difficult, complex and protracted due to the complexity of our academic organisational design, particularly the faculty structure. Reforming our academic structures will therefore go hand in hand with improving the efficiency of our services in relieving academics of administrative burdens and releasing more resources for research and education.

A final aspect of organisational design is governance. As we consider how the organisational design of the University might better serve our academic goals, and how the delivery of administrative services will enable this, we need also to consider the effectiveness of our current governance framework once the academic structure has been agreed.

The paper begins with an account of our current organisational design and how it evolved. It then lays out the reasons compelling us to consider organisational reform now. Since consultation about possible reforms has already been undertaken with the University community, the paper then presents the results of this consultation process, as well as issues for further discussion, in two parts:

- *Revising our faculty structure*
- *Making sense of the sub-faculty maze.*

The final section presents important next steps and invites feedback to inform careful consideration of the proposals set out in the paper.

2 Our current organisational design

The University of Sydney is not the outcome of a single planned process of organisational design. Like the other five pre-1945 public universities, but unlike the many that have been established since, it evolved over time in response to a variety of circumstances, both internal and external.

The founding faculty was Arts (1850) and during the 19th century the faculties of Science (part of the original Arts faculty), Medicine, Law and Engineering were added in response to an increasing international focus on professional education. In the early 20th century other faculties emerged, some in response to government requests (Dentistry as a result of the 1901 *Dentistry Act*), while others evolved out of departments within faculties to faculties in their own right, sometimes because of the emerging importance of particular disciplines and other times because of growth of student numbers and/or philanthropic endowment (Economics and Business, Architecture, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, all by 1920).

From the 1980s, however, the number of faculties grew significantly, two because of the desire of disciplinary communities to increase their academic profile and respond more effectively to professional communities (Education 1985, Pharmacy 2000) and four as a consequence of the Dawkins amalgamations of the late 1980s – Sydney College of the Arts (SCA), Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM), Health Sciences and Nursing and Midwifery.

Thus through the emergence of new professions and disciplines, happenstance and changing government policies, the University of Sydney has arrived at a faculty structure with 16 faculties of varying size, focus and complexity.

2.1 The sector and how we compare

In contrast, all the post-1945 universities in Australia were established at a particular point in time, and after much deliberation about the number and range of faculties that would form the basis of each – although each has refined this original structure from time to time. These were planned institutions, although a number of them were also the result of later amalgamations of post-war higher education entities that were not originally universities (commonly but not exclusively as a consequence of the Dawkins reforms).

There is nothing intrinsically superior in planned universities. Indeed five of the Go8 universities in Australia are pre-war institutions, which, like Sydney, evolved over time in response to changing circumstances. The distinctive feature of Sydney, however, is that it alone, of all the pre-war universities, has not undertaken any major reorganisation of its faculty structure – other than adding more faculties. Sydney has, with one exception, never sought to merge them. The one exception is Orange Agricultural College, which became part of the University of New England in 1990 (part of the Dawkins reforms). This merger failed and in 1995 Orange transferred to the University of Sydney, becoming the Faculty of Rural Management.

In 2005, however, when Charles Sturt University (CSU) approached the University an agreement was struck to transfer Orange to CSU. This is the sole instance of Sydney closing or merging a faculty and this fact is in striking contrast to other pre-1945 universities and many of the post 1945 ones. As a consequence Sydney has 16 faculties, more than any other university in the country, and almost twice as many as the Go8 average (see Table 1).

Table 1: Group of Eight university comparisons

University	Faculties	EFTSL	Academic FTE	Revenue
Adelaide	5 faculties	21,386	1539	\$0.85b
UQ	6 faculties	39,967	2883	\$1.7b
ANU	7 colleges	15,594	1599	\$1b
UWA	8 faculties	21,307	1515	\$0.95b
UNSW	9 faculties	39,597	2786	\$1.75b
Monash	10 faculties	52,992	3063	\$1.9b
Melbourne	10 faculties	42,653	3729	\$1.9b
Sydney	16 faculties	43,650	3465	\$1.9b

(Source: Annual reports. Accessed May 2015)

In this context it is perhaps telling that Sydney is currently lagging behind some of the other Go8 universities on various measures of teaching and research performance. Melbourne, in particular, is ahead in all the major international rankings systems (regardless of the diverse, and in some respects problematical, methodologies of these systems). While the special funding arrangements for ANU give it an understandable edge in research terms, over the last decade there is evidence that universities such as Queensland and Monash have, by some indicators, caught up and even passed Sydney and others such as UNSW are fast catching up.

The fact that Sydney is, depending on the measure and the ranking system, generally between third and fifth amongst the leading universities in the country (and in teaching performance is often in the bottom quartile of Go8 universities as outlined in the second education discussion paper), suggests that there are structural and cultural issues inhibiting our performance. Organisational structure is not the sole reason for this situation but it looks to be a critical factor.

Correlation may not be causation but it does suggest we should look at our academic organisation to see if it is fit for purpose. Moreover, this is not a new issue. Concern about our organisational structure has marked thinking about our University for more than 30 years. There have been a number of efforts to improve its effectiveness and all have fallen short of their aims. It is instructive to review these so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

2.2 Previous attempts at reform

The number of faculties at the University of Sydney, primarily the question about whether we have too many, has been one that every Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sydney has grappled with since the mid-1980s. Various efforts have been made to ensure greater coordination of our burgeoning faculty structure and each has been found wanting, abandoned and replaced by alternative measures.

In 1986, after a failed attempt at faculty restructuring that in the end produced a new faculty (Education) rather than restructuring existing ones as planned, the then Vice-Chancellor Professor John Manning Ward (1981-90) posed the question as to whether faculties themselves were the best means of organising academic programs. He left that question unanswered. Instead he became pre-occupied with responding to the Dawkins' amalgamation reforms of 1988, which resulted in Sydney taking on five higher education institutions, four of which became new faculties of the University – Health Sciences, Nursing, SCA and SCM. The fifth, the Sydney Institute of Education (the 'Old Teachers College') was merged with the Faculty of Education. When Ward posed his question in 1986 Sydney only had 11 faculties. After the Dawkins reforms it had 15 and the issue of the number of faculties and their effective coordination became even more critical for his successors.

The first effort to reorganise the faculties was undertaken by Vice-Chancellor Don McNicol (1990-5). In 1992 he commissioned the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to advise on improving administrative structures and processes. Although the BCG representatives were largely concerned with administrative services they did comment on the complex and diverse range of academic structures that added to the administrative complexity that they argued undermined service delivery and efficiency. In 1993 McNicol introduced a system of four academic groups (later divisions) headed first by a nominated Dean and later by a Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC). Each of the faculties was allocated to one of the four groups. The Vice-Chancellor thus devolved oversight and coordination of the faculties in each group to the PVCs, whose brief was to drive academic cooperation and collaboration amongst the faculties in each division.

In 1996, McNicol's successor, Vice-Chancellor Gavin Brown (1996-2008) replaced the four-division model with a three-college structure – College of Humanities and Social Sciences (Law, Economics and Business, Arts, Education,

SCA, SCM), College of Sciences and Technology (Science, Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, Veterinary Science) and the College of Health Sciences (Medicine, Health Sciences, Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy). Each of the colleges was headed by a PVC and Professor Brown often referred to the University at the time as a 'multiversity' – in effect three smaller universities of like-minded disciplines coordinated by senior officers (PVCs), who also sat on the Senior Executive Group (SEG) to ensure coordination and collaboration between the three.

Gavin Brown abandoned the college model in 2006. It had not produced the desired changes and improvements and he concluded that the only way forward was to amalgamate faculties. While this process was in place he appointed four executive deans to have oversight over the operations of a grouping of other deans. Brown was nearing the end of his term of office and the proposed amalgamation process never really got off the ground. Nor did the four executive deans have the mandate to make any substantive changes.

In 2008, Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence inherited this stalled amalgamation process. For Spence the problem was less too many faculties than the fact that they were highly autonomous academic units. Moreover, deans had traditionally been excluded from senior management decision-making, adding to the fractured nature of academic organisation at Sydney. As a consequence he found, in some respects, 16 universities in competition with each other (all the previous efforts at coordination – groups, divisions, colleges and executive deans having failed). Instead of reorganising faculties under new umbrellas, as his predecessors had done, he established divisional governance structures (seven of them) to bring faculties together for purposes of coordinated academic planning and made SEG a group in which deans were integral members responsible not just for the operation of their faculty but also for the University as a whole.

There have been significant gains in terms of creating 'one university' through the divisional and SEG system. Strategic decision-making has been more coordinated and collaborative and a number of faculties have moved onto a more sustainable financial basis. Nonetheless, the divisional governance structure has probably achieved what is possible under this system. There remain important questions of financial sustainability for some faculties, complex administrative support arrangements and ongoing issues of duplication and overlap in education and research that add to our cost base and undermine our capacity to divert more funding to education and research objectives. We have reached a point where it is timely to ask whether the number of faculties we have is holding us back?

In answering this question there is an important lesson from past attempts. Each of them – the four group/division, three college and four executive dean models – represented a layer of management on top of the faculties, leaving the faculties themselves substantially intact. These layers were, in the case of groups and colleges, expensive and yet they largely failed to address questions of sustainability, collaboration, cooperation, duplication and overlap. These were layers without significant impact, although they were effective in solving local problems.

If we are to reorganise and refine our faculty structure then avoiding adding a layer should be an important basis for making a final decision.

The faculty structure may have vexed successive vice-chancellors but equally important is what our staff and students of today think about the utility of our faculty structure.

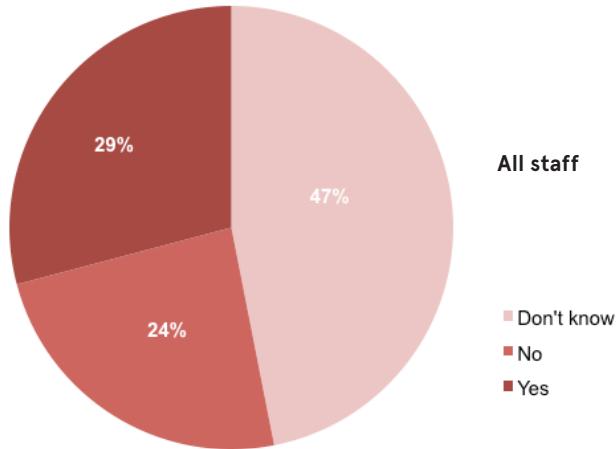
3 The evidence for change

The difficulties inherent in our complex academic structures are well known. Too often we see people of goodwill who are seeking to do the best by the University forced to find ways around arcane and complex structures to arrive at the best outcome. Too often we see areas struggling for load replicating programs offered elsewhere to entice students to stay or come to the faculty rather than other faculties. We need structures that facilitate collaboration and effective decision-making rather than constraining them.

The recent staff and student survey demonstrates that these frustrations are not just anecdotal – the prevailing discourse of a few influential voices – but widespread. Many staff and students find our current faculty structure less than helpful in achieving their aspirations. The survey, which had more than 5000 respondents, including almost a fifth of all continuing, fixed-term and casual staff, highlights some considerable ambivalence about the utility of the current 16-faculty structure.

In this survey, as Figure 1 shows, only 29 percent of staff thought the current faculty structure was fit for purpose. Almost as many believed the current structure did not serve us well, while almost half were unsure. The research agency commissioned to undertake the survey has argued that the high ‘unsure’ result generally means staff were ambivalent about the current structure but did not wish to commit to a negative assessment without knowing what the alternative might be.

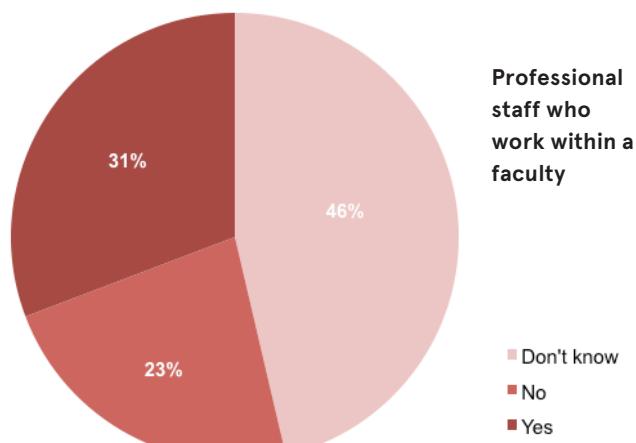
Figure 1: The University is currently structured into 16 faculties and central professional service units. Do you think this structure is serving us well?



(Source: 2016-20 Strategic Plan Survey, Colmar Brunton 2015)

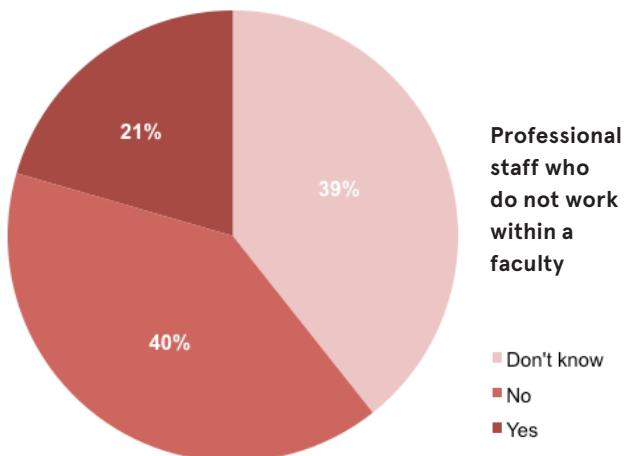
Equally interesting is the breakdown of the survey results by professional staff – those who have to manage or engage with faculties on a regular basis. As Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 demonstrate, those professional staff who work outside faculties and have to negotiate with them for the development of strategy and the delivery of services are much more inclined (40 percent) to argue that the current faculty structure does not work than those who work inside faculties.

Figure 2.1: The University is currently structured into 16 faculties and central professional service units. Do you think this structure is serving us well?



