



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**

**Engagement in Academic Decision  
Making**

**Final Report on a Review undertaken  
by Professor Emeritus Tom Prebble**

**June 2009**

## Executive Summary

In April 2009 the Vice-Chancellor and Academic Board of Massey University commissioned a review of the engagement of academic staff in academic decision making at the University. Terms of Reference were drawn up (Appendix 1) and Professor Emeritus Tom Prebble was commissioned to undertake the review. A Steering Committee comprising the Vice-Chancellor and senior colleagues was convened to guide the project.

The review took as its starting point the report and recommendations of the *Review of Academic Policy-Formation at Massey University* completed in November 2001 (the 'Rumball Report'). This provided an initial focus on Academic Board, its subcommittees and its relations with the University Council. But the current review has extended further and considered academic engagement at other levels of the University and in particular at a College and academic unit level.

- The review found that staff at most levels of the University were dissatisfied with their level of engagement with academic decision making affecting their work and the direction of the wider University. This was generally attributed to the growth of 'managerialism' at the University over the past decade or more, to the intensification of academic work brought about by funding pressures and PBRF, and to the challenges posed by a complex, multi-college, multi-campus, multi-modal working environment.
- Academic Board was a source of particular concern and criticism by its members and stakeholders alike. It was seen as 'rubber stamping' proposals from Colleges and reluctant to entertain debate or criticism on matters of important academic principle or strategy. Recommendations are made with the aim of encouraging more frequent and far-reaching debates on such issues.
- Engagement at a College level was also considered. The existing formal decision making structures, comprising program and subject groups, Postgraduate and Undergraduate Studies Committees and College Boards were generally perceived to be discharging their formal academic regulatory roles in a satisfactory manner, though the review found scope for wider debate on matters of principle and strategy, particularly at College Boards. Other groupings such as Professorial Forums and College Forums tended to struggle to maintain interest and relevance.
- The review found cause for concern at the low level of engagement in decision making of many rank-and-file academic staff. A number of options are canvassed for developing opportunities for regular, structured discourse among colleagues about the nature of their collective work.

## **Acknowledgements**

The cooperation and candour of the many dozens of academics who agreed to talk with the reviewer are appreciated as is the support of the Office of the Registrar in making the arrangements for these discussions.

While considerable effort has been made to gain a representative view of the issues, it was not practical to talk to the entire academic community. The reviewer has endeavoured to be even-handed in his analysis and recommendations but, finally, the report is no more than one person's impressions and opinions. It should also be acknowledged that this review was not able to address particular circumstances affecting individuals, programs or locations.

## **Project methodology**

The project involved three phases of data gathering.

The first phase comprised a documentary search to determine the extent to which the findings and recommendations of the 2002 'Rumball Report' had been implemented. This included a review of the various reports to Academic Board and to Council on this process between 2001 and 2006. It also involved an analysis of the terms of reference of Academic Board and its various subcommittees, and an analysis of the minutes and recommendations of Academic Board for 2008.

The second phase comprised an overview of the recent literature on the subject of academic governance in Australia and New Zealand.

The third and most important phase comprised a series of interviews with individuals and groups of academic staff concerning their experience of engaging in academic decision making at Massey University. In consultation with the Project Advisory Committee, it was decided to conduct discursive interviews with key individuals and with groups of staff selected on the basis of their shared experience. Where the numbers of staff in a particular cluster group was very large, prospective respondents were selected on a random basis from the targeted population with the aim of generating interview groups of up to a dozen at a time.

Acceptance rates from selected individuals were almost 100%. Rates for cluster groups varied from about 75% for elected members of Academic Board down to somewhere closer to 25% for academic staff at large from selected campuses and colleges. This method of sampling may have resulted in a systematic bias among the respondents from some groups. Most of the individuals who accepted the invitation to meet the reviewer were already engaged in academic decision making at some level within the University or else held strong views about the subject or, just as often, both. However, there were a few individuals who were able to reflect the experience of their many colleagues who were not well informed about options for engaging in

such decision making or else for a variety of reasons had chosen not to engage.

The discussion groups were drawn from the following clusters:

- Elected members of professorial and non-professorial members of Academic Board at Albany, Palmerston North and Wellington (3 groups)
- Heads of Department/Schools/Institutes from one college
- Academic staff at large drawn from three separate colleges at three campuses (3 groups)
- Māori members of Academic Board
- Members of the Professorial Forum of one college.

The following individuals were interviewed:

- Chancellor
- Vice-Chancellor
- Registrar
- Chairs of four of the standing committees of Academic Board
- Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Member of Academic Board elected to serve on Council
- Member of academic staff elected to serve on Council
- A number of individual academics who came to the attention of the reviewer for their particular experience.

## **The ‘Rumball Report’ and its recommendations**

In April 2001 the Vice-Chancellor convened a committee chaired by Professor Sylvia Rumball to review Academic Policy Formation at Massey University. The committee presented its final report and recommendations in November 2001. The report proposed a framework of principles for collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy formation. These principles continue to provide a strong basis for academic engagement in decision making and they are therefore appended to this report (Appendix 2)

Examination of the state of academic policy formation at the University against this set of principles led to a set of 22 recommendations. These recommendations are presented in Appendix 3 along with a record of their reception by the University Council and their implementation in the years following the Report.

In summary, many of the recommendations of the Rumball Report were for structural changes to the composition and terms of reference of academic decision-making bodies and for the relationships and communications among them. The great majority of these recommendations were accepted by Academic Board and by Council. A smaller, but still substantial majority of these recommendations, have actually been implemented with varying degrees of precision.

These developments have not been trivial: Academic Board has changed from the preserve of professorial staff to a membership more representative of the academic community of the University; this pattern of representation has been adopted by College Boards; there has been an effort to acknowledge the commitment to Māori partnership in the composition of the key academic decision-making forums of the University; and Academic Committee has been given increased delegation for many of the more minor aspects of academic approval and quality assurance.

The only proposal for significant structural change that was explicitly rejected was for an elected Chair for Academic Board. A similar proposal for elected Chairs for College Boards was accepted in principle but not actually implemented. Other proposals for enhancing engagement at a College and departmental level, through the creation of College Forums and Professorial Forums have been implemented with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success.

The remaining sections of this report address the other tasks listed in the terms of reference for this review and look beyond a documentary analysis. They draw on the opinions and experience of a large number of academic staff to assess the level of engagement of academics in academic and strategic decision making at Massey University and make a number of recommendations for enhancing that engagement. This analysis is based on an understanding of the University's current systems of governance and management and the way these systems have evolved over the life of the University. An overview of the evolution of Massey' systems of management and academic governance is provided in Appendix 4.

## **Overview of academic engagement**

Most members of the academic staff who contributed to this review were dissatisfied with the opportunities available to them for engaging in academic decision making. The nature of their concerns depended on their status and their individual experience.

Rank and file academics were often unaware of the existing committee structures for allowing such engagement, they commented on the lack of opportunities for professional discourse with colleagues about the nature and direction of their work, they cited pressures of work as a barrier to such engagement, and they were sometimes cynical of the efforts made by management to 'consult' them on important developments.

More experienced academic staff and those with formal leadership responsibilities such as program leaders were more knowledgeable about the opportunities available to them to engage in academic decision making and, by the nature of their responsibilities, they were endeavouring to take advantage of these opportunities. However, this group were critical of what they saw as the steady growth of 'managerialism' within the University and the encroachment of a culture of compliance and risk management that reduced their own levels of discretion.

