

Consultation Phase Two: Structures and Governance

Thank you for your responses to the Green Paper on University strategy. We have received well over three hundred submissions and are in the process of thinking through the issues that they raise. From your responses, it is clear that you would like more detail about the proposals in the Paper relating to University governance and, in particular, about the restructuring of the University that it proposes.

This memo offers both more detail about the approach to decision-making that the Paper proposes and some variants on the structure suggested in the paper for consideration alongside it.

Responses to the Green Paper dealt with both larger structural issues (such as whether we should have a College of Arts and Sciences) and more particular structural issues (such as the appropriate home for Economics or Urban Planning). It is with the larger structural issues that this memo is concerned. Once these larger structural issues are resolved, there will be consultation with affected academic communities around more particular structural issues, some of which will need to be resolved before the release of the Strategic Plan, and some of which can be dealt with once the new structure is in place.

The first phase of reform: the last eighteen months

In my inaugural address to the University in 2008, I described a university as a federation of self-governing academic communities. Academic communities within the University ought to have control over their own academic and financial affairs. But that control is always subject to the duty of accountability that smaller communities owe to the larger communities of which they are a part, and that all communities within the University ultimately owe to the University as a whole. Balancing this autonomy and accountability requires appropriate fora for collective decision-making, and clear information about how resources are earned and spent, at every level of the institution.

Two things that we have done in the last eighteen months have begun a process of embedding this vision of university governance in the life of the institution. First, the authority vested by the statutes of the University in the person of the Vice-Chancellor has been exercised essentially through a fortnightly meeting of the Deans and Deputy-Vice-Chancellors that I established soon after my arrival (the so-called 'SEG'), and its various committees. In this way, there has been participation in major decision-making from all parts of the institution. Moreover, in participating in this University-wide decision-making, members of SEG have, of necessity, been required to think not only of the interests of their own Faculty, but also of the interests of the University as a whole. This process is inevitably more time-consuming and complex than decision-making by fiat, but we have no doubt that it improves the quality of the decisions that we take. One way in which decision-making at SEG could be more open to the University community is by the publication of the minutes of at least its non-confidential business.

Second, we have been working on a new model for resource allocation in the University (the so-called 'UEM'), one that will transparently deliver to each faculty 100 per cent of the resources that they earn in teaching and research, taxed for the provision of University-wide services and strategic initiatives, for capital reinvestment, and for redistribution to other faculties that for one reason or another need financial assistance. Each of these taxes will be openly contested and agreed.

The next phase of reform: the proposals in the Green Paper

The difficulty with our current arrangements is that SEG and its committees can achieve collective decision-making, joint planning, and mutual accountability amongst academic communities only at the highest level. It is really concerned with issues of University-wide importance. It cannot achieve effective collective decision-making, joint planning and mutual accountability, amongst cognate parts of the University larger than the Faculty, but smaller than the University as a whole. Yet it is at this level that the failures of planning that we identified in the Green Paper have been most acute.

Moreover, the staff and students of the University are more or less represented at SEG according to the vagaries of our historic faculty structure. For example, the 54 staff (FTE) and 686 students (EFTSL) of the Sydney College of the Arts have as much say in University-wide decision-making, through their Dean's participation in SEG as the 442 staff (FTE) and 7314 students (EFTSL) of the Faculty of Arts. This is simply inequitable.

The structural reform proposed in the Green Paper is designed to achieve three things that I believe any University structure must provide, and that our current structure demonstrably does not. These are:

- Joint strategic planning between cognate academic communities
- Mutual financial and academic accountability between cognate academic communities
- Equitable participation by academic communities of different sizes in decision-making that affects them.

The essential structural reform proposed in the Green Paper is therefore that we should introduce fora for collective decision-making at a level wider than that of the Faculty, but narrower than that of the University as a whole. These fora, or 'boards', should involve representation of a group of cognate academic communities, on an equitable basis to be agreed between them. By 'equitable', I mean that constituent units of different sizes should have different numbers of representatives on the board, but it is possible to assess 'size' in several different ways. Each board should be chaired by one of the members of these constituent units, usually a Faculty Dean, who should be the servant of, and bound by the decisions of, the board that they chair.