(Source: 2016-20 Strategic Plan Survey, Colmar Brunton 2015)

Figure 2.2: The University is currently structured into 16 faculties and central professional service units. Do you think this structure is serving us well?

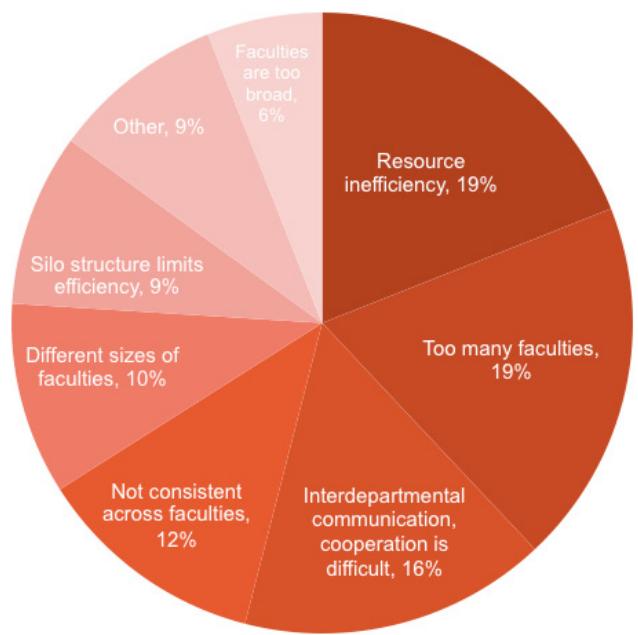


(Source: 2016-20 Strategic Plan Survey, Colmar Brunton 2015)

The frequent complaint of staff in professional service units and portfolios is that the 16-faculty structure is difficult to engage with and serve. The large number of faculties involves them in high transaction costs, challenges in terms of customisation, duplication, overlap, and the proliferation of different platforms and processes that inhibit the rolling out of University-wide services where we can achieve economies of scale and consistency of practice.

When we analyse the survey responses in more detail, and especially the qualitative responses added by 799 staff, these issues become more evident. When staff were asked to identify the thematic issues in the current structure that they found most troubling they highlighted such issues as resource inefficiency, too many faculties, the silo culture, difficulties of collaboration and inconsistencies in size and processes. See Figure 3 above right.

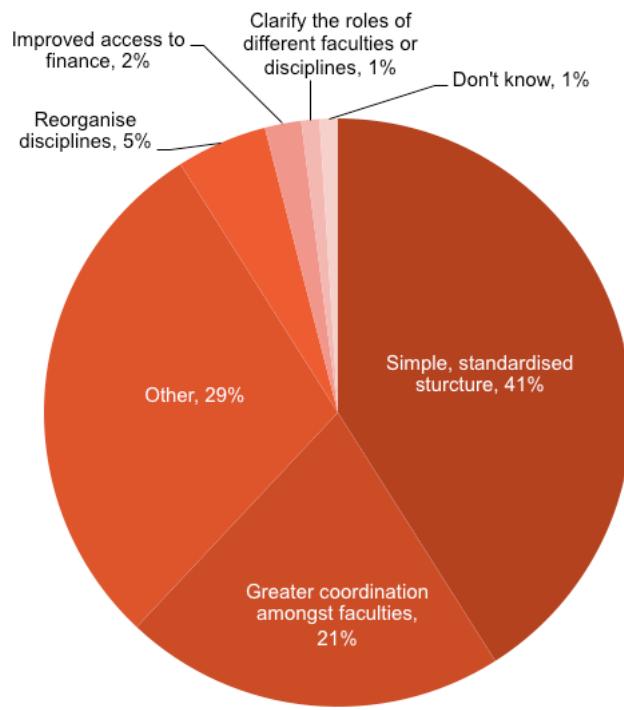
Figure 3: Key structural issues identified by staff



(Source: 2016-20 Strategic Plan Survey, Colmar Brunton 2015)

And when staff came to identify the opportunities they hoped might be improved through a refinement of our structures they identified such issues as improved access to finance, greater clarity of roles, and better coordination between faculties. See Figure 4 above right.

Figure 4: Key opportunities for change identified by staff



(Source: 2016-20 Strategic Plan Survey, Colmar Brunton 2015)

This survey evidence supplements and reinforces much of the qualitative, teaching survey, learning metrics, student-load and finance data about the operation of faculties that has been evident for some years.

These forms of evidence highlight potential areas of concern in our current 16-faculty structure that we should seek to address in any refinement of our organisational design. In summary these issues and concerns cluster into three areas that should guide our consideration of alternatives – academic issues, the student experience and, finally, administrative efficiencies and improvements.

3.1 Academic issues

The important issues here are facilitating collaboration and cooperation, reducing competition between faculties for students and driving research synergies of a type that provide opportunities to build scale and remove obstacles to research collaboration in areas of strategic importance for the University. Creating sustainable and vibrant academic communities will drive improved performance and impact and foster a better research environment for our PhD students and postdoctoral researchers.

The quantitative and qualitative survey evidence highlights a number of relevant concerns here:

- too many academic silos create the potential for duplication and overlap in educational offerings
- faculties often compete for load we already have rather than seek new sources of students
- the range and variety of faculties adds to the curriculum confusion outlined in the first education discussion paper in this strategy process
- the dispersal of research strengths in some disciplines across a range of faculties creates hurdles in marshalling research capacity, except through an elaborate structure of centres and institutes
- the diversity of faculties, with varying financial capacities, creates some academic and administrative hurdles to participation in the large multidisciplinary research initiatives of the University, except where they can access funding through these pan-university structures
- the rationale for our existing faculty structure is opaque. We have large faculties and very small ones and many of our small ones are far smaller than some of our schools. Why are some academic units schools and others faculties?

3.2 Student experience

Here the evidence suggests that students find elements of our structure frustrating and time consuming. So while students express greater appreciation of our faculty structure than staff, some elements of it are less than optimal:

- students find the negotiation of so many distinct faculty rules, regulations and business processes confusing and difficult to navigate
- the large number of faculties constrains student choice because of the proliferation of rules governing the amount of load to be taken outside the faculty of enrolment
- many of our students do not choose their subjects from within faculty boundaries. Some of our faculties get substantial proportions of their load from other faculties and almost every faculty teaches students from other faculties – Arts, Science, Business and Medicine, for example, each teach students from 12 or more faculties. Too many faculty boundaries exacerbate the challenge for students of following their particular academic interests.

3.3 Administrative and governance concerns

The number of faculties adds to both the challenge of coordinating a diversity of voices in meaningful governance forums and the costs of doing so. In addition, analysis of the Cubane benchmarking data on our administrative spend in comparison to other universities in Australia suggests that while some of our services perform well by comparison to other universities, overall our administrative structures cost the University possibly as much as \$30 million to \$50 million more than some of the other Go8 universities in the survey. This underpins our desire to generate at least \$30 million per annum in administrative savings alone by the end of this strategic period, for reinvestment in education and research initiatives. We would expect most of these savings to come from efficiencies in the core central services rather than faculties. The evidence highlights a number of factors in our current academic structure that add to this high cost basis and hence where we might generate some savings:

- the number and variety of our faculties adds significantly to administrative transaction costs
- the relative autonomy of faculties has created multiple administrative systems, processes and platforms that constrain our capacity for coordinated University-wide administrative services
- all of this adds to the significant cost of administration relative to a number of our key competitors in the higher education sector, thereby reducing the funds available for education and research
- faculties are allocated a common administrative support structure (faculty manager, finance team, associate deans etc.) and thus having 16 faculties further adds to our overall administrative costs relative to other institutions
- disparities in the size of faculties creates issues of equity in gaining a voice in University governance. Small faculties have a powerful voice through representation in major governance forums, while many far larger schools have little or no direct say.
- the number of faculties creates additional burdens on staff in terms of academic administration, evident in the number of deputy, pro, associate and sub-deans (around 220) and faculty committees (more than 150, with many more at school, department and discipline level) required to oversee our education and research operations across so many faculties.

These are just some of the important factors that highlight that there are reasons and opportunities to improve our academic organisational structure. Our staff, in particular, as the survey demonstrates, are open to thinking that there might be ways of improving it.

3.4 The role of faculties, schools and disciplines

By tradition, convention and practice, faculties of the University of Sydney play a significant role in the conduct of the University's academic business. This includes the provision of new courses, admission, credit, suspension, assessment and award subject to the oversight and approval of the Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board, and ultimately Senate.

Over time, of course, especially through delegation from the Vice-Chancellor, faculties and deans have taken on responsibility for many other matters, notably financial management, research performance and strategy, recruitment, staff development, fundraising and external engagement.

The critical issue that has made faculties at the University of Sydney particularly resilient as a structure is that they have for more than 25 years been the key point for the allocation of budgets for academic purposes. This has invested the dean and the faculty with considerable formal and strategic power.

Faculties, however, are also communities of academics that share disciplinary interests that are in some respects contingent and contested. Although there are obviously 'family resemblances' and conventions in the allocation of disciplines to faculties, these boundaries are not set in stone: they are open to variation and refashioning depending on circumstances, needs and strategic intent. Other institutions sometimes have similar disciplinary communities to Sydney but place them in schools rather than faculties or allocate them to different faculties to Sydney. For example at Melbourne, Psychology is in Medicine and Criminology in Arts.

The evolution of Sydney's faculty structure into 16 entities makes historical sense and we can understand the processes that have shaped that evolution, but at the same time we do not have to be captive to this history. If there are good reasons to refine it, as all other universities in Australia have done before us, then redesigning our academic organisational structure makes sense. Nonetheless, the emergence of schools and disciplines as integral elements within some of our faculties (we have 28 schools in four large faculties and numerous disciplines, sometimes departments, in a wide range of faculties) raises interesting questions about the distinction between faculty and school or discipline. While faculties organise disciplinary communities for education, research

and external engagement purposes, so do schools. While faculties are the key point for the delivery of budgets, and their management thereafter, it is also the case that some faculties have devolved many of these financial responsibilities to schools. Disciplines by contrast rarely have budgets. While faculties are responsible for such matters as academic planning, curricula, teaching, research strategy, staff performance and development and so on, most schools, and some disciplines, also have these functions.

Indeed on closer examination the differences between school and faculty are perhaps fewer than many think. The three key ones are first that schools receive their budget from the faculty (rather than direct from the University) and thus faculties can develop their own formulas for devolving funding to schools. Second, Senate vests faculties with oversight for the provision of degrees (except the PhD) and, finally, faculties have a formal place on SEG. But even here the distinctions are blurred. The School of Psychology, for example, is largely responsible for oversight of the Bachelor of Psychology. In the end the most meaningful distinctions seem to be that faculties, unlike schools, are the first point for University-wide budget allocation to academic units and the final point for approval of new degrees and curricula before being sent to the Academic Board, and faculties have a formal right to representation on SEG, while schools are only sometimes there as faculty representatives.

One objection might be that faculties create legible academic communities, in the sense that they are easily understood by people both internal and external to the University and make the institution easier to navigate. But even here the distinctions are blurred. Some of our faculties prefer the title 'school' in representing their brand to the wider world (Sydney Law School, Sydney

Medical School). More importantly, within Australia and overseas, some of our faculties are schools in other highly regarded universities.

It is convention and response to local circumstances that have largely created the faculty structure at the University of Sydney. There is nothing immutable in the current structure and in many contexts schools do and can deliver many of the same academic outcomes as faculties. Our contention is that it is the number of faculties at Sydney, not the idea of the faculty itself, which is at issue. If the challenges of contemporary higher education demand greater collaboration and cooperation in education and research then removing faculty boundaries to these activities – having fewer silos – is a means of liberating our staff and students to devote more of their energies to teaching and research and less to academic administration and committee work. There will always be a need for the latter but fewer major academic units should reduce the burdens of this work on more of our staff.

4 Refining our faculty structure

This section describes the steps taken to arrive at the preferred options for refining our faculty structure.

4.1 Principles for refining our faculty structure

Paramount in determining how we might approach the question of structural reform was to be clear about our goal and the principles for making decisions. We did not want to ‘move the deck chairs’ for the sake of doing so rather than with purpose. We therefore set this goal:

Our objective in refining our faculty structure is to unleash the academic energies of our community by increasing opportunities for collaboration and by releasing resources from administration for reinvestment in research and education.

With this as our starting point, we then developed criteria for assessing the utility of any structural refinements. Possible criteria were first canvassed at a workshop of the Senior Executive Group (SEG) and were subsequently refined by deans. They are:

1. the potential to achieve synergies in research and/or education must be a key driver
2. the potential to improve the student experience is highly desirable
3. improvements to the performance and accountability of services should be sought
4. the potential to achieve economies of scale in order to generate savings for reinvestment in research and education is highly desirable
5. but criterion 4 should be weighed up against the need to retain disciplinary and professional identities and distinctiveness.

These criteria, together with our overarching goal, have informed the entire assessment, consultation and decision-making process, described in the following subsections. The first step was to consider whether we were starting out with the optimal academic model.

4.2 Models for consideration

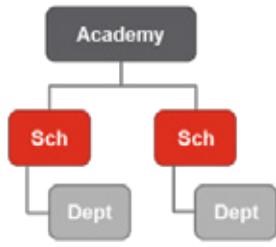
Internationally, there are three generic models for academic organisation (Figure 5), although considerable variation occurs within each. These models represent foundational, or 'vertical', structures. Woven into them and around them may be myriad research entities, such as centres, institutes, nodes and networks, that facilitate collaborations that sit alongside or cut across the foundational academic structures. These 'horizontal' structures are covered in the research discussion papers.

Figure 5: Organisational models

1. Academy model

Brings together faculties in larger academies. 3-6 academies (arts, science, medicine, etc).