Heads of units acknowledged that their roles as budget and staffing managers for their units gave them an important influence on academic planning and programming within their units. Their presence on College Boards and College Executive Groups extended this influence beyond their units to the College as a whole. However, many unit heads acknowledged that their managerial responsibilities made it difficult for them to continue to act as discipline or academic leaders and they were often unsure where that leadership would come from. Many unit heads were also aware of the limited scope their positions offered them to engage in debate at a University level on important matters of principle.

Professorial staff had some quite distinct concerns about their opportunities for engaging in academic decision making. Many continued to lament their exclusion from the former 'Professorial Board' and wished to make a stronger contribution to the strategic direction of the University.

Staff from these different levels expressed opinions about the opportunities offered by the various boards and committees of the University but these reactions will be considered in the sections that follow.

In spite of these generally negative perceptions of the state of academic engagement, staff were hopeful the situation could be improved. They were also encouraged by the commitment of the Vice-Chancellor to improving opportunities for communication and engagement.

## **Engagement in academic decision making at the Institutional Level**

### ***Academic Board***

#### **Role and Function**

The Terms of Reference of Academic Board are drawn directly from the Education Act 1989 Section 182 (a) and (b):

*The Council of an institution shall establish an academic board consisting of the institution's chief executive, and members of the staff and students of the institution, to:*

- (a) Advise the Council on matters relating to courses of study or training awards, and other academic matters; and*
- (b) Exercise powers delegated to it by Council.*

Academic Board and its committees form part of the academic governance structure of the University. While the chief executive, or Vice-Chancellor, is an ex officio member of Academic Board, the Board stands separate from the management line of the University. Its accountability is to Council. The Board is obliged to provide Council with advice on an unspecified range of academic matters; Council is obliged to receive that advice if not obliged to comply with it.

The recent Cycle 4 Academic Audit found that “the Academic Board is not working well”. The report suggests that the role, responsibilities and functions of the board are not clearly understood, that there is inadequate communication of Board decisions with colleges, and that the Board is not fulfilling the important challenge of drawing this multi-college, multi-campus institution together. However, the report does not indicate what the primary role of Academic Board should be other than to imply that it may be derived from the responsibilities of its subcommittees.

Without further specification, and taking into account the powers already delegated to Academic Board by Council, the role of Academic Board should be seen as primarily an advisory one. Its role is to advise Council on all academic matters that fall within the Council’s governance responsibilities.

### **Nature of Academic Board Business**

Most members of Academic Board expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the scope for debate at the Board. The reports and recommendations of Academic Committee comprise the majority of each agenda. These in turn comprise sets of programme proposals and regulations from each College on their proposals to CUAP plus the occasional item on University-wide academic policy. The former proposals have already been through at least three iterations by the time they reach Academic Board. They will have started at a programme or department level, they will then have proceeded to the College’s Graduate or Undergraduate Studies Committee, and from there to Academic Committee before they reach Academic Board. Members of the respective Colleges and even members of Academic Committee are expected to be supportive of these proposals. Board members from other Colleges find it difficult and invidious to challenge these proposals at this late stage in the deliberative process. While members of Academic Board have always been entitled to bring matters of concern to the Board, few feel able to take this opportunity. Instead, those wishing to raise and debate substantive issues of academic strategy, policy or practice sometimes do so in respect of specific programme proposals from another College. This is seldom a successful tactic.

Reports from the other standing committees prove little more rewarding. The newly constituted Teaching and Learning Committee is beginning to generate some useful debate on the Board, particularly on eLearning and assessment. It is to be hoped that this committee can continue to broaden its scope to consider important issues across the whole spectrum of teaching and learning. The annual report of the Graduate Studies Committee has been used to initiate occasional debate on some important questions of policy. The remaining committees seldom take advantage of their access to Academic Board to generate such debate.

At present, the University is failing to take advantage of the contribution Academic Board can and should make to academic debate and engagement. In part this failure is the result of an overly cautious interpretation of the term

'academic' when determining matters appropriate for debate by the Board. It may also reflect a concern on the part of management that the Board might overstep its role of academic governance. All parties need to recognise that the issues of management and academic governance are not tightly and exclusively distinguished by formal positions. Management is certainly responsible for decisions on strategy, planning, management and resourcing but managers should also acknowledge that many of these decisions will have an impact on the academic work of the University and should be subject to examination and debate by Academic Board. The Board, on its part, needs to acknowledge the constraints within which management is required to work and recognise that its own input on such matters is no more than advisory.

One of the recommendations of the Rumball Report that met the approval of Academic Board and Council was that there be more regular opportunity for debate on matters of academic principle and strategy on Academic Board. An analysis of the minutes of Academic Board in recent years, supported by the reported experience of Board members, suggests this has not happened. This review can do no less than repeat that recommendation:

**Recommendation:** *That the Agenda of Academic Board should regularly include opportunities for reflection, debate and academic policy-formation focused on the values of the University, its strategic direction and academic policies and practices that have significant implications for teaching and research.*

## **Composition of Academic Board**

As noted in the section on the Rumball Report and its implementation, the membership of Academic Board is now broadly representative of the University's staff and student community. It is a large board of up to 69 members, up to 47 of whom are elected by constituencies of Māori academic staff, professors, academic staff at large and students respectively.

There are grounds for considering a reduction in the size of the Board. The current Board is too large to permit the kind of rigorous and robust debate called for. Even allowing for a typical meeting attendance of just 60% of total membership, the size of attendance is not conducive to an inclusive exchange of views. A number of Board members mentioned that only a minority of members contribute regularly to the discussions and that many of the current members lack the depth of experience and leadership required for serious debate on substantive academic matters. Too much should not be made of this argument as the average agenda hardly encourages active debate. However, the balance between expertise and representation may have been tipped too far in favour of the latter but to the advantage of neither.

A reduction in membership size could be achieved in a number of ways. The principle that elected members should remain in the majority is worth re-examining. It is by no means clear that this principle has enhanced the work of the Board or that its relaxation would threaten the interest of groups

currently represented on the Board. At the same time, a reduction of some 10 to 20 members could be achieved without breaching this principle. Students should be encouraged to consider the nature of their representation on the Board. Arguably, they would be better served by a couple of representatives who were prepared to serve for a term longer than a single year than they are by the current cohort of one term members. Likewise, the attempt to ensure that all categories and locations of staff are directly represented on the Board may distract the Board from its real purpose of academic debate and advice.

**Recommendation:** *That there be a review of the membership of Academic Board with a view to reducing its size.*

A caveat should accompany this recommendation. The international experience suggests that board composition is seldom the major determinant of effectiveness. Far more important are issues of purpose, leadership and communication.

### **Chairmanship of Academic Board**

One of the few recommendations of the Rumball Report to be rejected outright was for the chairmanship of Academic Board to be an elected position. This may have seemed an undesirable and unusual development at that time. It may have been interpreted as challenging the Vice-Chancellor's role as academic leader as well as chief executive of the University and introducing the risk of having two competing streams of advice to the University Council. In fact, there is a converse dimension to both of these arguments. In his role as Chair of Academic Board, the Vice-Chancellor must act as an objective chair and can only adopt a strong advocacy position on a contentious issue at some risk to that neutral stance. And when reporting to Council, the Vice-Chancellor must reconcile his obligation to report even-handedly on Board decisions with his executive accountability to the Council.