The responsibilities of the new Boards

Each board should be responsible for:

- Developing a strategic plan for the group as a whole, including ensuring alignment with the University's strategic plan
- Overseeing curriculum development within and between its constituent units
- Facilitating research cooperation between its constituent units
- Promoting curriculum and research cooperation with other University and external groups
- Approving major new initiatives within its constituent units
- Exercising budgetary responsibility for its constituent units according to the principles of the UEM
- Accounting to the broader University, through SEG, for the financial and academic health of its constituent units.

On its formation, each board would agree with SEG the various ways in which these responsibilities are to be discharged. It is not intended that the boards should be supported by a new bureaucracy, but that secretariat support should be provided by the existing central University administration. In addition, the chair of each board will need additional support provided by the University to balance their work with the board and their other responsibilities, especially if they are also a Faculty Dean. That support will be different for each board.

Each of these new boards would, of course, be represented on SEG, which has University-wide responsibilities not dissimilar to those of the boards within their own area of responsibility. Again, representation would be on an equitable basis, to be determined once the broader structural questions are finalized. Contrary to the assumption of some of the responses to the Green Paper, we are not concerned about the size of SEG. It is, however, important that its membership represents the various academic communities of the University fairly.

Concerns about the structure proposed in the Green Paper

The specific structural reforms proposed in the Green Paper have attracted some considerable comment in the responses that we have received. On the whole, that comment has been positive, though concerns have also been raised. The structure has been commended to the University in the Academic Board's response to the Green Paper.

Two features of the structure proposed in the Green Paper have attracted questions as to the extent to which they achieve the goals outlined in the previous section, in particular the goals of joint strategic planning by cognate academic communities, and mutual financial and academic accountability. These are the notion of a College of Arts and Sciences and the position of the single faculty professional schools, especially the Faculty of Law.

The College of Arts and Sciences

The core feature of the structure proposed in the Green Paper is that it involves a College of Arts and Sciences and various professional schools.

The justification for a College of Arts and Sciences is twofold. First, the faculties that it is proposed should be included in the College are home to the great bulk of our undergraduate students, particularly those enrolled in generalist degrees. The Green Paper suggests that a College would be a good forum for major curriculum (and pedagogical) reform and development of our undergraduate programs. In particular, it would enable the development of our suite of undergraduate programs in ways that took account of both the need for disciplinary depth and cross-disciplinary breadth. Second, the faculties proposed to be included in the College contain many of those working in foundational areas of research, often across disparate faculties, and the College would be a good forum in which to consider ways in which to bring their work more closely together.

Although there has been widespread support for the proposal that we have a College of this type, two questions have repeatedly arisen in relation to this aspect of the proposed structure. First, if the purpose of the new structure is to bring together cognate academic communities in joint planning and mutual accountability, in what sense can the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences be said to be 'cognate'? Second, might not the distinction between the College and professional schools (and almost no-one likes that nomenclature) drive a wedge between foundational and professional education and research that is undesirable?

In relation to the first of these questions, the answer offered in the Green Paper is that the relevant Faculties are 'cognate' only in the sense that they share responsibility for the bulk of our generalist undergraduate education, but that development of the undergraduate educational experience is important enough to be the founding mission of the College. Nevertheless, it has been argued that there would be other ways of achieving both these aims. In particular, it would be possible to establish a process for undergraduate curriculum reform involving these faculties, without the establishment of a College.

In relation to the second of these questions, the answer offered in the Green Paper is that it would be a specific responsibility of the boards (and Chairs) of the College and of the professional schools to encourage collaboration between them, and that various 'horizontal' units of the type it describes would also build important links. In addition, we now propose that the Provost should not, as originally proposed, chair the College board, but that he or his nominee should have the right to sit *ex officio* on all boards, and that the College should be represented on all the boards of the professional schools.

