

## **CITATION**

Palmer, W. P. (1986). Higher Education, the Universities and Secondary Teacher Training in Papua New Guinea, *Education Today, Journal of the College of Preceptors*, Vol 36, pp.53-59.

## **Higher Education, the Universities and Secondary Teacher Training in Papua New Guinea**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to trace the growth of secondary and higher education in Papua New Guinea from its beginnings through the United Nations mission led by Sir Hugh Foot in 1962. The mission was most disappointed in the rate of educational progress in the territory of New Guinea which remained under United Nations mandate in the trusteeship of Australia. The Currie Commission resulted from the United Nations team's report and as a result of the Currie Commission's recommendations the University of Papua New Guinea was established followed by the establishment of Institute of Higher Technical Education also in Port Moresby which eventually became the University of Technology, Lae.

The major part of the paper deals with the establishment of Goroka Teachers' College and its rapid growth as the major source of secondary teachers in Papua New Guinea through a variety of imaginative programs. Finally the paper considers the unequal distribution of resources between the three campuses of the University of Papua New Guinea.

Volume 36 Number 2 1986

# Education Today

## Contents

**F. G. Rickard 3 A Glance over my Shoulder**

**Dennis 1. O'Keeffe 16 The Name of the Game is Weber: The Socio-Economy of Education in a Liberal Society**

**Peter Stokes 28 The Relevance of German University Reforms for the UK**

**Cosy N. Barikor 36 Michigan's Contribution to Higher Education: An Historical View**

**George Browne Rego 45 The Quality of Instruction in Brazilian Education**

**W.P. Palmer 53 Higher Education, the Universities and Secondary Teacher Training in Papua New Guinea**

**60 BOOK REVIEWS**

**Editor's note: The Editor would welcome, in particular, provocative articles on any of the following topics:**

- (1) Pre-school education
- (2) Education at the first level
- (3) Second-level education
- (4) Examinations and methods of assessment
- (5) Pre-vocational and vocational-technical education (6) Urban and multicultural education
- (7) Teaching as a profession.

Articles dealing with other aspects of education and foreign systems of education will be welcome. Contributors should follow the Instructions to Contributors (inside back cover) as closely as possible

# Higher Education, the Universities and Secondary Teacher Training in Papua New Guinea

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## Introduction

The start of secondary and higher education in Papua New Guinea can be most simply traced to the United Nations mission led by Sir Hugh Foot in 1962. The mission was most disappointed in the rate of educational progress in the territory of New Guinea which remained under United Nations mandate in the trusteeship of Australia. The mission was insistent that there should be rapid expansion of secondary education and a start to the planning of the tertiary education system[1].

The Currie Commission resulted from the United Nations team's report and the Commission recommended the establishment of the University of Papua New Guinea in its report of March 1964. In February 1966 Dr. J. T. Gunther was appointed first Vice-Chancellor of the new university and within a few weeks the first intake of 52 male and six female preliminary year students started their courses.

Faculties of Arts and Science were established in 1967 and an Education Faculty was created in 1968[2]. At the same time an Institute of Higher Technical Education (IHTE) was created, also in Port Moresby, and the two institutions had to share some facilities in the initial stages. At first the IHTE was very much the junior partner, and there were considerable tensions between the two institutions[3]. The IHTE changed its name to the Institute of Technology, became a degree-awarding institution in 1971, and in 1973 physically moved to Lae, becoming the University of Technology. In 1971 also, the Papuan Medical College became a separate faculty of the University of Papua New Guinea. There were thus two distinct trends; institutions merging or remaining independent and expanding.

## *Higher Education in Papua New Guinea 53*

In the early 1960s the development of institutions of higher education was minimal but by the end of the decade a wide variety of institutions had been created by different government ministries and by different missions for a wide variety of training purposes. The situation was chaotic as there was considerable duplication of effort and resources were not being used sensibly.

A commission of enquiry under Sir Allen Brown was set up in December 1970 to rationalise the situation [4] . However, the report took longer to produce than anticipated and was vague in places so many of its recommendations were not implemented. In particular, the recommendations to establish co-ordinating machinery were ignored by government, so a wide variety of institutions of higher education still remain today. The present situation is that there are over 80 institutions of higher education attended by more than 10,000 students, most of whom receive government scholarships[5].

Goroka Teachers' College was one of the many institutions created in the early 1960s originally as a primary teachers' college, but it was upgraded in 1967 to a secondary teachers' college[6] under the Department of Education. Its function was to provide national secondary teachers to staff the rapidly expanding secondary school system (no secondary schools in 1960 and 110 secondary schools in 1983) and also to replace expatriate secondary school teachers, whose employment was extremely expensive for government, as quickly as possible.

The Brown report did, however, lead to Goroka becoming a separate faculty of the University of Papua New Guinea on 1 January 1975[7]. The details of the prolonged "courtship" are described by Howie-Willis and he also points out what he chooses to call GTC's Cinderella complex[8]. Meek[9] also describes the development of the University of Papua New Guinea but makes only passing reference to Goroka Teachers' College. However, he closes with the following statement about the structure of UPNG which will be used as a theme of this article:

"Change, conflict, order and stability are all characteristics of the UPNG community, none of them ever achieving permanent ascendancy". These interlinking ideas could be followed first within GTC as individual departments experience periods of comparative ascendancy and decline, next in the relationship between GTC and other faculties of the university where other campuses of the university view GTC as a "poor relation" and, finally, as part of the whole complex picture of higher education in Papua New Guinea.