The experience of a number of Australian universities of adopting an elected chair for their academic boards is encouraging. Several universities have followed this practice (Dooley, 2007; Winchester, 2007). In general they have found an elected chair relieves vice-chancellors of the role conflict involved in chairing the board, helps to clarify the role of academic board as a source of advice distinct from the management line, and allows the chair to focus on the business of the board. Most importantly for Massey University at this time, such a development would send a clear message to Academic Board and to the wider academic community that both Council and the University's management line wishes to encourage the engagement of academic staff in academic decision making.

**Recommendation:** *That the University agree in principle that the Chair of Academic Board be elected from the membership of Academic Board and establish a taskforce to recommend on eligibility of candidates for the position, on an electoral process for the position, on the terms of reference and tenure of the position, on the nature and size of the*

*support establishment required for this position, and the nature of the formal relationship of this position with the University Council.*

The selection of a chairperson is critical to the success of this change. It needs to be a senior academic with the confidence of the academic community and the management, with experience and expertise in chairmanship and university governance, and with a commitment to an extended period of service in the role. The task force will need to consider whether electors for the position be restricted to non-executive senior members of academic staff on Academic Board or whether there is advantage in adopting a more inclusive approach. For instance, the involvement of the Senior Leadership Team in this selection may be important in persuading a suitable candidate to put themselves forward for what will be a challenging career commitment. The position will also need to be adequately supported if the change of chairmanship is to be effective. Australian experience suggests that an elected chair of a busy Academic Board will require a time allocation of between .2 and .5 depending on the size of the mandate, the support of a dedicated office, and a budget to support the work of the Board. The nature of the relationship of the Chair with the University Council will be addressed below.

The earlier recommendation about encouraging more debate on matters of academic principle and strategy should be a key responsibility of the elected Chair. The Chair should take a medium and long term view of the work programmes of the Senior Leadership Team, the five Colleges and the Council and identify upcoming issues that have an important academic dimension. One source of such information is the current practice of 'early notification' from Colleges of upcoming programme proposals. These should alert the Chair to issues that need early debate by the Board. Where possible these and other important developments should be identified at an early stage in their gestation when debate and feedback from Academic Board can still provide useful input to the process. Where possible, too, early notice can be given of these discussions to allow for the preparation of discussion papers and consultation with a wider circle of academic forums. There have been a few instances in recent years when a member of the SLT has been invited to make a presentation to Academic Board on a significant strategic development. These have been well received and could be repeated more frequently to advantage.

### **Relationship between Academic Board and Council**

Academic Board is a committee of the University Council. It carries a number of formal delegations from Council – principally that of considering and approving any changes to academic programmes. It is also entitled to advise the Council on unspecified academic matters. In practice, the relationship is a limited one with Council receiving the regular minute reports of Academic Board minus the business already covered by Council delegation, notably program proposals being submitted to CUAP. As Chair of Academic Board, the Vice-Chancellor is the primary voice of Academic Board on Council

although there are two members of Academic Board elected to Council by their peers.

The role and responsibilities of these two elected members is not altogether clear. Over a number of years these members have attempted to maintain lines of communication between the two bodies, interpreting Academic Board decisions and concerns to Council when needed and reporting formally to Academic Board after each meeting of Council. The latter task has proved difficult as a considerable amount of Council business is carried out in the confidential part of the meetings. These two members are not, strictly speaking, representatives of Academic Board on Council and it may not be in the interest of a united governance body that they should be. For instance, they do not speak on behalf of Academic Board and are not bound to support each and every decision taken by Academic Board. But nor is that a reasonable expectation of the Vice-Chancellor in his current role as Chair of Academic Board.

The relationship between Academic Board and Council would be very much assisted with the introduction of an elected Chair to the former body. One of the responsibilities of the Chair would be to report regularly to Council, to alert Council to matters of academic interest or concern to the Board, and to encourage Council to draw more frequently on the advice of the Board. This could be achieved by having the Chair of Academic Board be in attendance at the appropriate point in Council meetings to present the reports and recommendations of Academic Board and to discuss matters of relevance to either party. This measure would assure the Board of formal representation to Council, provide Council with a clear point of contact with the Board, and relieve the Vice-Chancellor of the task of attempting to represent a set of recommendations that he might not always agree with.

**Recommendation:** *That Council invite an elected Chair of Academic Board to meet with Council on a regular basis to present the reports and recommendations of the Board and to provide advice to Council on academic matters.*

## **The Committees of Academic Board**

The committees of Academic Board include Academic, Teaching and Learning, Doctoral Research, Scholarships, Research, Human Ethics, and Library.

The purpose of Academic Committee is to “contribute[s] to quality assurance of the University’s academic portfolio of qualifications and papers through cross-College peer review and scrutiny of proposals made to the Committee, and the provision of advice to Academic Board”. The Committee considers *inter alia* all proposals from Colleges for changes and additions to papers and programmes, changes to academic policies and procedures and changes to degree structures and definitions. Following consideration, these proposals come forward to Academic in the form of reports and recommendations.

Several years ago, in an effort to streamline this process, Academic Board delegated powers of approval to Academic Committee for minor Calendar changes, proposals for new papers, approval of Calendar dates, approval of Graduating Year Review Reports for forwarding to CUAP, and approval for community education courses. This measure did reduce the volume of reports and recommendations requiring consideration by Academic Board. Nevertheless, Academic Committee business regularly occupies around half of each Academic Board meeting time with accompanying papers accounting for an even larger proportion of agenda materials.

A number of criticisms were received concerning both Academic Committee and the way Academic Board relates to it. Some academics believe that the composition of Academic Committee – essentially the PVCs and Academic Directors from each College – contributes to a permissive approach to one another's proposals. Others expressed considerable frustration with the volume of material coming forward from Academic Committee and called for a greater level of delegation to be given to Academic Committee.

This review would not support any fundamental change to the composition of Academic Committee or to the level of delegation extended to it by Academic Board. Academic Committee has always been a challenging forum to manage. However, it provides an important opportunity for PVCs to argue the merits of their proposals among their peers, a task they should be encouraged not to delegate to others. Academic Board in turn provides a final opportunity for those generally not closely involved in the development of a particular set of proposals to scrutinize and challenge them when appropriate. This helps to mitigate any risk of permissive treatment by previous committees.

There are measures that Academic Board might take to reduce the amount of time and effort it currently devotes to a consideration of voluminous sets of reports and recommendations from Academic Committee. To begin with, the earlier proposal to facilitate debate on more substantive matters of principle and strategy may encourage members to deal with the proposals from Academic Committee more expeditiously and less fractiously. Another device, already modelled by the Chair recently in tasking two or three Board members to take special responsibility for scrutinizing the minutes on behalf of the Board, might be extended to apply to considering complex programme proposals from Academic Committee. A third possibility would be for various categories of Academic Committee proposals to be circulated and approved in an asynchronous online environment. This latter possibility is the subject of a recommendation in a later section.

The review makes no recommendations concerning the Board's six other committees other than to encourage each of them to report more regularly to Academic Board on matters likely to be of interest or concern. It is noteworthy that only one or two of these committees seek a regular place on the agenda of Academic Board, the remainder restricting their communications to their annual reports.