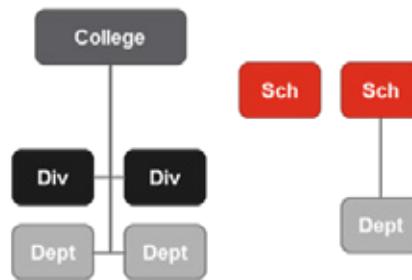
E.g. Edinburgh, Manchester



2. US college model

Undergraduate liberal studies college and specialist schools (law, medicine, music, etc).

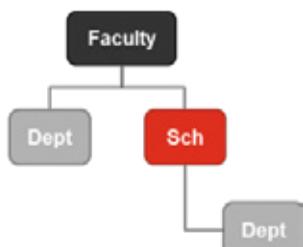
E.g. Northwestern, UC Berkeley



3. Faculty model

Groups academics in traditional fields of education together. 8-16 faculties

E.g. Toronto, UBC, Go8



4.2.1 The academy model

In the United Kingdom some universities are structured around an academy/college/large faculty model. This involves between three and six very large academic units – variously called academies, colleges or, more commonly, faculties. Under each faculty usually sits a plethora of schools or, in some instances, departments. Among the Russell Group universities for example, Manchester has four faculties and 20 schools (and six institutes); Sheffield has five faculties (and one overseas faculty) with 56 schools; Warwick has four faculties and 30 departments; and Edinburgh three colleges and 22 schools.

There are merits to this structure but it does represent a radical departure from current Australian practice and Sydney's tradition of seeing the faculty rather than the school as the organising unit for the whole university. It would mean heads of school would become very significant academic managers across the whole University and not just in some parts of it as at present. If we were to adopt such a model, going on past practice, there might be three or four faculties, and possibly anywhere from 28 to 32 schools (depending on whether we treated, for example, Engineering as a single school or broke it up into its existing schools as would be the case in the UK). This is a structure that works in the UK, in part because strong faculty structures were introduced to coordinate schools and departments that had been the primary organisational structure for many universities. Thus the faculty structure became a means to bring order to the proliferation of schools and departments in the UK system. This is a different history to the evolution of university structures in

Australia. This model works well with the strongly single discipline-based undergraduate curriculum common in the UK, but would likely not work so well in our setting where the undergraduate curriculum tends to be more broadly based. So, although there are elements of the school system worth considering, we do not believe this is a feasible model for Sydney at this point in time.

4.2.2 The US college model

The other common international model is the US College of Arts and Sciences (or Liberal Arts and Sciences) with professional schools. This is widespread in the North American public land grant universities such as Berkeley (Faculty of Letters and Sciences and 13 schools), Indiana (College of Arts and Sciences and 13 Schools), Wisconsin (Letters and Science and 20 schools), and Illinois Urbana-Campaign (Liberal Arts and Sciences and 15 professional colleges and schools), and in some of the major private universities such as Harvard (Faculty of Arts and Sciences and 13 schools), Yale (UG College and 12 professional schools) and Stanford (School of Humanities and Sciences and 6 professional schools).

This was a model we floated in the Green Paper in 2010, believing it was one option for forging greater collaboration across faculties. In general there was little support for it. While it made sense at the time because of the highly autonomous nature of the faculties, since then the operation of SEG has forged a more cohesive University culture, where the faculties are at the centre of decision-making.

While a college of arts and sciences model might align well with our education vision and the proposals about our generalist degrees, the challenges of faculty duplication and overlap, collaboration and multidisciplinary cooperation involve much more than just aligning our generalist undergraduate programs. Thus it is now our view that the immediate needs of the University mean that this would not be a productive model to adopt at this point in the University's history.

4.2.3 The faculty model

In Australian universities the most common academic organisational structure is of course the faculty model. Being common doesn't mean it is the ideal, but it does have the advantages of being legible in the Australian context (it has international legibility as well) and of playing to the strengths of the University of Sydney's existing structure. It is the least radical, most feasible model for us to work with. For these reasons, we determined to stay with the faculty model.

4.3 Improving our existing faculty structure

The next step was to ask how our existing faculty structure measures up in terms of our goal and criteria. But before giving an account of these findings, it is necessary to explain some preliminary matters about nomenclature and about the powers and functions of faculties.

4.3.1 Preliminaries

Nomenclature

Inevitably conversations about faculty restructuring are inflected by language and nomenclature. Titles and names like faculty, school, department and dean come with considerable cultural and institutional baggage and associated fears about loss of status. If we are to have a serious discussion about organisational design, it is important to try to take status and language questions out of the equation. Thus, while the nomenclature of faculty, school and dean is used in this discussion paper, this does not mean it will be the language we finally adopt. Once we have decided a structure, we will consider relevant names for the various levels.

Powers and functions

Some of these nomenclature issues also relate to delegations. A faculty, according to Senate resolutions, exercises its powers and functions subject to the authority of Senate and the Academic Board to determine all matters concerning degrees and diplomas (with the notable exception of the PhD, where these responsibilities are delegated by Senate to the PhD Award Subcommittee). Thus a dean has delegated powers to bring proposals before the faculty board in relation to these matters, covering such issues as admission, credit, suspension, assessment, award, new degrees and diplomas and the closure of existing programs and so on. This is the fundamental principle for the formation of a faculty. The faculty also has, through the Vice-Chancellor's delegations, oversight of academic planning, research strategy, research training, work health and safety, staff development, external engagement, alumni and development and so on. Finally, faculties are the primary budget unit for the support of academic programs.

Given that the plans for refining the academic structure include making some faculties into schools, Section 5 of this paper will consider how some of the 'faculty' functions outlined above might be delegated to sub-faculty entities (that is, schools or disciplines). Briefly, in this situation the fundamental difference would be that the budget allocation to schools or disciplines would be

determined by the faculty, whereas academic matters (degrees, diplomas etc), research strategy and other business proposed and managed by schools or disciplines would be subject to *final approval* by the faculty.

4.3.2 Initial assessment

In assessing the University's current faculty structure, a useful starting point was to consider the size of the faculties, since this is germane to three of the decision criteria: the potential to achieve research and/or education synergies; improvements to the performance and accountability of services; and the potential to achieve economies of scale in order to generate savings for reinvestment in research and education.

There are six faculties which, by virtue of size (student load and academic FTE), it would seem sensible to conserve as faculties in any new structure: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Science, Business, Engineering and IT, Health Sciences and Medicine. The academic FTE in these faculties is considerably larger than in the other 10. Indeed, as Table 2 demonstrates, the smallest of these six faculties (Health Sciences) has almost double the academic FTE of the largest of the next 10 faculties (Education and Social Work) and almost six times more than the smallest (Sydney College of the Arts).

Table 2: Academic staff 2014

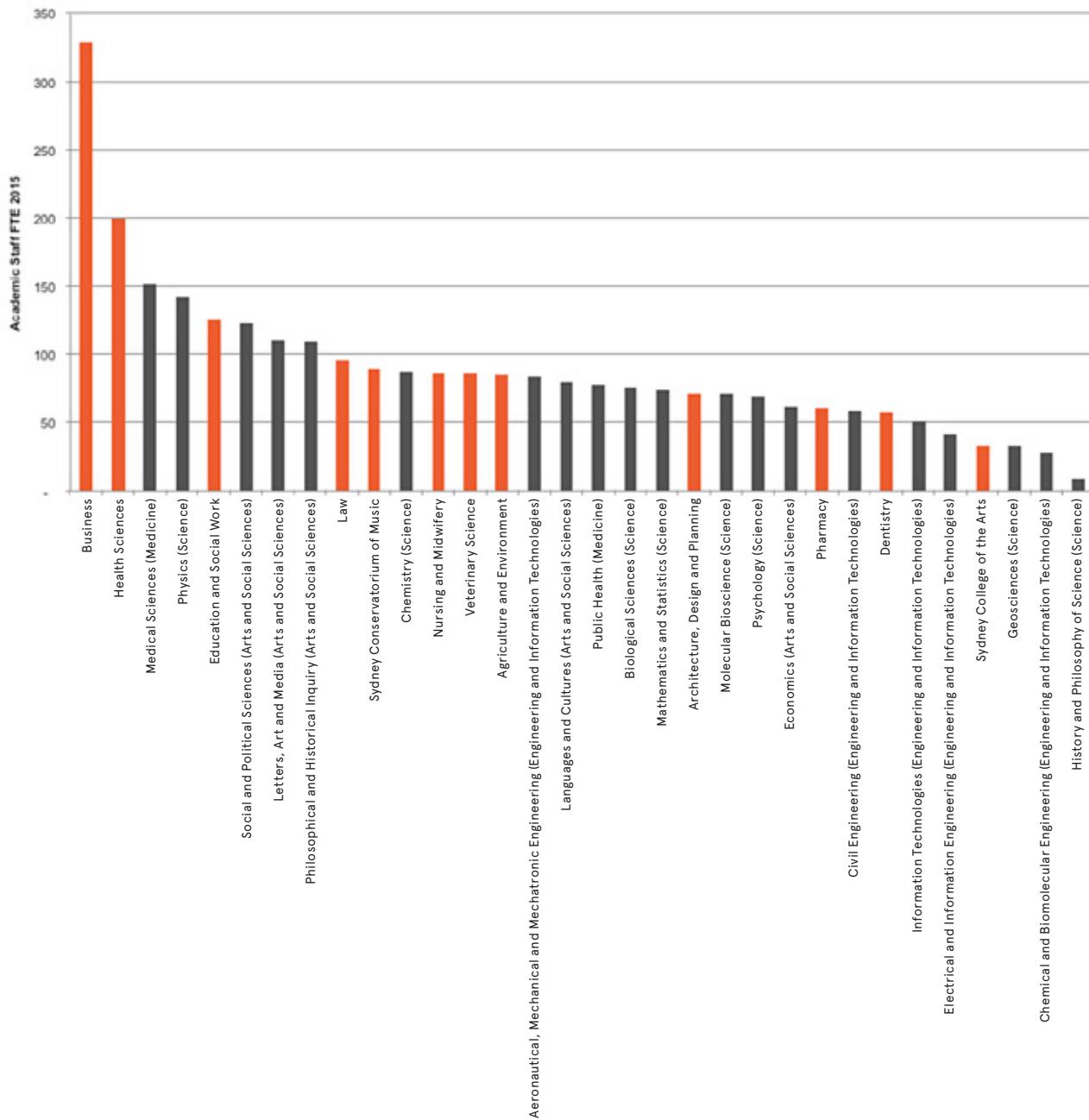
Faculty	Academic FTE (including casuals)	Students (EFTSL)
Medicine (Sydney Medical School)	684.3	4321.6
Science	559.0	5888.3
Arts and Social Sciences	507.6	8799.2
Business (The University of Sydney Business School)	292.9	6466.9
Engineering and Information Technologies	262.5	4065.3
Health Sciences	203.5	3116.2
Education and Social Work	116.4	2445.3
Law (Sydney Law School)	92.2	1761.5
Veterinary Science	89.6	892.7
Sydney Conservatorium of Music	88.4	899.3
Agriculture and Environment	81.2	520.8
Nursing (Sydney Nursing School)	81.1	1030.4
Architecture, Design and Planning	67.3	1111.3
Dentistry	60.6	514.7
Pharmacy	52.9	996.1
Sydney College of the Arts	35.5	665.0

Source: PIO website Source: SIBI

In addition to their size, the six larger faculties are commonly major organisational units in most universities in Australia. From both internal and external perspectives, then, these six groupings seem obvious ways to organise our academic programs.

A further point for consideration was the disparity in size between some of our faculties and schools: our eight smallest faculties have lower academic FTEs than our nine largest schools (Figure 6). The rationale for supporting so many small faculties is hard to fathom. Why do small faculties receive recognition in governance forums, budget allocations and the provision of higher levels of administrative support when large schools don't?

Figure 6: Faculties and schools: differences in size and scale



A final consideration was that, as well as thinking about how existing faculties might be moved in their entirety, we could think about how parts of a faculty might be better placed elsewhere in the university. For instance, would Social Work, currently in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, be better placed in one of the health faculties because there is increasing overlap in the work of allied health professionals and social workers? More radically still, should we put all the clinical disciplines in the health and medical faculties together, separating them from the biomedical disciplines?

4.3.3 Consultation to date

In August and early September, to advance University-wide discussion of how we might best refine our faculty structures, the Provost undertook an extensive round of consultations with all faculties and other important groups in the University community (Academic Board, University of Sydney Association of Professors, and some professional staff). In all, there were over 20 ‘town hall’ and smaller meetings with staff, and in response to the issues raised in these forums we received 45 submissions from faculties and individuals.

For this preliminary consultation process we summarised the considerations (outlined in the ‘Initial assessment’ section) into a preliminary decision logic (Figure 7), to help orient discussion. We stressed that positioning the six largest faculties on the horizontal axis and the 10 smaller ones on the vertical was just a starting point; size of faculties was an important consideration, but we had to be alive to all our decision criteria, such as research and education synergies, student experience and disciplinary distinctiveness. This allowed staff to see that there were multiple possibilities for our faculty restructure. Many of the subsequent submissions indicated preferences around these models, as well as arguments for and against them.

Figure 7: Reduced faculty model decision logic

Six broad fields of education							
		Business	Engineering and IT	Arts and Social Sciences	Health Sciences	Medical Sciences	Science
Eleven specialisations	Architecture, Design and Planning	Business and Design	Architecture, Engineering and IT	Arts, Society and Design			
	Sydney College of the Arts			Arts and Social Sciences (or with Architecture, Design and Planning)			
	Social Work			Arts and Social Sciences	Health Sciences		
	Education			Arts and Social Sciences			
	Pharmacy				Health Sciences	Medical Sciences	
	Dentistry				Health Sciences	Medical Sciences	
	Nursing				Health Sciences	Medical Sciences	
	Agriculture						Natural Sciences
	Veterinary Science					Medical Sciences	Natural Sciences
	Law	Business		Arts and Social Sciences			
	Music			Arts and Social Sciences			

An aim of the consultation process was to seek early faculty input into whittling down the ‘possible’ models into a list of three or four ‘preferred’ models for more detailed consultation after the release of this discussion paper. But in

the event, even using the five decision criteria outlined earlier, there was no consensus amongst the deans or the faculties as to the most appropriate models.