The single-faculty Professional Schools

A further question about the consistency of the proposed structure with the principles outlined in the previous section concerns the ability of single-faculty professional schools to achieve the level of mutual accountability that is being required of the multi-faculty professional schools. A consistent concern has been expressed about the place of Law in the proposed structure, with the arguments of the Green Paper for its exclusion from a wider group finding little support outside the Faculty itself. Moreover, even the Law response points out the strong intellectual connections between the work of that Faculty and that of the University more generally.

These concerns identify a genuine issue in the proposed structure that it is suggested should be met by governance reform within those faculties themselves. In particular, the governance of single-faculty schools should be extended to include representation both from the College and from any other relevant professional school so as to increase accountability. Of course, for these, as for the College and other schools, SEG itself would also provide an additional locus for accountability.

Alternative structures

In light of these responses to the Green Paper, we have developed three alternative models for the structure of the University for further consultation. Each represents to some extent a balancing of the three goals outlined above: joint strategic planning, mutual accountability and equitable participation. No single model achieves these perfectly, but we believe that each can represent an acceptable balance between them. Option One is the closest to the preferred model outlined in the Green Paper. Of the additional models, the second involves a College of Arts and Sciences and 'Divisions'. A third model does not involve a College of Arts and Sciences and would have to be supplemented by a University-wide process to consider curriculum reform for our major undergraduate degrees.

In the tables on the following pages, the three alternative structures are outlined, each representing the number of staff FTE and student EFTSL currently in each Faculty (both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the whole), and the percentage that each Faculty earns of the University's overall teaching and learning and research incomes. Of course, these would vary in any eventual structure depending upon the final detail of the UEM and movement of constituent parts of existing Faculties, but each table gives an idea of the size and shape of the parts of the proposed structures.

As with the structure proposed in the Green Paper, we have no commitment to the names of any of the units proposed in these models. The naming of the relevant unit would be a matter for agreement between the unit and SEG.

As we begin to prepare the White Paper, setting out the strategies the University will follow from 2011 to 2015, I am asking again for your feedback, this time specifically on the three structural options which follow. These have been developed to acknowledge the feedback received on the Green Paper and attempt in different ways to reach the vision of a better University to which we all aspire.

**Michael Spence
Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

OPTION ONE: COLLEGE AND SCHOOLS I

	Stu. Nos¹	%	Staff Nos²	%	% Res Inc³	% T&L Inc⁴
College of Arts and Sciences						
Arts	7314	18.7	442	9.6	3.9	13.8
Science	5259	13.4	716	15.5	19.3	14.3
Vet. Sci	775	2	252	5.5	3.3	3.1
AFNR	435	1.1	112	2.4	3.5	1.2
Educ. & SW	2015	5.2	132	2.9	0.6	3.8
	15798	40.4	1654	35.9	30.6	36.2
Division of Medicine and Health						
Medicine	3555	9.1	1298	28.1	48.4	15
Nursing	431	1.1	64	1.4	0.3	0.7
Dentistry	450	1.2	83	1.8	0.7	1.7
Pharmacy	878	2.2	105	2.3	1.7	2.4
	5314	13.6	1550	33.6	51.1	19.8
Division of Business Studies						
E&B	7205	18.4	373	8.1	1.1	16.9
Division of Health Sciences						
Health Sci.	3382	8.6	354	7.7	5.3	8.6
Division of Engineering and Information Technologies						
Eng. & IT	2846	7.3	328	7.1	8.4	9
Division of Architecture and the Creative Arts						
Architecture	1116	2.9	57	1.2	0.2	2.5
SCA	686	1.8	54	1.2	0.1	1.4
SCM	890	2.3	95	2	0.1	1.8
	2692	7	206	4.4	0.4	5.7
Division of Law						
Law	1731	4.4	119	2.6	0.5	3.8

Note 1: Student EFTSL = Student equivalent full-time student load (Source: SPO Master Files, full year at 31 August 2009)

Note 2: Staff FTE = Staff Full-time Equivalence for full-time and fractional full-time staff (academic and general staff, excludes casuals) (Source: SPO Master Files, at 31 August 2009)

Note 3: Gross Research Grant Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)

Note 4: Gross Learning and Teaching Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)