An elected Chair of Academic Board will need the help of the Board in guiding and shaping the work of the Board. An Agenda Committee – one of the measures already approved by Academic Board following the Rumball Report – will be essential to this task.

**Recommendation:** *That Academic Board re-appoint an Agenda Committee comprising at a minimum the Chair of the Board, the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee and one member of the Board elected by the elected members of the Board.*

The School of Music presents a particular challenge to the University's commitment to academic engagement. Falling outside the University's College structure, the School is represented by a Board of Studies which is a committee of Academic Board. However, the programme proposals of the Board of Studies are considered by Academic Committee on which the School is not represented and, by the nature of that Committee's delegation, many of these decisions are never actually considered by Academic Board. This review was not able to suggest a resolution but urges the attention of the University to this situation.

### **Induction, training and support of members of Academic Board**

Members of Academic Board reported a bewildering introduction to the Board and no formal induction to their new role. Several members were unaware that the Board has statutory authority under the Education Act or that there are formal terms of reference for the Board. Most elected members reported uncertainty as to their responsibility for reporting back to their respective constituencies on Board deliberations. Even after serving on the Board for two or three years, many Board members could not identify more than half their fellow Board members by name or position within the University. There is a need for more systematic and intensive induction and training for members. The proposed elected Chair of Academic Board working with the Office of the Registrar is best placed to commission such training.

**Recommendation:** *That the Chair of Academic Board and Registrar assume responsibility for commissioning appropriate induction training for members of Academic Board.*

The Audit Report commented on the lack of financial support available to allow Board members from the Auckland and Wellington Campuses to attend meetings in Palmerston North. This review received similar feedback from Board members on those campuses. In the absence of videoconferencing facilities, representatives from those campuses are placed at an unacceptable disadvantage.

**Recommendations:** *That, unless there are satisfactory videoconferencing facilities in place, the Office of the Chair of Academic Board be resourced to meet the costs of members travelling from their local campus to attend Board meetings.*

This review was struck by the fact that this issue should remain unresolved almost a decade after campus-based places were guaranteed on Academic Board. Academic staff participating in this review indicated that a similar problem was encountered with other University-level committees and that it serves to discourage more active engagement in these forums by academics from these campuses.

**Recommendation:** *That all University-level committees have a published protocol indicating the source of funding to assist members travelling between campuses to attend meetings and that these protocols have the formal approval of the respective budget centre managers.*

### **Application of Information Technology to enhance engagement**

Massey University has made some important commitments to the development and use of a range of information technologies to support its teaching and administration functions. It has been less progressive in its use of these technologies to support its processes of collective decision making. Two possible developments have been mentioned already in relation to the support of Academic Board business. The first is the use of videoconferencing to allow members to participate in meetings from remote campuses. The second is the development of an online environment both to support the distribution and storage of Board documents and to allow asynchronous discussion on those documents and proposals by Board members. There was one suggestion made to the review that much of the consideration and approval of College programme proposals coming to the Board from Academic Committee could be processed entirely in this online environment. There was another suggestion that, with little if any modification, Stream could provide a user-friendly environment for any University committee. Given the importance of committee work to the life of the University, and the particular challenges posed by Massey's multi-campus structure, it would seem timely to investigate these possibilities more closely.

**Recommendation:** *That a project be initiated to investigate and promote the greater use of information technology to support engagement in decision making.*

### **Communications from Academic Board**

There was general agreement among staff interviewed for this review, both members of Academic Board and others, that communication of Board decisions is not well done. Individual Board members are generally unsure of their obligations to report back from meetings to the constituencies that elect them. This problem is common to Academic Board committees as well.

In part this difficulty and uncertainty is a reflection of the nature of Academic Board business: the fact that such a large proportion of meetings and reports of Board meetings have to do with the approval status of detailed programme

proposals from each College. Generally, the few people who really need to know these outcomes – the College Academic Directors and the Heads of department and programme directors with proposals under consideration – are in direct contact with their College representatives on Academic Board within hours of each meeting. However, this form of informal communication is hardly adequate. The previously proposed project on the application of IT to collective decision making may offer a solution. This project should also be asked to consider how the minutes and recommendations of Academic Board can be posted at an early stage to a publicly accessible website, albeit in a draft form before they have been approved at the following meeting.

There is probably no single answer to the challenge of communicating the work of a committee to the wider stake holders. In some cases, posting the reports of a committee on a website may be sufficient; other committees might wish their members to act as links to their respective University communities in which case it will be helpful if those members are also members of their respective College Boards; still others might use newsletters, email lists and other distribution methods. The important thing is clarifying where this responsibility for communication is assigned.

**Recommendation:** *That each University-level committee develop and implement a communication plan for keeping its stake holders informed of its work.*

### ***A larger mandate for Academic Board?***

The foregoing sections on the role, membership, leadership and operation of Academic Board are all premised on a largely advisory role for the Board. However, the terms of the Education Act 1989 Sections 182 would allow Council to expand that role to one of operational responsibility for academic quality if it chose to do so. The recent Audit Report identified a gap in the University's policies and systems for quality assurance. The Panel observed that these systems assigned responsibility for quality assurance to senior managers for the work of their various Colleges and Division. The Panel was not convinced that this devolved approach was adequate and recommended the development of an overarching quality assurance framework for the University. Currently, responsibility for the University's quality assurance framework rests with the senior leadership. An argument can be made that Academic Board should play an integral role in such a framework. Quality assurance should be at the heart of Academic Board's mission but at present its involvement in this function is largely restricted to its traditional roles of approving changes to academic programmes and regulations.

A thorough exploration of the implications of assuming responsibility for the quality assurance of all of the University's academic activities lies beyond the brief of this review which has been focussed on academic engagement. However, it is a direction that other universities have taken in an effort to

revitalise their academic boards and it is an option that Massey University should examine. Such a development would require the Board to actively monitor the performance of all of its academic programs and activities. It would require access to regular summary reports on major program and student outcomes such as student recruitment, retention and completions; student satisfaction data such as SECAT; information on stake holder engagement; PBRF results; international academic activities; progress on the implementation and outcomes of systems to support program development delivery and evaluation, to list just the more obvious. Such a development would have big implications for the role of Chair of Academic Board, for the level of resourcing that the role would require, for the reporting relationships between this position and both senior leadership and Council and for the nature and work of the Board's committees.

**Recommendation:** *That the Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team examine the case for according primary responsibility for academic quality assurance to Academic Board with a view to making an appropriate recommendation to Council.*

## **Engagement in academic decision making at the College level**

### ***College Boards***

The principal organs of academic governance at the College level are College Boards and their various committees, in particular Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees. Their roles are analogous to those of Academic Board and its subcommittees. Their business consists largely of deliberating on proposals for new papers and programmes, changes to existing papers and qualifications and changes to academic regulations. Their composition, as with Academic Board, is now reasonably representative of the College academic community with a mix of ex officio and elected members.

Members and College-based observers of College Boards make similar observations and criticisms of the work of those boards as are made of Academic Board: that they are preoccupied with the details of academic programmes and the academic regulatory environment; that there is little opportunity to debate matters of academic principle or strategy; and that increasingly, many of the important questions relating to programme development and deployment are being made by management rather than by collegial processes.