A significant group favoured a model where we created five or six faculties of roughly equal size to drive the economies of scale required to generate a significant reinvestment margin for education and research. This would mean winding all 10 smaller faculties into the six larger ones. Other deans were more inclined to stress issues of distinctiveness and potential synergies in education and research as equally if not more important in arriving at a decision.

One group of deans posed an alternative model for consideration. This model was a College or Faculty of Professions, incorporating Architecture, Design and Planning, Law and Education and Social Work. This draws on a similar arrangement at Adelaide (although there the Faculty of Professions includes the Business School, making it a much larger entity than the model proposed here). In the light of our key criteria we have concluded that this model does not deliver any major benefits for the University. There are very few education or research synergies produced by such a grouping, given their disparate disciplinary foci. Similarly we can't see, given the nature of the professional curriculum in each, any genuine opportunities to improve the student experience. Moreover achieving administrative efficiencies and savings through such a model are also constrained. We cannot see a set of issues and concerns that ties such a group together. In other words, it doesn't appear to fit our criteria, so we did not pursue this model.

In assessing our initial framework and sifting through the submissions received from faculties and academic staff, we have kept in mind all the decision criteria but have erred on the side of caution, arguing that mergers for the sake of mergers, when there are few education and research synergies or administrative rationalisation opportunities, would not be the best option.

As a result of these consultations, we have arrived at initial decisions concerning many faculties, which will be put to Senate for approval. For these faculties the arguments seemed clear in the light of our criteria, and we take the opportunity to outline them in the next subsection. Where no decisions were reached was in regard to the health and medical faculties. Genuine areas of contention remain unresolved here, so these faculties will be the subject of more detailed consultation arising from this paper.

4.4 Initial decisions

This section outlines the reasoning behind the decisions made so far, in light of the decision criteria and feedback from faculties. We discuss the issues and consequences for each faculty in turn.

4.4.1 Business

The University of Sydney Business School is a distinctive, inherently multidisciplinary, academic community of considerable size and scale. It undergoes significant external professional accreditation processes and is financially sustainable. In terms of economies of scale, potential service efficiencies and the student experience, there is little to be gained by adding further parts of the University to this faculty. There are potential research and education synergies with Economics in FASS or Business Law in Law, but Economics, in particular, has research and education synergies with other parts of the University and has thrived in its relatively new context of FASS. Under our decision criteria then, most of the conditions are already met and the opportunities too few to warrant changing the composition of this faculty. There was no significant demur from the school in response to the consultation process, reflecting the fact that we had always proposed that it remain standalone and the school was in agreement with this proposal.

4.4.2 Engineering and IT

Similar arguments hold for this faculty. In terms of size and scale there are few additional efficiencies that might be achieved. It is financially sustainable and requires a distinctive disciplinary identity by virtue of the external accreditation processes it has to undergo. There are definitely potential research and education synergies for Engineering and IT with Architecture, Design and Planning, Science (especially mathematics and physics), and Medicine (Biomedicine). But these synergies don't exhaust the opportunities for Engineering and IT and are probably better achieved through participation in networks, centres, institutes and multidisciplinary research initiatives and related research collaboration mechanisms outlined in the second research discussion paper. Although the faculty indicated that it was open to considering the incorporation of Architecture, Design and Planning or parts of that faculty, on balance there are no compelling reasons under our decision criteria to change the size, shape and composition of this faculty.

4.4.3 Science, Agriculture and Environment, and Veterinary Science

The potential research and education synergies between the faculties of Agriculture and Environment and Veterinary Science and the Schools of Biological Science and Molecular Bioscience in Science have already been the basis for a sustained change process over the last 12 to 18 months, resulting in the creation of a new School of Life and Environmental Sciences (SOLES) within the Faculty of Science. While there are research synergies for Veterinary Science with Medicine, these are insufficient to outweigh the education and research potential in becoming a school in the Faculty of Science. In addition there are economies of scale and administrative efficiencies to be gained from bringing these two comparatively small faculties into Science. Also, reducing duplication and overlap in the curriculum and providing more pathways for students should enhance the student experience. Thus this proposal meets all the key requirements under our decision criteria.

The submissions from the three faculties during the consultation process recognised the logic of this grouping and the reasoning for making Agriculture and Environment and Veterinary Science schools in a larger Science faculty. Nonetheless, in the meetings with staff, concerns were expressed about the nature of these proposed schools in the light of the SOLES structure. This is an important issue that should be addressed through the implementation process. There was one submission, from Science, which proposed the amalgamation of Agriculture and Environment and Veterinary Science into a single school, to ensure more coordinated management of assets such as the farms. This argument has merit but in the interests of distinctive disciplinary identity and the fact that Veterinary Science undergoes rigorous external accreditation, it would be advisable to leave them as distinct schools. The decision is to make Agriculture and Environment and Veterinary Science schools in the Faculty of Science.

4.4.4 Sydney College of the Arts (SCA)

This faculty (like similar visual arts faculties in NSW) has faced insufficient and falling load in recent years. For the SCA this has been partly offset by strong research and research training outcomes. Nevertheless SCA has serious financial sustainability issues, exacerbated by being situated at Rozelle, which reduces cross-faculty enrolments and research and teaching synergies. While there are other, external opportunities being discussed with the NSW Government at the moment, if these do not provide a satisfactory solution, SCA must come onto the Camperdown Campus and, given its small size, would be a school in a larger faculty. In relation to administrative efficiencies and savings, this is an obvious decision.

The question is whether under the criteria of research and education synergies it would be better placed with FASS or Architecture. Feedback from SCA was divided on this question: a significant minority of staff preferred Architecture, whereas a slight majority of staff favoured FASS. The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) evidence suggests possibilities for both, but with the overall numbers favouring FASS as the area for more fruitful collaboration:

Table 3: ERA 2012 contribution of each faculty

FoR code	FASS	SCA	Architecture
Creative Arts and Writing	36%	33%	5%
Art Theory and Criticism	56%	39%	6%
Film, Television and Digital Media	82%	14%	-
Visual Arts and Crafts	3%	83%	13%

4.4.5 Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM)

The SCM was also considered for incorporation into another faculty, with the most likely partner, on the basis of research and education synergies, being FASS. This option was certainly favoured by some staff in SCM, although others mounted a case for standalone faculty status. There is no clear faculty position on this question. On balance we have opted for the standalone option. While there are undoubtedly education and research synergies with FASS, the potential for these has largely been realised through existing collaborations and degree pathways. Music is already a Table A major in FASS, so a merger with FASS would offer few additional benefits. In terms of research, collaboration remains a genuine opportunity, but with no possibility of SCM ever moving to the Camperdown Campus such collaborations will largely continue to be through personal networks.

and opportunities brokered through the Research portfolio. The pedagogy and curriculum of the SCM also marks it out as distinctive. Moreover, by virtue of its long and independent history (established in 1915 and only becoming part of the University in 1990), it has an external brand and legibility of considerable strength. Another factor is geography. It is distant from main campus in facilities jointly operated with the State Government. These are not facilities we could replicate on Camperdown. If this is the case, then there are few opportunities for administrative savings from merging with another faculty. In other words, the particular nature and circumstances of the SCM militate against any benefits arising from incorporation into a larger entity. For these reasons it should remain a faculty.

4.4.6 Law

As with the SCM, while there are arguments for amalgamation with either FASS or Business, our decision criteria indicate that Law should remain a standalone faculty. There are some overlaps in research and teaching with other faculties – in criminology and critical legal studies in FASS and in business law in Business. Indeed there was considerable support in the FASS submission for an alliance/merger with Law. Nevertheless, these areas of collaboration are on the margins of the core programs in Law. As the ERA data show, 92 percent of our research outputs in the Law FOR code are produced by staff in the faculty. Even in the areas of obvious overlap with other faculties, such as criminology, Law dominates, with 84 percent of the ERA outputs; FASS has only 13 percent.

Moreover, at most Go8 universities (except UQ) and many non-Go8 universities, Law is a standalone faculty. It is also commonly a standalone faculty or professional school in both the UK and US. Important here in the light of our criteria, there are specific professional requirements in a law curriculum ('the Priestley 11') that all law students must pass. So while Law and JD students undertaking combined degrees come from a wide range of faculties and specialisations, once they are in the Law faculty the curriculum is very prescriptive and largely confined to the faculty itself. This highly structured and distinctive professional curriculum means there is little duplication and overlap in teaching with other faculties, except at the margins in social science areas like criminology or sub-fields such as business law, and thus little to be gained by merging with another group. Finally, law has a strong financial basis and is clearly sustainable; and in this respect, as with its external legibility, distinctive disciplinary specialisation, student experience, and educational and research offerings, Law constitutes an independent academic entity.

4.4.7 Architecture, Design and Planning (Architecture)

This is an interesting case as Architecture is a diverse, multidisciplinary faculty (like many of its type around the country). Despite its small size, it includes a wide range of disciplines: architecture (both technical and humanities discipline), architectural theory and history (humanities disciplines), architectural science (engineering discipline), computer design science (IT and engineering disciplines) and urban planning (a social science). It is a multidisciplinary faculty given coherence more by theme (built environment) than discipline, theory or methodology. This fact in itself might be read in multiple ways – as an argument for splitting the faculty and sending the various elements to their disciplinary homes, for finding the most relevant amalgamation partner, or for leaving the faculty to stand alone because of its lack of substantial fit with other faculties.

Given the thematic coherence of the faculty and its professional focus, breaking it up does not appear to be a feasible option. Alternatively, the most likely merger faculties, given Architecture's range of disciplines, are either FASS or Engineering and IT. Neither is an ideal fit, and a merger with either would come at considerable cost: the humanities and social science staff in Architecture would be very isolated in an engineering environment, just as the design and architectural science disciplines would be at sea in a humanities and social science context. Moreover, in some of its core disciplines there is almost no overlap with other faculties; 93 percent of all ERA submissions in the Architecture For code come from the Faculty of Architecture.

The faculty submission argued strongly for standalone status, deploying many of the arguments outlined above. A few staff (inside and outside the faculty) indicated that a merger with Engineering, or even breaking up the Faculty, were desirable options, in large part because they felt Architecture was not driving a research agenda hard enough and the research synergies with Engineering would be a positive outcome from merging. These arguments have merit. Therefore it is desirable to assess the research outcomes of the faculty over the next three years and, if there is insufficient progress on the research front, reconsider at that point a merger with Engineering. In terms of the student experience there would be some benefits from a closer association with Engineering. There would also be administrative savings arising from greater economies of scale. On the other hand, the professional accreditation requirements for Architecture, and the downside of putting some disciplines in an inappropriate disciplinary context, must always remain important considerations. On balance, given the distinctiveness

of Architecture as an area of research and professional education, it would be best to keep it as a standalone faculty but assess its progress on the research front and reconsider the question in a few years' time.

4.4.8 Education and Social Work (E&SW)

Under our criterion of increasing research and education synergies, there are compelling reasons for reconsidering the role of this faculty. First, research in education is widespread across the University, with E&SW producing only two thirds of the University's output in the Education FoR code in ERA 2012. This means there are significant overlaps with other faculties in its core research focus; and, as such, amalgamation with any of these faculties would increase research synergies in Education. Secondly, Social Work was transferred to Education in 2003 (from FASS) largely for budgetary reasons, yet its involvement in clinical placements, funded through bodies such as Health Workforce Australia, and its alignment with some of the strategies in the health disciplines, raise the question whether it might not be better placed in Health Sciences.

Although the faculty made a strong argument to remain a standalone entity, pointing to its variety of disciplines and its emerging and very strong science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) agenda, the majority of staff are nonetheless social scientists and the central discipline of Education itself is a social science. Thus there is a strong case for merging Education and Social Work into a larger humanities and social sciences grouping (FASS). In areas such as social policy, and some content areas like history, there is common focus with staff in FASS. For example, in the Policy and Administration FoR code, FASS produced 51 percent of our ERA outputs and E&SW produced 26 percent. In other areas the overlap is less than one might hope for (for example, in Linguistics FASS produced 69 percent of the outputs and E&SW 7 percent), but this is all the more reason to stimulate research synergies through amalgamation. In terms of

student experience, moreover, a merger with FASS could improve the experience of the many E&SW students who take units of study in FASS. There are also some potential administrative efficiencies and savings from making Education a school in FASS, especially given their close geographic proximity. Overall, placing Education in a larger social science grouping makes sense and meets many of our key decision criteria.