OPTION TWO: COLLEGE AND SCHOOLS II

	Stu. Nos¹	%	Staff Nos²	%	% Res Inc³	% T&L Inc⁴
College of Arts and Sciences						
Arts	7314	18.7	442	9.6	3.9	13.8
Science	5259	13.4	716	15.5	19.3	14.3
Vet. Sci.	775	2	252	5.5	3.3	3.1
AFNR	435	1.1	112	2.4	3.5	1.2
	13783	35.2	1522	33	30	32.4
Division of Business, Law and Education						
E&B	7205	18.4	373	8.1	1.1	16.9
Law	1731	4.4	119	2.6	0.5	3.8
Educ. & SW	2015	5.2	132	2.9	0.6	3.8
	10951	28	624	13.6	2.2	24.5
Division of Medicine and Health						
Medicine	3555	9.1	1298	28.1	48.4	15
Nursing	431	1.1	64	1.4	0.3	0.7
Dentistry	450	1.2	83	1.8	0.7	1.7
Pharmacy	878	2.2	105	2.3	1.7	2.4
	5314	13.6	1550	33.6	51.1	19.8
Division of Health Sciences						
Health Sci.	3382	8.6	354	7.7	5.3	8.6
Division of Engineering and IT						
Eng. & IT	2846	7.3	328	7.1	8.4	9
Division of Creative Arts						
Architecture	1116	2.9	57	1.2	0.2	2.5
SCA	686	1.8	54	1.2	0.1	1.4
SCM	890	2.3	95	2	0.1	1.8
	2692	7	206	4.4	0.4	5.7

Note 1: Student EFTSL = Student equivalent full-time student load (Source: SPO Master Files, full year at 31 August 2009)

Note 2: Staff FTE = Staff Full-time Equivalence for full-time and fractional full-time staff (academic and general staff, excludes casuals) (Source: SPO Master Files, at 31 August 2009)

Note 3: Gross Research Grant Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)

Note 4: Gross Learning and Teaching Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)

OPTION THREE: DIVISIONS

	Stu. Nos ¹	%	Staff Nos ²	%	% Res Inc ³	% T&L Inc ⁴
Division of Arts and Social Sciences						
Arts	7314	18.7	442	9.6	3.9	13.8
Educ. & SW	2015	5.2	132	2.9	0.6	3.8
Law	1731	4.4	119	2.6	0.5	3.8
	11060	28.3	693	15.1	5	21.4
Division of Natural Sciences						
Science	5259	13.4	716	15.5	19.3	14.3
Vet. Sci.	775	2	252	5.5	3.3	3.1
AFNR	435	1.1	112	2.4	3.5	1.2
	6469	16.5	1080	23.4	26.1	18.6
Division of Medicine and Health						
Medicine	3555	9.1	1298	28.1	48.4	15
Nursing	431	1.1	64	1.4	0.3	0.7
Dentistry	450	1.2	83	1.8	0.7	1.7
Pharmacy	878	2.2	105	2.3	1.7	2.4
	5314	13.6	1550	33.6	51.1	19.8
Division of Business Studies						
E&B	7205	18.4	373	8.1	1.1	16.9
Division of Health Sciences						
Health Sci.	3382	8.6	354	7.7	5.3	8.6
Division of Engineering and Information Technologies						
Eng. & IT	2846	7.3	328	7.1	8.4	9
Division of Architecture and the Creative Arts						
Architecture	1116	2.9	57	1.2	0.2	2.5
SCA	686	1.8	54	1.2	0.1	1.4
SCM	890	2.3	95	2	0.1	1.8
	2692	7	206	4.4	0.4	5.7

Note 1: Student EFTSL = Student equivalent full-time student load (Source: SPO Master Files, full year at 31 August 2009)

Note 2: Staff FTE = Staff Full-time Equivalence for full-time and fractional full-time staff (academic and general staff, excludes casuals) (Source: SPO Master Files, at 31 August 2009)

Note 3: Gross Research Grant Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)

Note 4: Gross Learning and Teaching Revenue generated by each faculty (Source: 2010 Budget – projected gross University receipts)