The question arises as to whether the recommendations that are being proposed for Academic Board should apply equally to College Boards. On balance, this review would not favour major changes along those lines. It is important that College Boards continue to focus on the important work of deliberating on changes in programme offerings and academic regulations. These are the forums best able to assess the impact of such decisions on the

life of the College and their various programme offerings. They are also well-placed to consider the advice of college and unit management as they do so. Nor is it important that Pro Vice-Chancellors give way to elected chairs for College Boards. It is more important that Pro Vice-Chancellors are challenged to continue to reconcile their management responsibilities with those of academic leadership of their Colleges.

College Boards are already constituted on representative lines with most members securing their places by election. Some comment was received during the review on the uneven representation of individual disciplines on College Boards and on Academic Board and the limitations that this places on opportunities for engagement. This comes about, it was suggested, by the exigencies of the electoral process in the case of College Boards, and the fact that a discipline with few if any professors is handicapped when competing for most of the available places on Academic Board. It is not clear how widespread this concern is or how it might be addressed other than by encouraging such bodies to review issues of representation and equity on a regular basis. This review is reluctant to recommend an increase in discipline-specific positions on either College Boards or Academic Board if it comes at the expense of the numbers of positions determined by open election.

The one recommendation that could be applied to College Boards as well as to Academic Board is to encourage more regular debate on matters of academic principle and strategy. In some cases, these could be on issues initiated by Academic Board, but other debates could relate entirely to the work of the respective College.

### ***Professorial staff***

When Professorial Board was reconstituted as Academic Board, professors lost their ex officio membership of the Board. From that point, there were just 15 places reserved for professorial staff. The Rumball Committee's recommendation for the creation of Professorial Forums in each College was an acknowledgement of the loss of representation that this change represented. As discussed in a previous section, Colleges have interpreted this recommendation in different ways. The Professorial Forum of the College of Science continues to meet more regularly than the others and this appears to be a reflection of the wishes of its members. Some of those members would appreciate a greater level of engagement in University-wide issues but, outside of winning places on Academic Board by process of election, their options are limited. A previous recommendation encourages the Chair of Academic Board to seek earlier and wider consultation on matters of academic principle and strategy. A Professorial Forum prepared to make a considered response to Academic Board on an issue of this kind would be making a useful contribution to University decision making.

### ***College Forums***

As mentioned already, Colleges have introduced College Forums with varying

success. Early efforts to encourage widespread interaction at such forums have tended to give way to more formal presentations from the College leadership on matters of current importance. As with Professorial Forums, they are only worthwhile as long as their members find them useful. Nonetheless, staff in several Colleges commented on their units' isolation from other units and colleagues across the College. There may be other ways in which College leadership can establish opportunities for academics to meet across departmental boundaries and other ways in which knowledge and good practice can be shared and transferred among units.

The PVC of one College is assembling a small group drawn from across the College that will both encourage and filter new ideas. The group will assess the ideas against the University and College strategies, make some determination of the market case for a proposal, the resource implications, and the impact on other programmes and activities within the College and beyond before advising the PVC on further development and consultation required. This is an opportunity for staff to contribute and confer across departmental boundaries before proceeding with formal programme proposals.

## **Engagement in academic decision making at the unit level**

### ***Heads of academic units***

On first consideration, engagement in academic decision making might not seem a problematic issue for heads of academic units. HoD/S/Is are members of their respective College Boards and directly involved in all proposals affecting the programmes within their areas. In consultation with programme directors they are responsible for staffing and resourcing teaching programmes. They are also members of their College Executive Group and direct parties to all College strategies. However, the roles of unit heads have undergone some major changes over the past decade and some of these changes have attenuated the contribution these unit heads are able to make to academic decision making.

Unit heads have become budget managers for large, often disparate groups of staff, subjects and programmes. They are also compliance managers in an increasingly regulated management culture. They are managing at a time when resourcing is tight and options are limited. These trends and pressures are inexorable and seriously threaten the unit heads' other roles as subject leaders, team leaders and programme leaders. In the face of the uncompromisingly insistent pressures of management and compliance, unit heads will find it difficult to retain a focus on academic leadership or to actively encourage their junior colleagues to engage in the collective life and decision making of their units.

Unit managers recognise this shift in their role and would appreciate assistance in rebalancing their roles. Two measures suggested by Heads of School were more thorough training for their changing roles and more structured opportunities to network with their peers across the University. A year or two ago there was a short-lived effort to convene a regular forum for unit heads. Apparently this was well-received by the attendees but has not persisted. It may be that implementing this second measure would be a useful first step in addressing the training issue as well. This group was also conscious that its input to the discourse on University strategy is now limited to their contribution to their individual College Executive Group and, as senior members of the University community, they feel they have more to contribute in this regard.

**Recommendation:** *That a forum for academic unit heads be established with a view to providing mutual support and training and to offering another source of advice on University strategy.*

### **Academic staff at large**

Three group interviews were held with 'rank and file' academic staff, each with staff from a single College drawn from different campuses. While the invitations to participate were extended across all levels of seniority, the pattern of responses tended to be skewed in favour of more senior staff. Two of the groups comprised mostly long-serving, relatively senior members of staff holding a variety of programme leadership and committee membership roles within their Colleges. Only the third group contained a significant number of staff with little or no active engagement in decision making beyond their immediate work group.

Most of the individuals in all three groups reported a moderate to high level of alienation from the decision making processes of their College and of the University. Some acknowledged there were opportunities for staff to engage if they wished but suggested they were too preoccupied with pressures of work and PBRF. Many respondents suggested that the younger generation of academics no longer had the same commitment to the collective life of the University that an older generation may have had. Those holding programme leadership and committee responsibilities expressed a good deal of frustration with the compliance culture they considered they were working within. They were particularly frustrated when their programme planning was thwarted by College-level policies for rationalising offerings or by rulings and interpretations from Academic Directors. Many felt that the majority were being unnecessarily constrained by rules intended to alter the behaviour of a small minority of errant colleagues. They objected to what they saw as a bureaucratisation of a professional activity. They conceded that there was no shortage of 'consultation' but they were cynical about the genuineness of this process, observing that most communication seemed to come in one direction – downwards. Most staff were critical of the level of 'managerialism' they observed at every level of the institution.

In spite of this generally negative message, the group from one College conceded that their College was pursuing a particularly consultative process in redesigning their major undergraduate degree and that they were enjoying the engagement with the process and with their colleagues. Staff from another College reported positively on the efforts their PVC was making to involve staff in considering the implications of the University's 20/20 Strategy for that College. Staff were frequently ambivalent about the move to a more strategic approach but on balance acknowledged the need for such an approach and the need for clear leadership. There was also a grudging acknowledgement that a strategic approach would mean that some programmes and possibilities could be favoured over others.

There are probably no easy or immediate solutions to the current level of disengagement of rank and file staff. Some asked for better induction to the University's decision making structures but this is probably better achieved at a College or even a unit level than at an institutional level. Most rank and file staff are primarily interested in their own work, in the programmes to which they contribute, in the work of colleagues in their field and in the policies and plans affecting their work. And yet, many staff noted a lack of hands-on academic or team leadership within their immediate programme or subject team. Many reported a lack of structured opportunities for discussion among peers on curriculum, teaching, assessment, standards, student support and the other aspects of their daily work. Whether this leadership is to come from HoD/S/Is or from programme and subject heads may vary but it should not be left to chance.