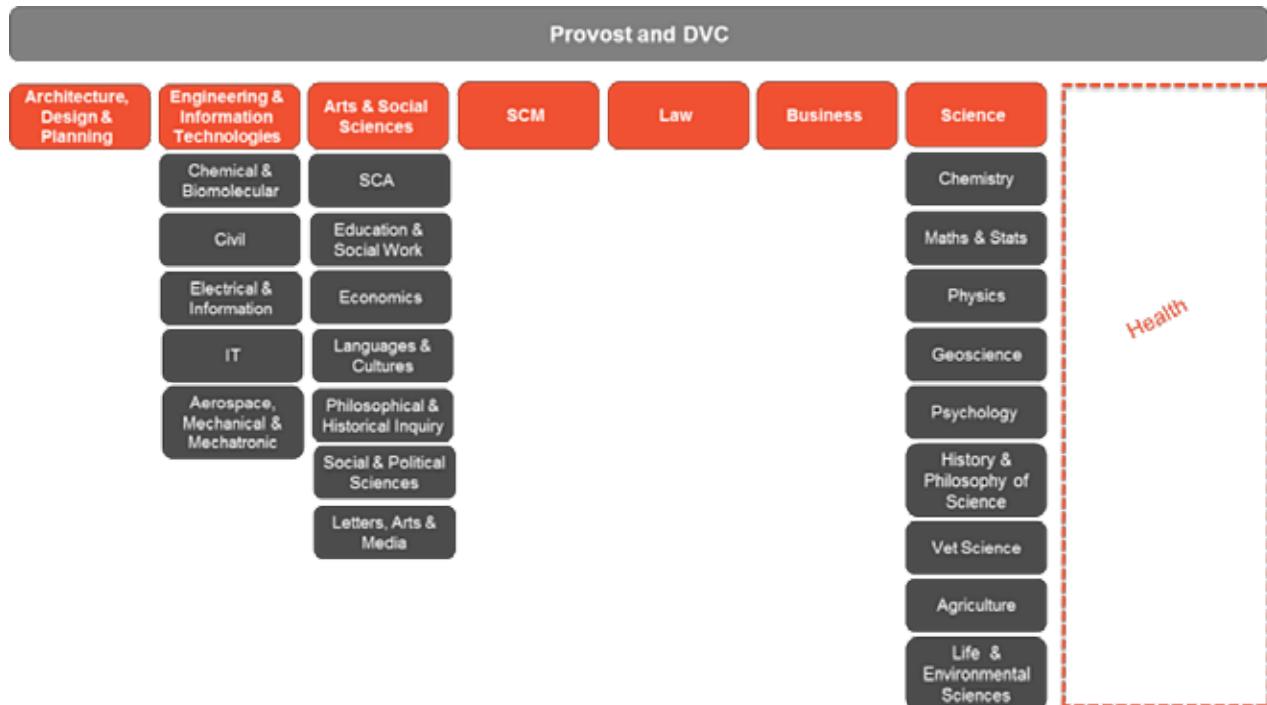
Social Work is relevant to a wide range of areas as is social policy, which has strong links to the social work group. Nonetheless, according to the FoR code analysis, social work is also relevant to a range of other disciplines in the university, including Law, FASS and Health Sciences (which all have staff publishing in this field). More importantly, the submission from Health Sciences was very supportive of social work coming into that faculty, and argued that many allied health professionals work very closely with social workers in a variety of institutional settings, not just hospitals, but also schools, prisons, welfare institutions, primary healthcare initiatives in the community and so on. Education and Social Work, however, has argued strongly for keeping its key streams together, highlighting its distinctive profile across teacher education, social work and social justice arenas.

While the evident research overlaps between Social Work and Health Sciences in the Social Work FoR code might reinforce the notion that Social Work could prosper in the health faculty context, on balance, given the faculty's very strong preference to remain as a single entity, we propose that the Faculty of Education and Social Work, as a whole, become a school in FASS. We also propose to reconsider the question of Social Work and its best academic environment when Health Sciences moves from Lidcombe to Camperdown in 2017.

4.4.9 Summary of initial decisions

As a consequence of the analysis outlined above we have arrived at a model, shown below, in which 11 of our faculties become seven. This model will be presented to Senate for approval.

Figure 8: Preliminary organisation model



The model retains three comparatively small faculties, which 'contravenes' our criterion of achieving administrative efficiencies through economies of scale. During the implementation phase we will therefore explore possibilities for gaining some back-office administrative efficiencies through additional refinements of the shared services model for these faculties.

The critical area of our health faculties, however, remains. Here the variety of models and feedback from the consultation process to date have raised a host of challenging issues and questions. The consultation process on the faculty structure following the release of this discussion paper will thus focus more closely on assessing the best options for our remaining five health faculties. Below we outline the four feasible options that will require further consultation and discussion with the University community.

4.5 Rethinking our health faculties structure

Our five health faculties are of critical importance for our strategies in education, research and external engagement. They produce over half the University's research outputs. They encompass professions of vital significance in improving health outcomes locally, nationally and internationally. They are at the forefront of developing new frameworks for the delivery of healthcare. And their multidisciplinary research into chronic and acute diseases makes an important contribution to State and Federal Government healthcare policy.

There are several pressing reasons why the University should reconsider the organisational design of these faculties. The increasing importance of inter-professional learning in the health sector indicates the value of developing greater inter-faculty collaboration. The University's major Westmead strategy makes it imperative to consider how to bring our health faculties together to best support it. And our plans to bring the faculties of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Sciences onto the Camperdown Campus in the near future afford opportunities to consolidate teaching and research and to achieve administrative efficiencies. In this context, and applying our criteria of education and research synergies, student experience and economies of scale, the continuing viability of maintaining three relatively small faculties and two large to very large faculties is questionable. The first consideration, then, is how best to merge the three smaller faculties into a larger grouping.

4.5.1 Nursing and Midwifery

Nursing has challenges in terms of financial sustainability, although it is on a strong upward trajectory on the back of improved load and research outcomes. Given that Nursing is coming onto Camperdown Campus in the near future, the opportunity exists to achieve administrative savings and increased load (currently constrained by poor infrastructure). In research and education there are genuine synergies with a number of areas in Medicine, notably Public Health. And the overlaps in relation to primary healthcare, clinical placements and inter-professional learning all suggest that amalgamation, as a school, into a larger faculty is the obvious option. (Another option, developed by the deans, was to create a new faculty of Health Sciences, Public Health and Nursing. Although this would have significant potential in terms of research synergies and administrative savings, it has not received much support, either from Nursing, which preferred Medicine, or from Public Health, which

mounted a strong case for remaining in a larger medical grouping rather than aligning with Health Sciences.) So amalgamation into a larger faculty remains the leading option, but the question is whether it would be better as a school in Medicine or in Health Sciences? Given the linkages with Public Health and the strong desire of Public Health to remain in Medicine, on balance the best option for Nursing and Midwifery seems to be in Medicine.

4.5.2 Dentistry

The linkage with Medicine is even more clear-cut in relation to Dentistry. Its close connections to the hospital system, important relationships with Local Health Districts, and central role in our Westmead strategy make amalgamation, as a school, into Medicine the obvious decision. Regrettably, the geographic spread of the faculty, across Sydney Dental Hospital and Westmead Hospital, makes administrative efficiencies difficult. Nonetheless, as our Westmead footprint increases over the coming decade there may be opportunities there to achieve some administrative efficiencies and realise savings.

4.5.3 Pharmacy

Of all the small faculties, Pharmacy is one that has consistently proven to be financially sustainable. It has an excellent record of budget surpluses built on a solid foundation of high demand for its teaching programs (excellent international and local fee-paying streams assist here) and good research. Nonetheless, there is significant disciplinary overlap and duplication between Pharmacy, Pharmacology (Medicine) and medicinal chemistry (Science). This is particularly evident in our analysis of research outputs. In the Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences FoR code for ERA, Pharmacy produced 40 percent of our outputs, Medicine 49 percent and Science 12 percent. We are already actively exploring the potential for a merger of Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

A critical question in relation to Pharmacy, however, is one of professional identity and distinctiveness. Pharmacy has close links with the Pharmacy profession and is subject to external accreditation requirements. The strong professional links drive much of the student demand and financial sustainability of the faculty. Thus in considering options for Pharmacy, sustaining a clear professional identity is essential for sustaining professional accreditation. The criterion of disciplinary distinctiveness is vital here and has to shape our decision, especially as there are a number of possible options. One is amalgamation as a school in Science, an option not favoured by Pharmacy or Medicine. Another would be placement as a discipline within the School of Medical

Sciences. The risk here is that it would lose considerable external visibility, which might compromise student demand and accreditation. The more fruitful course of action would be to create a school of Pharmacy and Pharmacology or Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences within a larger health and medical faculty.

4.5.4 The health and medicine options

If we start from the basis that Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy will become schools in a larger health and/or medicine grouping, the critical question becomes the shape of those larger groupings. As indicated earlier this does not necessarily involve just shifting our current faculties around. As outlined in the preliminary consultation discussions there are some models in this space that involve the creation of a new biomedical sciences faculty. Thus there is a range of possible variations in the health and medical sciences space that require further consultation. Some of these were canvassed in the preliminary consultation process and there were clear divisions of opinion over each. Thus we believe a more focused set of consultations and discussions around these models is vital. Below we outline the four major options for consideration.

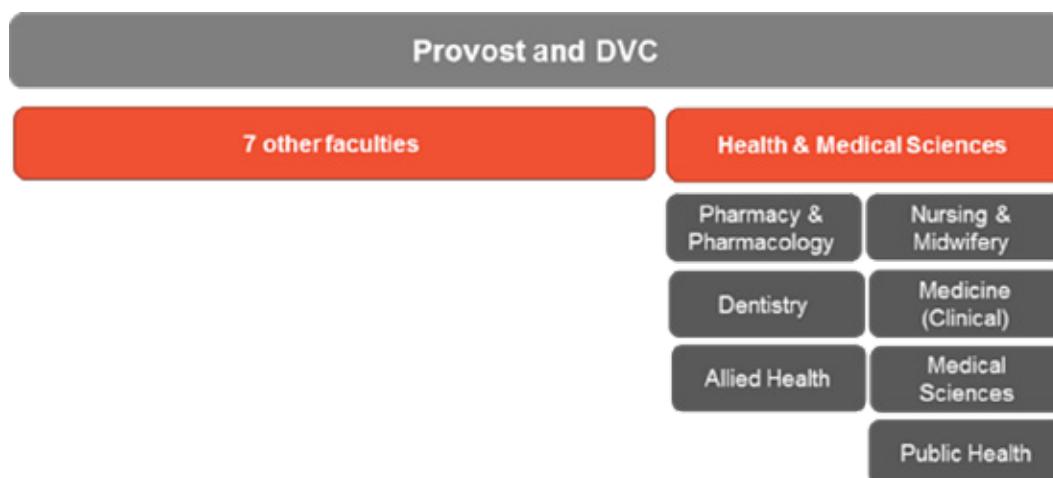
Option 1: Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences (one Faculty)

The first option places all our health and medical sciences into one mega-faculty. In such a model we might have an overarching faculty of health and medical sciences, with a school of medicine (incorporating the current clinical schools). There are obviously other ways to configure these areas.

The logic here is that there is significant overlap across all these faculties in research, education and external engagement. They also share common interests in engaging with a variety of health professions and government health bureaucracies, clinical training, inter-professional learning and primary health care provision. Moreover, in many of the previous attempts to restructure the university (the groups/divisions and the three colleges) all five of these faculties have been in a single entity and generally worked well in such a framework.

The downside of this single-faculty option is that it creates a huge academic entity, around 40 percent of all academic staff, which might be very difficult to manage. There is a question about whether some academic structures are too large to be viable. During the consultation process, Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy and some individual staff expressed concern about the complex internal structures in Medicine and the risk this posed to successful integration. Making such a large entity work would require a very significant overhaul of these internal structures. Indeed, whichever option is chosen for the health and medical sciences, a thorough external review of the internal structures will be warranted to ensure that it is fit for our strategic purposes.

Figure 9: Health option 1 (one faculty)

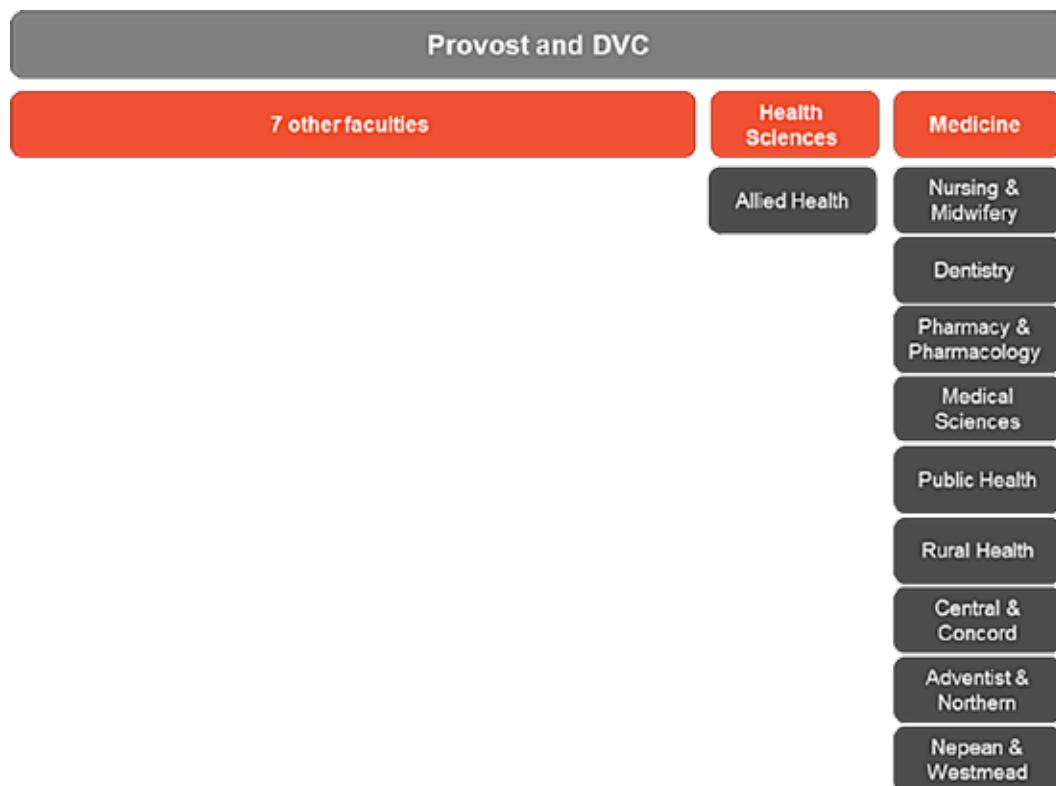


Option 2: Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Medicine or Medical Sciences (2 faculties)

Another obvious option, one which flows from the logic of our analysis of the three smaller faculties, is to leave Health Sciences as presently constituted and then place Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy into Medicine as schools in that faculty. This converts the current divisional arrangements into a concrete organisational structure. Again the research, education, clinical and professional training, external engagement, administrative and potential Westmead synergies are evident.

As with the first model, however, there would still be internal management challenges, as highlighted in the consultation process by Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy. With the addition of these three faculties as schools into Medicine, this grouping would still contain almost a third of the University's academic staff – again, grounds for a thorough external review of the internal structures.

Figure 10: Health option 2 (two faculties)



Option 3: Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine or Medical Sciences, and Faculty of Biomedical Sciences (3 faculties)

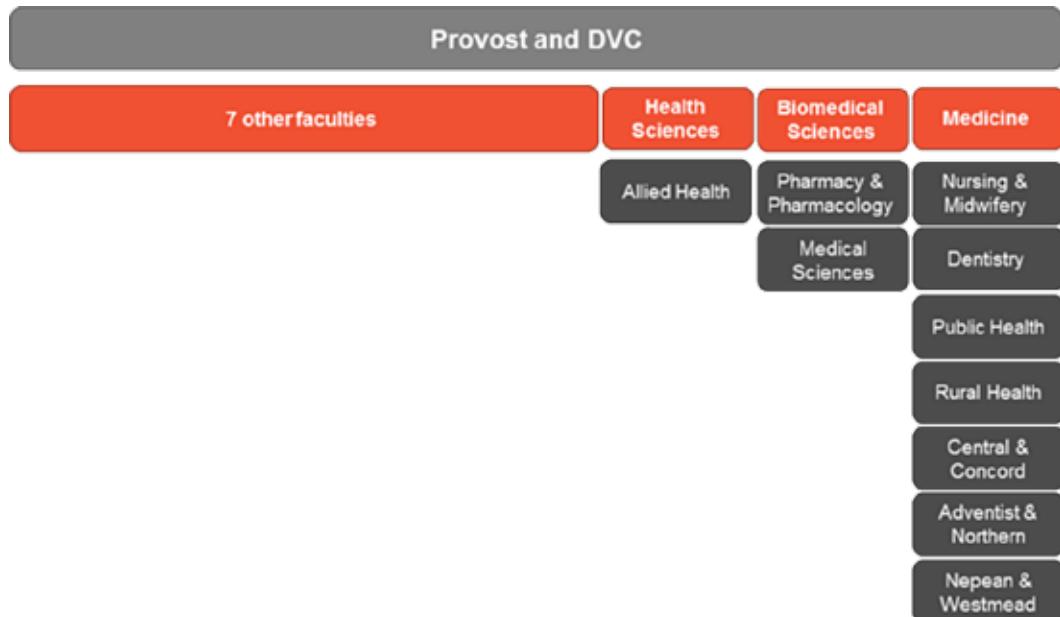
In the consultation process we outlined an option for creating a Faculty of Biomedical Sciences. The rationale is that currently we are the leading university in the country in the clinical medical sciences but lag some way behind in the fundamental biomedical sciences. Bringing together into a single faculty some of the basic biomedical sciences – the School of Medical Sciences, possibly Pharmacy and Pharmacology, perhaps some elements of the School of Molecular Bioscience in Science, and possibly Psychology – and appointing a dean to drive improved research and education performance in these fields, could significantly improve our performance in the health and medical sciences overall.

This option received a mixed response. Some staff in the health and biomedical-related disciplines saw some potential in the proposal and were open to further consultation on the issue. The submission from the Faculty of Medicine was strongly opposed to the idea. This submission argued that contemporary developments in health and medicine are closing the gap between bench (biomedical) and bedside (clinical)

through innovative forms of translational research, a key element of the faculty's current research strategy. Splitting the biomedical and clinical disciplines would create silos that might impede translational research. Equally, the faculty argued that new funding arrangements through the NHMRC favour large multi-disciplinary teams of biomedical, translational and clinical scientists. Assembling these teams would be more difficult with researchers in separate faculties and would incur added transactional cost across faculties.

These are important considerations, although as our research strategy makes clear, facilitating cross-faculty research is feasible if the right mechanisms and support systems are in place. So there are mechanisms under consideration to offset some of these concerns. The critical issue is whether driving a significant biomedical agenda would deliver *sustainable* benefits in performance. If it did, then after five to ten years, say, it might be feasible to return biomedicine to the larger health and medical grouping. If lifting our performance in such a critical area of research and education is strategically significant, as it is, then serious consideration has to be given to the creation of a new faculty in this area.

Figure 11: Health option 3 (three faculties – including new biomedical sciences faculty)

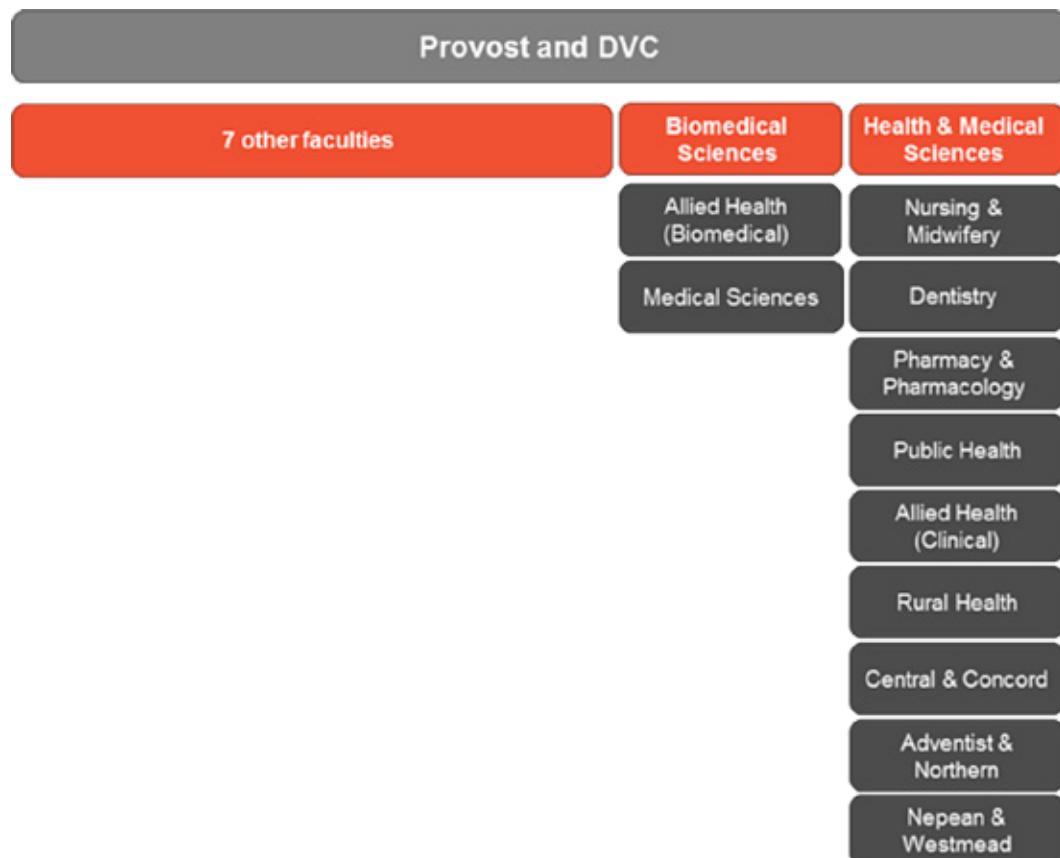


Option 4: Faculty of Biomedical Sciences and Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences (2 faculties)

A variation on the previous model, with much of the same rationale, would involve undoing the current Faculty of Health Sciences and moving its clinical disciplines, as a school, into a larger Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, and its biomedical disciplines into a Faculty of Biomedical Sciences.

Again there are opportunities and risks in all of these options. Certainly the biomedical options create an opportunity to drive a more vigorous performance agenda for both the biomedical and clinical sciences. The risk is losing some of the coherence and linkages across allied health, health and medical disciplines. In each of the models the need to thoroughly review the internal management structures of the medical sciences grouping remains.

Figure 12: Health option 4 (two faculties - including new biomedical sciences faculty)



4.6 Summary

On the basis of extensive analysis and consultation, it has been determined that 11 of our existing faculties will be transformed into seven. In addition, our five existing health and medical sciences faculties will be transformed into one, two or three faculties depending on which option is ultimately chosen. The overall outcome for the University will therefore be an organisational model of eight, nine or 10 faculties. Any of these would be acceptable.

Proposition 1

That the University:

- restructures the five health faculties into one of the four structure options (detailed in Section 4.5)
- will apply the principles outlined in Section 4.1 to determine the preferred option for health

5 Making sense of the sub-faculty maze

The faculty organisational structure is only one part of our organisational design challenge. A critical issue, to bring greater coherence to our academic decision-making and our capacity to work as a larger distributed leadership team, is to have some recognisable points of coordination and collaboration for this leadership team. At the very least we might consider who constitutes our leadership team.

Some in the University, of course, see the leadership team as a very small group of people at the supposed 'centre' of the University, the Vice-Chancellor and his direct reports and in some versions (but not all) the deans. Some see the leadership team as SEG. While SEG is a vital decision-making body for the University, both these versions misrepresent the nature of leadership in a complex university. Given our core business is education and research we naturally have a wide range of academic leaders in the University – professors, associate deans, heads of school, chairs of departments and disciplines, heads of centres and institutes and so on, as well as key professional staff like faculty managers and directors of professional service units and portfolios, who all constitute a distributed and vital leadership team for the University. Leadership is not the preserve of a small elite but something invested in many people around the University who have responsibility for achieving our aspirations and goals in education and research.

Even in a narrower frame of reference, shaped by criteria such as management of budgets, curriculum planning, staff development, research strategy and so on, a recognisable leadership team for University-wide coordination would include not just SEG but also such positions as heads of school, associate deans and the like. If we are to improve our performance through better academic planning, better staff mentoring and development, improved external engagement and uplift in development then expanding the leadership team to include these roles is vital.

One of the aspects of Sydney's devolved faculty structure, however, is that under Senate resolutions deans are empowered to nominate anyone and have faculty appoint such nominated people to pro-dean, deputy dean, associate dean and sub-dean roles. They also have the capacity to appoint people (either from internal candidates or external advertisements) to roles such as head of school, head of department or related positions. There has been no limit placed on deans and faculties for the number that could be appointed to such roles or the variety of functions they might perform. As a measure of the relative autonomy of faculties many have also appointed colleagues to positions such as chair of department, chair of discipline or program coordinator, none of which have any standing or recognition under Senate resolutions.

In other words deans have been left largely to their own devices to craft the internal faculty leadership structure. As a consequence there is very significant variation between faculties in the leadership structures in place across the University. This is, in some respects, appropriate. Leadership structures need to be tailored to local needs and circumstances. But, if we are to have joined-up conversations about strategy and its implementation, to drive academic planning and enhance our education and research offerings, then some consistency and visibility in these internal structures would be beneficial.

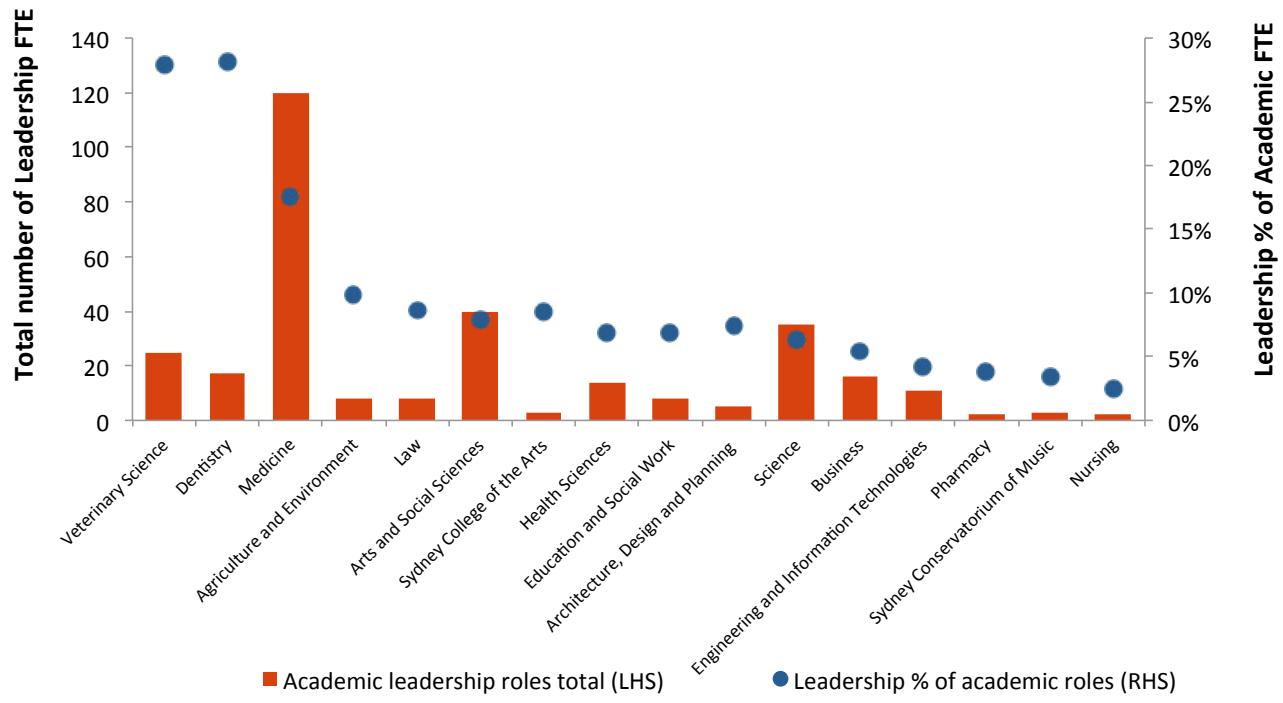
5.1 What does this sub-faculty maze look like?