There are many ways in which opportunities can be organised for professional discourse among academic colleagues. These might include:

- A proportion of departmental staff meetings devoted to discussion of teaching and other professional matters rather than to management and compliance issues;
- Greater use of team teaching (staff from the College of Education reported an increase in the amount of team work simply in planning for team teaching across the new four year teaching degree);
- A more systematic approach to peer review of teaching, a commitment that tends to be honoured in the breach at present;
- Greater involvement of team members in both the conduct and follow-up of qualification reviews;
- A more formative dimension to the present staff performance interviews; and
- Encouragement and support for 'communities of practice' on teaching and subject themes as well as on research themes.

Communities of practice warrant further exploration. Experience indicates that these can be valuable opportunities for ongoing professional development as well as for professional networking and engagement across formal departmental and subject barriers. However, they are unlikely to be sustained over the medium and longer term without continuing leadership and support from the host College or institution. Some universities draw on their staff development units for ongoing support for communities of practice; the most

successful also call on the endorsement and support from faculty-level leadership such as Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning. This may suggest that Colleges should be considering how they might provide leadership for this process of professional engagement at a College level rather than expecting it to continue to be forthcoming at a unit level. Further exploration of the role that communities of practice might play in encouraging and supporting professional discourse lies outside the brief of this review. However, this is a development the Teaching and Learning Committee may wish to examine.

Rather than recommend any particular course of action to encourage grass roots engagement in collective decision making and professional dialogue among colleagues, it may be more useful to identify a set of principles that might support such engagement.

A first principle would be a commitment to collegial participation in academic decision making by all members of the University community. It is not sufficient for management to provide opportunities for staff to engage in decision making; all staff should accept their responsibility to engage in those processes.

**Recommendation:** *That the University affirms the importance to the well-being of the University of maintaining a strong culture of collegial participation and responsibility in academic decision making and holds all members of the academic community accountable for their contribution to this goal.*

A second principle would be to confirm the responsibility of all academic managers for engaging staff in their reporting line in academic decision making.

**Recommendation:** *That the University affirms that academic managers will be held individually accountable for developing a culture of collegial participation and responsibility in academic decision making within the units for which they are responsible and for engaging staff in academic decision making.*

The third principle concerns the importance of bridging the gap between the management line of the University and both the academic governance line and academic staff at large. At a time when the senior management of the University is adopting a strong, strategic role it is imperative that the academic community at large is well informed about these strategic initiatives and has regular opportunities to contribute to their development and evaluation.

**Recommendation:** *That the University affirms the responsibility of the senior leadership of the University to continue to engage with the wider University community in the planning, implementation and evaluation of key strategic developments.*

## Appendix 1

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Report on Engagement in Academic Decision-making**

The purpose of this review is to assess and report on the effectiveness of academic community engagement in academic decision-making at Massey University. The consultant will prepare a report that is to:

- Assess and comment in progress made in implementing the decisions taken following the 2001 review of academic policy-making;
- Assess and comment on the extent of University community participation in academic decision-making bodies and processes;
- Provide a considered view of the effectiveness of current forums, mechanisms and processes for enabling academic reflection, debate and discussion on issues of strategic academic issues;
- Assess and report on the effectiveness of existing channels for enabling feedback and input into decision-making, and make recommendations for change;
- Evaluate the composition and operations of the Academic Board and its sub-committees in relation to its purpose, and comment on possible changes that would enhance its effectiveness in providing for effective engagement in academic debate and decision-making;
- Evaluate whether the Academic Board should be encouraged to reconsider and clarify its relationship with its sub-committees; and
- Make appropriate recommendations to Academic Board for discussion at the April meeting of the Board

Appendix 2

***Principles for collegial participation and responsibility in academic decision making as articulated by the Rumball Report, 2001***

- Collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy-formation within the University is an essential and distinguishing characteristic of the University as an academic institution;
- An Academic Policy can be described as a policy that either itself directly relates to the structures and ways in which teaching and research is carried out in the University, or is likely to have a significant implication for the structures and ways in which teaching and research are carried out.
- The Treaty of Waitangi has significant implications for how the University as an institution demonstrates its responsibilities to partnership with Māori, and for the ways in which Māori staff and students are able to participate in the structures and processes relevant to the academic policy-formulation in the University.
- The governance-management nexus of the University is located in the interdependent governing and management roles vested by the Education Act in the Council and Vice-Chancellor respectively and should be given balanced and appropriate expression in all areas of the life of the University, including academic policy formation.
- Collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy formation is given expression through three broad means:
  - A. The functions of bodies established to provide advice to Council, or advice to bodies or persons with delegated responsibilities , in the process of policy determination;
  - B. The function of bodies with delegated powers to determine policy; and
  - C. The election, by the relevant collegial constituencies, of representative persons to the membership of Council and of bodies as described in (A) and (B) above, and participation in the networks of information and consultation that support such representative membership.
- Actively maintaining a shared vision and purpose across the University as a single institution requires that growing complexities and changing patterns in organisational structures and management processes are strongly balanced by the structures and processes supporting effective collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy formation.
- Sustained collegial participation and responsibility and responsibility in academic policy formation as an effective and efficient component in the governance-management nexus of the University requires the following understandings and commitments:
  - A clear understanding by all members of the University, especially its academic members, of the requirements of responsible participation in the process of collegial responsibility

- in academic policy-formation, and a commitment to those requirements;
- A positive understanding by all those with leadership and management responsibilities of the ways in which their roles can and must support the efficient and effective implementation of the processes of collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy formation and a commitment to those collegial processes;
- A strong recognition and commitment by all those participating in the processes of collegial responsibility in academic policy formation that the overriding outcome in sought outcomes must be the best interests of the University as a whole in accord with achieving its stated aims and objectives and reflective of its affirmed values;
- The continuing commitment of Council and Vice-Chancellor to maintaining and developing a University community in which collegial participation and responsibility in academic policy formation is a successful and characteristic feature of the ongoing expression of governance-management responsibilities throughout the University.

Appendix 3

***The Recommendations of the Rumball Report (2001) and their reception and implementation by Massey University***

*Recommendation 1: That Council affirm the importance to the well-being of the University of maintaining a strong culture of collegial participation and responsibility in academic decision making, provide time for the University community to respond through Academic Board, and determine its own response to the report and recommendations.*

Council allowed an extended period of consultation with Academic Board and the wider University community during 2002. Academic Board supported the proposal unanimously at its meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> July and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2002 before reconsidering the report and its recommendations in April 2003.

*Recommendation 2: That Council clarify its relationship with Academic Board and that of Academic Board with College Boards.*

Endorsed by Academic Board, accepted by Council in April 2003 and implementation completed by July of that year.

*Recommendation 3: That the practice of early notification ('Early Notice') of matters of academic policy should be established.*

Endorsed and implemented by Academic Board meaning that Council was not required to take a position on the matter.

*Recommendation 4: That current terms of reference for all Boards and Committees be available on the Massey University Website in one location and in a consistent format.*

Endorsed by Academic Board and broadly endorsed by Council. The terms of reference for Academic Board are now readily available on the 'Policy' section of the website; those for college boards are either not yet available or not easily locatable.