- In all we have around 220 pro-deans, deputy deans, associate deans and sub-deans across the 16 faculties, and the distinction between pro, deputy, associate and sub is at best opaque.
- There is no correlation between size of faculty and number of such positions. Our largest faculty in terms of student load has eight pro, deputy, associate or sub deans, while one of our smaller faculties has 27.
- Two of our faculties have almost a third of all academic staff with one of these titles, although, plausibly, one dean argues that wide distribution of such duties is part of getting buy-in to leadership issues and developing staff potential.
- If we add in heads of school, chairs of departments, chairs of discipline, program coordinators, program convenors, directors of centres, institutes, nodes and networks and the variety of other teaching and research leadership positions that have proliferated over the years, we have probably around 500 to 700 people holding significant academic leadership positions in the faculties.
- If we then look at substantive substructures in faculties, four of our faculties have schools, one has departments and two have disciplines. The rest either have no discernible sub-groupings or have loose groupings such as units, programs or areas.
- Even more puzzling, the title head does not constitute the same set of responsibilities in each faculty. Heads of school in Engineering, for example, have a wider range of tasks and responsibilities, such as oversight of higher degree research administration, and more budget autonomy, than those in FASS or Science. In other words the delegations to title also vary across the University, adding to the internal complexity of our structures.
- Of the faculties that have schools, one, FASS, also has departments and another, Medicine, has schools, departments and disciplines (in a very complex matrix leadership structure when combined with its 67 deputy, pro, associate and sub dean roles).
- These differences between faculties create significant problems of coordination for the University more generally (one of the issues identified in the staff survey as a frustration in our current structure). For example, when the Vice-Chancellor wanted to call a meeting of heads of school or equivalent (for those faculties without heads), the HR system provided four different lists. Similarly, when we undertook to make the Academic Planning and Development (APD) system an online process defining who an academic manager was under this system, our efforts were complicated by the fact that an academic manager was defined differently in each faculty. As a result, HR was required to undertake many hours (and thousands of dollars) of additional time and effort to configure these differences across the University in the new system.

This sub-faculty maze is externally opaque (to the rest of the University, let alone the external community) but internally logical. Such structures have grown up in response to local circumstances and strategic decisions by successive deans.

The differences in practice at this level of organisation across the University are very evident in the following two figures – on the proportion of academic staff holding one of these sub-faculty titles and the proportion of each title in the various faculties.

Figure 13: Proportion of academic leaders* by faculty

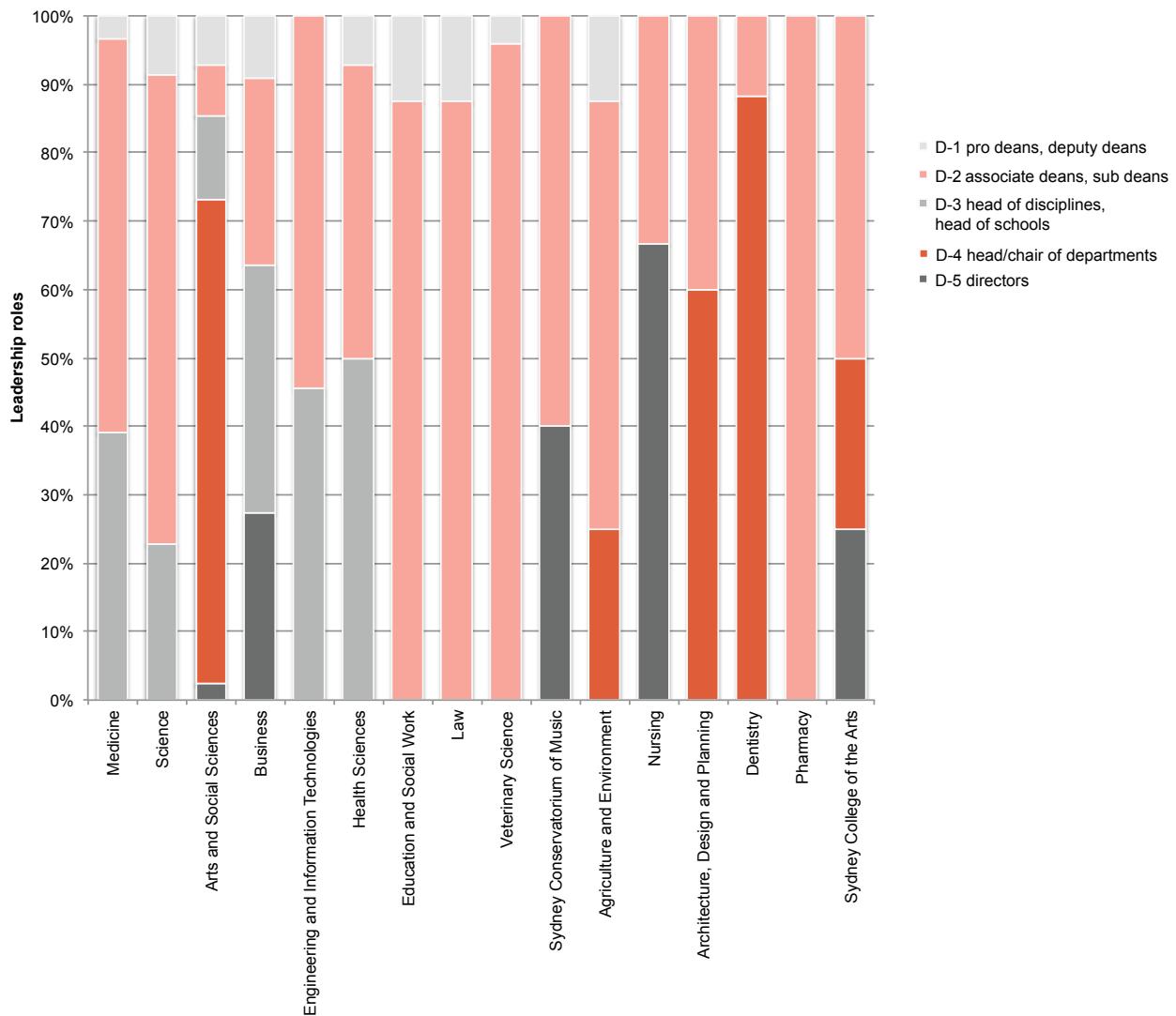


Total leadership roles (bars, left); leadership roles as a proportion of academic FTE (dots, right)

**Academic leaders include pro-deans and deputy deans, associate deans and sub-deans, heads of school, heads of disciplines and heads/chairs of departments, and directors.*

(Source: University of Sydney HR data)

Figure 14: Leadership profile by faculty
(role type as a proportion of total leadership)



(Source: University of Sydney HR data)

There are obvious issues of legibility, coordination and line of sight in these myriad sub-faculty structures that make it difficult for us to work together as one university. We are fortunate to have amazing staff who have done a remarkable job as academic leaders in key faculty roles over many years, often working around the complexities of roles and structures. But inherent in complex sub-faculty structures like ours (and many similar institutions) there are dilemmas and challenges that our faculty leaders have to navigate. The list of generic challenges is obvious to many. For example:

- A large number of sub-faculty leadership roles may empower and develop academic leaders, giving them useful staff development opportunities, but it comes at the cost of a flat leadership structure where many such leaders have very small portfolio responsibilities (because of the number of such roles). This can have three consequences. It means many in these roles have titles but little real responsibility and hence little scope for meaningful action. Secondly, a flat structure leaves the dean overly exposed to audit, workplace, health and safety and financial risks from poor decisions by local academic leaders, as real responsibility lies with deans in such contexts, given those supporting them have small spheres of responsibility. Finally if there are many different types of role in a matrix faculty structure – heads, chairs, associate deans and so on – then who actually has the power to make decisions is often unclear (even to those inside the faculty), or alternatively a decision might be made at one level and ignored at another, unless there is very extensive oversight by the dean.
- Another common challenge concerns the engagement of the office holders themselves. In many parts of the University these positions rotate amongst existing staff, usually on a biennial basis. Given these short terms, office holders rarely have the time or the inclination to make large strategic decisions or tackle major issues. And if they are to rotate out of the office after two years then there is an inclination to not rock the boat for fear of alienating the next incumbent. At the other extreme some heads appointed from within the current staff sometimes hold office for decades. This has the potential to lead to atrophy or the persistence of tradition at the expense of necessary change and innovation. This is particularly the case for major roles such as head of school. Both outcomes are less than optimal. These are critical leadership positions and thus there is a strong case for making all head positions subject to external advertisement and for minimum periods of four years (renewable). Our aspiration should be to get the best person in the field (as we would for

any academic position) not just the person already on deck willing to do it (and often reluctantly because it is their turn). If we want to achieve our vision for unleashing the energies and creativity of our staff and students, then a smaller cohort of academic leaders with genuine responsibilities would be preferable to a wider array of academics doing many small jobs with little responsibility or capacity to drive improvement.

- A related issue is that while many heads, chairs of discipline and department, pro, deputy, associate and sub deans take these roles seriously and make a significant commitment for the good of the faculty, others take on the role for a brief period in order to enhance their chances of promotion (and leave the role once promoted). Again, while this is perfectly understandable, and fostered by our own policies on promotion, it is not in the best interests of the leadership team to have people holding important positions of responsibility whose commitment is more to holding the office than driving appropriate change. Of course there are many who hold these positions for a couple of years and make a significant difference but deans regularly report their disappointment at those who hold office and move on immediately after promotion. Academic leadership is vital for taking us forward and thus we need people who take on these roles as a serious commitment. One suggestion is that there should be fewer of them and appointment should be on three-year renewable terms (to coincide with Special Studies Program entitlements).

There are a number of issues arising from this extensive and complex network of sub-faculty roles. Many, for example, come with either forms of teaching relief, salary loadings or research funds or some combination of these, and thus there is a direct financial burden on faculties, particularly when they have a large number of such roles. In those faculties where the roles are many there is a question about whether some of these tasks might be seen as part of a staff member's 20 percent service obligations rather than a role on top that requires teaching relief or remuneration. On the other hand, for some of the major roles, for example research or learning and teaching, there are questions about whether staff are getting adequate relief and/or remuneration to allow them to devote the required time to these core functions.

Another relevant issue is that many of these roles require staff to chair a committee or working group, to provide advice and support. Associate deans, deputy deans, heads of school and so on do need to work closely with colleagues. The question is not whether there should

be such roles but how many there are and how many committees arise as a consequence of their proliferation. A frequent complaint from academic staff is that there is too much administration. As indicated previously there are at least 150 faculty committees, usually chaired by deputy, pro, associate or sub-deans and many more committees at the school, discipline and department level. For example in our audit of school and faculty governance structures we found many areas with a plethora of committees. One school we noted had 13 committees, with the chairs of some of these committees then sitting on faculty committees. Neither SEG nor Senate has mandated this plethora of committees. Instead we seem to be creating considerable administrative burdens at the local level that merit consideration and potential rationalisation.

The challenge for the alignment of the sub-faculty structures, however, is how to balance the need to have clear, consistently defined, roles present in all faculties and aligned to central academic decision-making and strategy with ones that meet local needs. For example, not every faculty needs someone for overseeing farms.

A starting point for defining a core group of sub-faculty roles might be to consider the roles and functions at the faculty and school/discipline levels. Below we outline some common roles and delegations at various levels. We have also indicated some of the academic FTE models recommended as desirable for each level.

Figure 15: Roles and responsibilities in the faculty model

Organisation unit	Leader	Reporting line	Academics (FTE)	Responsibilities and delegations
University's faculty structure	Provost	VC	All academic staff	Responsible for the general management of the University with specific accountability for the academic delivery and performance of the faculties. Working with the deans, the Provost is responsible for all strategic plans and initiatives, particularly those that cut across faculties. The Provost also has major responsibility for setting budget priorities. Authorised to approve large-scale (<\$5 million) strategic initiatives and all academic appointments other than faculty leadership appointments, and review faculty grievances.
Faculty * (or equivalent)	Dean* (or equivalent)	Provost	250-500	Responsible for the academic and administrative leadership of a faculty. Accountable for overseeing and advancing the programs and teaching and research within the faculty to ensure the University's academic excellence. Hold full operating responsibility, with consultation from the Provost. They have the delegated authority to approve admissions into and graduation from courses and authority to appoint academic staff other than professors for the faculty. They negotiate and are responsible for the faculty budget within University guidelines. Also lead on staff performance, mentoring, WHS, external engagement, alumni and development.
Faculty (or equivalent) choice of: School or discipline	Head of school/ discipline	Dean* (or equivalent)	70-150	Responsible for the academic and administrative leadership of the academic school/discipline including the review, management, research strategy and advancement of teaching units of study and courses that are offered by the school/discipline. Manage the school/discipline budget. Recommend academic appointments to the faculty and mentor staff. Their administrative delegation includes approving arrangements for teaching units of study and appointments of casual academic staff, some WHS and staff performance oversight.
Discipline	Head of department	Head of school/ discipline	<50	For faculties with schools/disciplines, then departments may be required. The Head of Department is an academic lead who represents the department. Responsible largely for curriculum development and teaching provision and may represent the department in school/discipline or faculty forums. They hold no other delegation.

*Academic leadership titles need to be discussed further. Options include: Executive Dean, Dean or Vice-Provost.

As indicated, not every faculty unit will have departments, schools or disciplines. But it is our proposal that **every faculty should have either schools or disciplines as their primary academic unit below the level of faculty.**

At this level, heads of school/disciplines will commonly have delegated powers and responsibilities from the dean and faculty for such matters as curricula, research and research training programs and staff performance and development. Schools and disciplines may also receive funding allocations from the faculty to facilitate this work.

An important question then, is what is the difference between a school and a discipline? Both are ways of organising academic communities for strategic purposes, academic planning, research, education, curriculum, professional and external engagement and related activities. While we recognise that there are different practices across the University with respect to the nature and operations of these forms of organisation, achieving greater consistency will address our desire to build greater cross-faculty commonality in leadership and decision-making. Agreeing a common definition is a first step.