*Recommendation 5: That Council review the membership and processes of Council and its Committees to ensure proper representation and involvement of Māori in academic governance on the University as required by the Treaty of Waitangi.*

Endorsed by Academic Board and addressed by Council when considering its constitution and committee structures in May 2004.

*Recommendation 6: That membership and processes of Academic Board and College Boards and their sub-committees be reviewed to ensure that these give effect to Māori partnership according to the Treaty of Waitangi.*

Endorsed by Academic Board and actioned in a comprehensive review of the terms of reference and membership of Academic Board, its sub-committees and College Boards during 2003 and 2004.

*Recommendation 7: That a Kaupapa Māori Board be established in association with Academic Board to provide advice on academic matters, this Board to include representatives of all colleges and campuses elected by Māori.*

Academic Board rejected this recommendation replacing it with a proposal for specific Māori representation on Academic Board from each of the three campuses of the University. This recommendation was incorporated in the reconstitution of Academic Board that took place in 2003 and 2004.

*Recommendation 8: That consideration should be given to the establishment of a Professorial Forum in each college to provide advice on matters of academic policy, to be chaired by a member of the College professoriate.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation, albeit with some dissent. By 2004, the Colleges of Education, Sciences and Business reported the establishment of professorial forums. The forum in the College of Sciences meets at least twice each year with occasional meetings of a chapter at Albany. This appears to be a useful forum for a college with a relatively large number of professors. While the meeting is convened by an elected chair, the Pro Vice-Chancellor uses the meetings as an opportunity to consult and inform the professoriate on matters of strategic importance to the College. The professorial forums of the Colleges of Education and Business tend to convene on an issue-by-issue basis. The PVC of the CoB attends the Professorial Forum of that college; the PVC of the CoE has chosen not to attend.

*Recommendation 9: That College Forums should be strengthened through clarification of the role of the chair, procedures for setting the agenda and terms of reference that specify an advisory role to the College Board.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation but its implementation has been patchy at best. While most colleges continue to convene whole-of-staff assemblies from time to time, these tend to be convened by the respective Pro-Vice Chancellor and comprise a prepared report on matters of concern to the college followed by questions and discussion on those matters.

*Recommendation 10: That consideration should be given to the establishment of Campus Development Committees to provide advice on campus-related issues.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation with a number of votes recorded against it. Council subsequently rejected the recommendation. Whether this reflected a view that there were better mechanisms available for consulting and involving academic staff on campus matters or that such matters were not primarily academic matters is not clear.

*Recommendation 11: That all academic staff ... have an affiliation with their department, Institute or School .. and be provided regular opportunity to discuss, and be expected to participate in, considerations of academic policy in that grouping.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation and by October 2003 each college was able to advise that all academic staff had such an affiliation.

*Recommendation 12: That the agenda for Academic Board be set by agreement of the elected Chair, the Vice-Chancellor and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Maori). The Terms of Reference for Academic Board must include criteria to determine eligible agenda items and the process for placing items on the agenda.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation though the Academic Board Review subcommittee subsequently added a professorial member to this group. However, the failure of Academic Board and Council to adopt the recommendation for an elected Chair of Academic Board (Recommendation 15 below) weakened the intent of this recommendation and the 'agenda committee' has not operated in the manner intended. Nor has Academic Board adopted 'explicit criteria to determine eligible agenda items though there is a provision that a meeting of Academic Board may be called upon written notice by no fewer than 15 members of the Board.

*Recommendation 13: That the Agenda of Academic Board should regularly include opportunities for reflection, debate and academic policy-formation focused on the values of the University, its strategic direction and academic policies and practices that have significant implications for teaching and research.*

This recommendation was carried unanimously by Academic Board although it does not find explicit mention in the terms of Reference of Academic Board as amended during 2003 and 2004. In the past few years there have been very few occasions when matters of academic principle or strategic significance have been brought to Academic Board for general debate. The agenda is largely taken up with the reports and recommendations of its various subcommittees preceded generally by an oral and/or written report from the Vice-Chancellor/Chair.

*Recommendation 14: That the majority of the membership of Academic Board should be elected.*

Academic Board endorsed this recommendation and the principle was upheld in the revised membership provisions of 2003-4. Elected members now comprise 47 of a possible total of 69 members of Academic Board.

*Recommendation 15: That the Chair of Academic Board be elected by Academic Board from the Professorial representatives.*

This recommendation was initially narrowly carried at Academic Board but subsequently rejected by the Academic Board Review Sub-committee. The Vice-Chancellor remains in the Chair.

*Recommendation 16: That the membership of Academic Board should be ... (The full list can be found in the report itself but came to a total of 64 voting members and comprised most of the members of the Senior Leadership Team, the Chairs of the major sub-committees of Academic Board, elected Māori staff, elected professors, elected academic staff, elected student representatives and a small number of key general staff.)*

Academic Board endorsed the principles informing the proposed membership but asked the Academic Board Review Subcommittee to give it further consideration. The latter committee stayed close to the original recommendation, increasing the number of Senior Academic Managers slightly to include the Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellors. Subsequent additions include the Director, School of Music, Director, Pasifika and the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

*Recommendation 17: That Academic Board review the range, functions, membership, and procedures of all its sub-committees to ensure that effective deliberation on academic matters is achieved and that proper and timely advice on academic matters is provided to Academic Board.*

This recommendation was endorsed by Academic Board and generally carried through in the following two years. The principal outcome of these reviews was the dissolution of the Board of Extramural Studies and the establishment, after considerable debate, of the Teaching and Learning Committee. The membership of the Board's committees is broadly in line with the representative composition of the Board itself.

*Recommendation 18: The Academic Committee clarify the composition of Academic Committee, and the relationship of Academic Committee to College Boards, this relationship to be reflected in the Terms of Reference of all these bodies.*

This recommendation was endorsed by Academic Board with the addition of the words 'and review' following 'clarify'. This process of review continued through 2003 and 2004. The upshot of these reviews was to uphold the importance of Academic Committee as the body responsible for assuring the quality of the University's academic qualifications and papers through cross-College peer review and scrutiny of proposals made to Committees and the

provision of advice to Academic Board. The review also delegated to Academic Committee many of the relatively minor matters that had previously been considered by Academic Board including: approval of minor Calendar changes; approval of all proposals from College Board for new papers; approval of key Calendar dates; acceptance of Qualification Review Reports; acceptance of Graduating Year Review Reports; and approval and quality assurance of community education courses. This delegation has reduced, but by no means eliminated, the number of recommendations that are referred to Academic Board by Academic Committee.

*Recommendation 19:*

- *That the majority of the membership of College Boards should be elected by electoral colleges.*
- *That the Chair of each College Board be elected by the College Boards from the Professorial representatives.*
- *That the Pro Vice-Chancellor be an ex-officio member of each College Board.*
- *That all Heads of Departments/Institutes/Schools be ex-officio members of their College Board.*
- *That College Boards include Māori representatives.*
- *That College Boards continue to include student representatives.*
- *That membership of College Boards include cross-College representation.*

This recommendations was adopted by Academic Board. The Colleges of Humanities and Social Science, Education and Design, Fine Arts and Music had completed their reviews by early 2003 with the remaining two colleges following up. The recommendations largely reflected the status quo and did not require major changes. The only recommendation that would have required a significant change – that for elected Chairs for College Boards – was not picked up in any of the College reviews.