The difference, in our view, primarily revolves around budget responsibility. In a school structure the school is the major devolved budget unit within a faculty, responsible for core budget lines in both salary and non-salary areas of expenditure. In contrast, while disciplines may have small discretionary budgets for academic purposes, primary responsibility for salary and non-salary budgets remains at the faculty level.

Faculties that choose schools might have disciplines or departments within schools but in this situation schools will be the primary academic organisational unit. In the allocation of resources faculties should concentrate on either schools or disciplines (and if disciplines are the preferred structure the budget allocation to a discipline will only be partial, as outlined above). And, to ensure coordination across the University, faculties with schools should clearly specify their leadership team as including heads of school.

These roles should be clearly recognisable to the rest of the University (obvious on the website) and updated in HR staff lists, so that when the University needs to engage faculty leadership teams it doesn't have to search out or guess who is a member of these teams. Head of school

roles, in particular, are ones of considerable responsibility and will have delegated financial responsibilities. Thus these roles should preferably be full time, or at least 0.5, and preferably a term of four or five years and renewable. These roles should be externally advertised. Our aspiration is to build a committed and capable leadership team at the faculty level, one that can drive coordinated academic planning and position the University well to achieve its education, research, international and external engagement goals.

In addition to the school/discipline structures, faculties have a leadership team that also has a faculty-wide remit. These are the portfolio roles commonly allocated to deputy, pro, associate and sub-deans. Here the alignment with SEG and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) portfolios is crucial as these roles are primarily engaged in negotiating the faculty relationship with these central university functions and representing faculties in SEG committees and other University-wide forums.

One thing we could do to rationalise roles and reduce confusion is remove some of these titles. Pro-deans and deputy deans, under Senate resolutions, are effectively the same. It is only faculty tradition and preference that has created differences in usage across the University. Similarly the distinctions between associate and sub-dean are at best opaque (and not clearly defined in Senate resolutions). By convention associate deans have larger portfolios than sub-deans but where to draw the line has again been the subject of tradition and preference, not some pre-existing definition.

One proposal that we would like to endorse as part of this element of the strategy is consistency of nomenclature. **Our proposal would be that we adopt Deputy Dean and Associate Dean as the common titles across the University** (in other words we would cease to have pro or sub-deans). In summary:

1. **Every faculty (or equivalent) will have one or more deputy deans.**
2. **Every faculty (or equivalent) will also have a range of associate dean roles**

We now need to define the scope and appropriate delegations for such roles.

5.2 Scope and delegations

5.2.1 Deputy deans

Deputy dean roles should broadly support the dean. They would be the person to deputise for that leadership role in the dean's absence. The deputy dean (or at least one of them if there is more than one) should have responsibility for supporting the dean in core functions such as budget allocation, monitoring overall teaching and research strategy and performance and oversight over academic staffing issues. They might also be allocated other specific duties but these should be the core responsibilities. If there is more than one deputy dean then at least one should have primary oversight over these core issues.

Thus when the Vice-Chancellor (VC) and/or Provost or other DVC/Vice-Principal calls a meeting for heads of school or equivalent then each faculty will have a deputy dean (from every faculty) and heads of school (for those faculties with schools) that will be part of the leadership group constituted in such a meeting.

This will greatly assist University-wide communication, deliberation and strategy across a broad distributed leadership group beyond SEG. We consider engaging this group in regular meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and Provost critical to the implementation of the new strategic plan, so it is essential that we have this core group clearly defined.

In summary every faculty would have a designated deputy dean and they, along with heads of school, would attend the VC/Provost deputy deans/heads of school meetings as required.

5.2.2 Associate deans

Associate deans more commonly have a specific sphere of responsibility, such as research, research training, learning and teaching and so on. Our guiding principle here, as outlined above, is that those spheres of influence should align to broader University-wide portfolios and SEG committees for oversight of key areas of our strategy and its implementation, although there should be a capacity to add further portfolios for faculty-specific purposes.

In this context it is important to align some of these roles specifically with the current SEG committee structure. We see the core committees requiring representation from key local academic unit leadership as the following:

- **SEG Research Committee**
Associate Dean Research
- **SEG Education Committee**
Associate Dean Education (currently more commonly Learning and Teaching but Education might be preferable to encompass such areas as student experience)
- **SEG Research Training Committee**
Associate Dean Research Training
- **SEG Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Services Committee**
Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Support
- **SEG International Committee**
Associate Dean International Engagement

We see these as the core associate dean roles that every faculty should have. If the University does decide to develop a portfolio in the area of external relations, including marketing, industry and community engagement and cultural outreach – there would be a strong case for an Associate Dean External Engagement as well.

This, as we have suggested above, would not prevent faculties from having other associate dean roles, indeed we think there is a strong case for having an Associate Dean UG Programs and an Associate Dean PG Programs in each faculty (except where such responsibilities are allocated to deputy deans).

The logical conclusion is that each faculty (or equivalent) should have one or more deputy deans, at least five (possibly six) core associate dean roles, potentially two more core associate dean roles and then others, as they deem appropriate. This would give us some consistency across the University and enable better, joined up decision-making and strategy.

There is one further issue for consideration in relation to associate deans. In some faculties these are key roles with delegated responsibility for making decisions, in others the delegations from the dean are such that these position holders effectively refer everything back to the faculty. This creates a significant bottleneck in decision-making and communication. Some associate deans don't feel they have a mandate to make a decision or offer a faculty perspective in a SEG committee meeting. Instead they refer matters raised in these committees back to the dean and/or faculty executive or advisory committee for comment and a decision and then take this view back to the relevant SEG committee.

In our view associate deans will be more effective if they become essential members of the overarching executive committee of each faculty, have a delegation to speak and make decisions on behalf of the faculty, and thus they apprise the dean and faculty executive of issues beforehand, to source the preferred faculty view and then contribute to the University-wide decision on this basis. Thus, unless by prior agreement with the Provost, these core associate dean roles should be at least 0.5 positions (with appropriate teaching relief) and, for a term of a minimum of three years, renewable. We also need to make these roles key leadership positions that facilitate local and University-wide decision-making and strategy.

Proposition 2

That the University:

- implements a more consistent faculty substructure
- encourages faculties to select either schools or disciplines as the primary sub-faculty entity (detailed in Section 5.1).

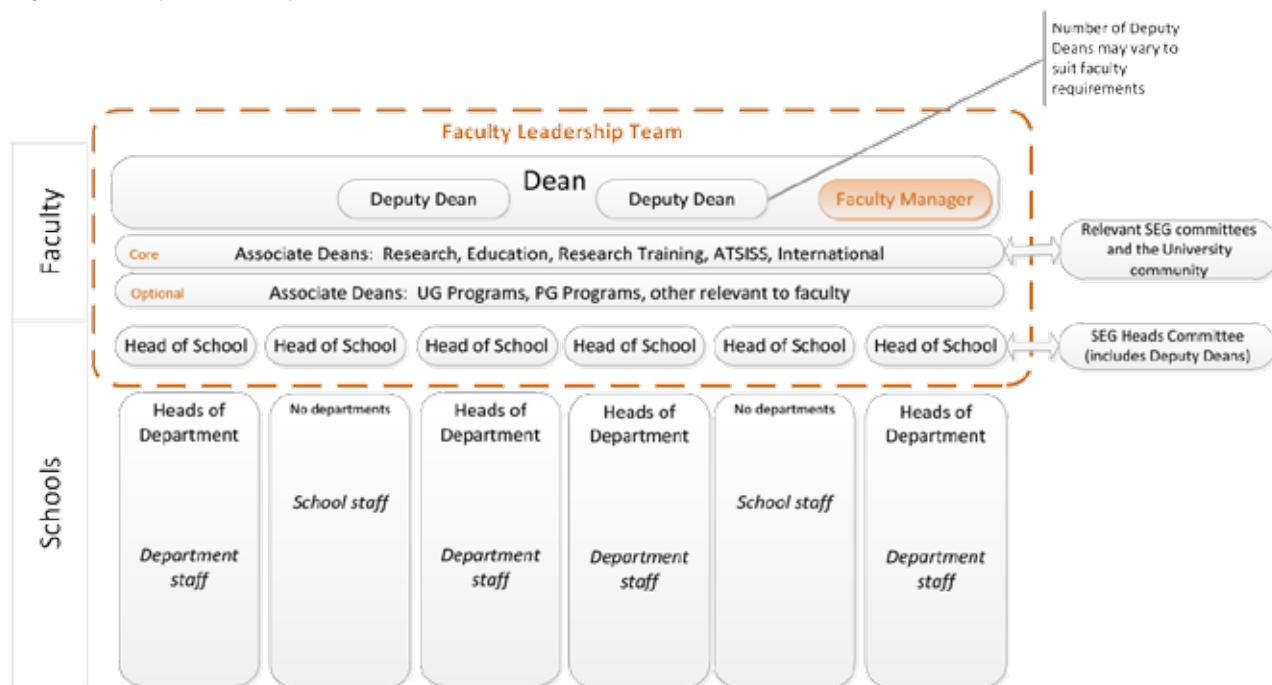
In other words there would be two basic models for internal faculty structures – a school model and a discipline model. Faculties can choose which model they prefer but in doing so would commit to some core roles that ensured consistency across faculties and enabled better communication and consultation across the University.

We offer a broad conceptual representation of these models below.

Figure 16: Example leadership structure for faculties with disciplines



Figure 17: Example leadership structure for faculties with schools



Proposition 3

That the University:

- implements a more consistent faculty leadership framework of deans, deputy deans and core associate deans (detailed in Section 5.2)
- encourages faculties to introduce optional associate dean roles only as relevant.

5.2.3 Faculty managers

In our view faculty managers are vital parts of the faculty and University-wide leadership teams, and are also important contributors to effective operational governance in the University.

If faculty managers are such an integral part of both the faculty and institution-wide leadership teams the question arises as to whether the University should have some oversight over their appointment and development (as we do with deans). One option, common in some universities and indeed the practice at this University until 30 years ago, would be to make faculty manager appointments to the Provost portfolio, with the allocation to faculties being a joint decision for the dean and Provost. Faculty managers might then have a more identifiable career structure (better able to be moved to different faculties over time to build their skill and expertise base) and a more rational remuneration structure than at present. The University would be able to recognise this group of faculty managers as key professional staff who could provide appropriate leadership across a broad range of discipline areas, and increase the potential to embed common business processes across the institution. While reporting formally to the Provost, faculty managers would be located in an identified faculty and report for all daily matters to the relevant dean.

In terms of governance the regular Provost meeting with faculty managers, which is currently an informal committee, would become part of the formal governance structure and have the capacity to request items for discussion to both strategic and operational governance forums. All of this would be aimed at enhancing the impact, coordination and professionalism of the key faculty manager group in the University, so they could better support the work of the faculties and the University more generally.

Proposition 4

That the University:

- adopts a framework through which faculty manager roles become appointments to the Provost portfolio, and have strengthened appointment and development opportunities at institution-wide level
- establishes a formal role for the faculty manager group within both strategic and operational governance forums.

6 Conclusion

This paper addresses the primary question of whether our current academic organisation supports the University's aspiration for greater investment in educational and research excellence. It signals a focus on two core areas for consideration: the need to refine both the faculty structure and the sub-faculty architecture.

Earlier in the paper, it was noted that easing the complexity of our faculty and sub-faculty structures and improving overall service efficiency would lead to corresponding improvements in responsiveness and decision-making, and procedural simplification. This consideration should be extended to our governance structures in a way that facilitates those same improvements.

The establishment of SEG and its committees has been successful in bringing the faculties into the centre of University-wide decision-making, and consequently, it has done much to create a 'one university' culture. Nevertheless, further governance reform is needed as the sheer volume of business put before SEG and its

committees is becoming overwhelming. The number of SEG committees and sub-committees has led to confusion about where decision-making authority, accountability, and responsibility for strategic or operational initiatives truly lies, when in many cases the committee decision-making is delegated back to SEG.

Consequently, not only are we burdening our staff with administrative complexity but the amount of time individuals spend in committee meetings is significant. We need to create more time for staff to concentrate on the core business of education and research.

A recent external review of SEG led to the finding that most committees, including SEG, are performing both strategic and operational roles. Each of these is a major responsibility in its own right, and therefore it is important that there be a separation of the two functions. A reshaping of the SEG committee structure would then have the benefit of focussing SEG on the strategic business of the University whilst assigning items of operational business, regulation and compliance to committees delegated to make operational decisions.

Therefore, it is proposed that once the academic structure is agreed, we consider a set of parallel reforms to our governance framework so that it appropriately reflects the new organisational structure. This would include: (i) a reform of the membership of SEG to reflect the new academic structure and to allow it to concentrate on strategic matters (ii) the creation of a new committee for the purposes of operational decision-making, and (iii) a simplification of our existing committee structure.

6.1 Complete list of proposals for discussion

The purpose of this discussion paper is to elicit your responses to the ideas and proposals laid out within its pages. We encourage you to take the time to share your thoughts.

If you would like to respond to the propositions set out in this discussion paper, please do so by **30 October** via the online form:

- sydney.edu.au/strategy

Proposition 1

That the University:

- restructures the five health faculties into one of the four structure options (detailed in Section 4.5)
- will apply the principles outlined in Section 4.1 to determine the preferred option for health.

Proposition 2

That the University:

- implements a more consistent faculty substructure
- encourages faculties to select either schools or disciplines as the primary sub-faculty entity (detailed in Section 5.1).

Proposition 3

That the University:

- implements a more consistent faculty leadership framework of deans, deputy deans and core associate deans (detailed in Section 5.2)
- encourages faculties to introduce optional associate dean roles only as relevant.

Proposition 4

That the University:

- adopts a framework through which faculty manager roles become appointments to the Provost portfolio, and have strengthened appointment and development opportunities at institution-wide level
- establishes a formal role for the faculty manager group within both strategic and operational governance forums.

Notes

Notes



Contact us

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