*Recommendation 20: That the Staff Training and Development Unit be charged with the responsibility of developing and offering workshops for staff and for student representatives on the following: key structures and policies of the University; key structures and processes for academic policy formation; understanding about the governance-management nexus; understanding about collegiality; responsibility for participating in the collegial responsibilities of the University ..., practical advice on how to be an effective Board/Committee member and the responsibilities therein.*

This recommendation was endorsed by Academic Board but has not led to any targeted and enduring training programmes by TDU or CADeL, its

successor. Regular offerings such as ‘The Big Picture’ and ‘New Staff Orientation’ provide an overview of the University and its systems for newly appointed staff but do not extend to developing skills of engagement in academic decision making. Another set of training courses target the management skills required by HOD/S/Is and other line managers but again do not specifically target the skills and knowledge required by all academics to operate in a collegial decision-making environment.

*Recommendation 21: That Academic Board give effect to their individual rights and responsibilities for collegial participation in academic policy formation by becoming informed about processes and bodies for academic decision-making; participation in departmental, college, campus and other meeting where such participation is invited and expected; and by taking on appropriate academic leadership roles, on a rotating basis, in the University’s academic decision-making bodies.*

Academic Board endorsed the recommendation but only after the addition of the words ‘be encouraged to’ between ‘Academic staff’ and ‘give effect to...’ This amendment came close to nullifying the intent of the original recommendation. The latter had sought to assert the obligation, rather than merely the right, of academic staff to engage in processes of collegial decision-making. It is very hard to assess the extent to which academics are currently being encouraged to participate in such activities.

*Recommendation 22: That Council members and key leadership personnel throughout the University undertake individual activities in order to enhance understandings of governance responsibilities, processes and bodies in the University especially in relation to academic policy formation.*

As with the previous recommendation, Academic Board softened this recommendation with the addition of the words ‘be invited to’ between ‘University’ and ‘undertake individual activities’. Council does engage in regular governance training exercises; it invites members of the Senior Leadership Team to make presentations on topics of interest and concern; the Chancellor has recently taken the opportunity to meet with Academic Board; and Council members are encouraged to approach the Vice-Chancellor for information on any matter of interest or concern.

#### Appendix 4

### ***The evolution of Management and Governance at Massey University***

University management and governance is in a state of flux throughout the western world. The ideal against which most university systems modelled themselves for a hundred years was Newman's *Idea of a University*. The purpose of the university, Newman maintained, was to seek out and teach universal knowledge with a view to training and expanding the intellect through a liberal education. Universal knowledge, he recognised, was something to be pursued rather than achieved; pursued by scholars committed to the search for truth, to academic freedom and to a community of scholarship.

The traditional systems of University governance and management embody these beliefs and values. Groups of scholars within a discipline would make collective decisions about how they would profess their subject. Representatives of each discipline would then contribute to decisions about how these disciplinary programmes would contribute to qualifications. Finally, a senior group of academics would take an institutional view ensuring that these separate programmes and qualifications met acceptable standards and that the university had a coherent set of policies and processes to carry out its work. These three levels of decision making had their organisational expression in the department, the faculty and the university with the decision making taking place within departmental staff meetings, faculty boards and academic or professorial board respectively. At each of the three levels, leadership was exercised by a senior academic-cum-manager: the head of department, dean, and vice-chancellor respectively. All three levels were expected to combine the demands of scholarly leadership with those of resource, staff and programme management.

Universities were relatively simple institutions through till the final quarter of the Twentieth Century. Financial management was largely centralised and managed by a small bursar's office, and most other institution-level administrative matters were handled by a registrar's office staffed by non-academics. Deans may have drawn on the support of a sub-dean, usually an academic colleague who continued to carry a heavy teaching and research load. Heads of department would coopt senior colleagues to assist with demanding cyclical tasks such as enrolment. Much of the ongoing work of policy-making, quality assurance and academic processing at all three levels of leadership would be carried out by a miscellany of committees and task forces all of which would be reliant on the participation of academic staff.

This is the model that prevailed at Massey University until about twenty years ago. It was a model where most academics, from an early stage in their careers, would be drawn into academic administration and committee work, both at a departmental level and beyond at a faculty and institutional level.

During the 1980s and 1990s universities the world over came under a new set of pressures: universities typically grew from a few thousand enrolments to tens of thousands; their portfolios of qualifications grew at a corresponding rate as universities took on a wider professional and vocational education role; funding authorities began reducing the proportion of tuition costs they were prepared to fund in an effort to spread their resources further; governments became more demanding of universities both in terms of their efficiency and reporting but also in terms of the kind of outputs they were prepared to fund; universities were encouraged to compete with one another both nationally and globally; they were also forced to look to other sources of funding such as raising student tuition fees, enrolling international students and forging partnerships with private enterprise.

Like universities the world over, Massey found that the existing combination of a large and inclusive committee structure, a set of part-time academic leaders and a handful of fulltime central administrators was unable to respond adequately to this series of challenges. So began the appointment of dedicated managers at every level of the institution. At the institutional level, Associate Vice-Chancellors were appointed, first in Academic affairs, followed by Research and then Finance but latterly in the Office of Registrar, in External Relations and People and Organisational Development. At a Campus level, Principals and more recently Deputy Vice-Chancellors have been appointed to exercise leadership at each campus. Following a painstaking separation of 'regional' from 'national' University services, each DVC is now responsible for their own suite of campus services. The third group contributing to the University's Senior Leadership Team is the Pro Vice-Chancellors of the five colleges. This role has changed enormously from the earlier deanship model with DVCs now operating essentially as divisional managers.

The role of head of department has changed considerably as well. The former single-discipline departments have given way to larger aggregations of staff and disciplines. Most of these departments, schools and institutes extend across more than one campus. Like the PVCs to whom they report, Heads of Department, Schools/Institutes are budget centre managers and required to manage their programmes and staffing within approved budgets.

A complex system of accountability and decision making has developed within this 'management line'. At the level of Departments, Schools and Institutes, Heads report to and advise their respective PVC. The PVCs in turn are members of the Senior Leadership team of the University, accountable for their respective responsibilities but providing advice to the Vice-Chancellor on the strategic management of the University.

Alongside this complex, growing management structure lies the traditional academic governance committee structure, largely untouched since the previous era of University governance and management, and increasingly superseded by the new management structures. College Boards continue to consider and make decisions on academic programmes and academic policy assisted by Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees.

Academic Board continues to consider and rule on the proposals of college boards, assisted by Academic Committee which ensures compliance with appropriate standards and regulations. A handful of other committees with more-or-less academic business report to Academic Board including Teaching and Learning, Doctoral Research, Scholarships, Research, Human Ethics, and Library.

Both the management and the academic lines report finally to the University Council: the former through the agency of the Vice-Chancellor who is also the Chief Executive of the University and the sole employee of Council; the latter through the reports and recommendations of Academic Board and the representations of its chair, also the Vice-Chancellor.

The formal linkages between the management and the academic governance lines are remarkably few. The management line is not accountable to the academic line and the various academic committees are also not accountable to the management line. In fact, of course, the management line is heavily represented on the various levels of academic governance and able to exercise a strong influence on discussions and outcomes. It is much less clear how the academic line is able to influence the management line.

This pattern of development is common to universities throughout the world. In their various ways they are all confronted with the challenge of defining and managing the relationship between the emerging management line and the traditional academic governance line.

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