Very briefly, then, a few issues in each of these relationships will be mentioned.

*54 I Education Today 36,2*

### **Goroka Teachers' College**

This is traditionally a single-purpose institution whose aim has been to train secondary school teachers. At present it is producing 140-160 graduates per year, whereas the Manpower Planning Report[10] believes that 170 teachers per year should be produced from GTC, but probably the number of secondary teachers produced by GTC each year needs to be about 190 to make up for the under-production of secondary teachers by the Faculty of Education (UPNG). Changes relating both to the areas of study and to the quality of the teachers produced have recently been introduced. It has been decided to expand the facilities at GTC to produce many more technical teachers for technical colleges, through a project financed by the Asian Development Bank. A scheme for producing better-qualified teachers of science commenced in February 1985 giving these teachers much greater subject content. The Education III project will help GTC to retrain existing teachers at a higher level in the schools, through in-service and correspondence, initially for a five-year period. This period started in December 1984. In another scheme to improve the quality of secondary teachers, a few specially selected holders of the Diploma in Secondary Teaching have continued their education at Waigani (the main campus of UPNG) immediately after finishing their courses at Goroka[11].

Three years ago it was difficult to get enough applicants for the college and those who came were not usually of a high standard. In the last two years the world recession which has hit Papua New Guinea very hard has meant that many more of the better-qualified school leavers. are applying for Goroka Teachers' College courses, and, in addition, GTC is getting some applicants who are prepared to pay their own way through college. There is thus considerable change, but much stays the same. The increased numbers of students have caused pressures on the staffing at the College and this in turn increased the pressure by the GTC Faculty Planning Committee for equal distribution of staffing resources between the college and other faculties of the university. At the time of writing (May, 1985) this appears to have resulted in an increase in staffing of approximately one academic staff member and one ancillary staff member each year for five years.

### **Relationships between Goroka Teachers' College and the University of Papua New Guinea**

Distance, poor lines of communication and administrative inefficiency create problems of making and implementing decisions. The main campus of the university has 1,521 equivalent full-time students whilst Goroka Teachers' College has 470 students, making up about one-quarter

*Higher Education in Papua New Guinea 55*

of students in the university. Work by the university planning office has indicated that Goroka Teachers' College, with an establishment of 42, is about 10 staff short using the same criteria as other faculties.

Costs per student at Goroka Teachers' College compared with other institutions are shown in Table 1[12].

**Table 1.**

University campus	Student cost per annum
Waigani	K 6,000
Medical Faculty	K12,500
Goroka Teachers' College	K 3,800
University of Technology, Lae	K 8,200

Students at Goroka have very limited recreation facilities whilst those on the main campus have excellent facilities. Staff promotion prospects are less good at Goroka, and housing and student accommodation are in general inferior to that provided for staff and students on the Waigani campus[13] .

Detailed plans for the expansion of Goroka Teachers' College as a University of the Highlands[14], were published and accepted by Council as university policy but there is little sign of the implementation of these plans.

A recent consultant's view on the relationships between Goroka Teachers' College and the Waigani campus was expressed as follows[15]:

Relationships with the main campus at Waigani need attention in terms of the ready access of information and exchange of views. Neither party seems to completely understand the difficulty of the other in all this and I have suggested that Waigani, as the senior partner, takes appropriate steps to remedy same.

For an overview of the present state of the University of Papua New Guinea[16], Rogers gives an excellent factual account. However, controversy is completely absent from the report, its perspective on the university is somewhat distant and does not give sufficient weight to the problems which confront the university.

### **Higher Education and the Universities**

Papua New Guinea has suffered from the present world recession particularly in the export of its primary products - copper, gold, coffee, copra, cocoa and palm-oil. All government expenditure has come under

*56 Education Today 36,2*

close scrutiny including university expenditure - roughly 18.3 per cent of the education budget for 1982, or 2.8 per cent of the national budget[17]. Amounts spent per annum are roughly UPNG, K9.4 million, University of Technology, Lae, K9.9 million, Goroka Teachers' College K1 7 million.

Higher education as a whole accounts for about 6.8 per cent of the national budget, almost half of which is spent on the universities (18). Further research is needed to find out whether this gives good value for money. Goroka Teachers' College is an extremely cost-effective institution as its costs per student are lower than those of other institutions and since all GTC diplomates go directly into secondary teaching. Many of them will directly replace expatriate teachers whose total benefits average three to four times the salary of a Goroka diploma holder. Others replace national teachers or fill vacancies caused by the expansion of the system, but in either case if a Goroka diplomate was not available an expatriate would have had to be appointed. The College is making slow headway in the localisation of the system as may be indicated by Table II, and it should be noted that the localisation of headmasters' positions is, in fact, slowing down[19].

**Table II.**

	December 1979	June 1982
Number of provincial high schools	94	105
Overall localisation of secondary teachers	68.9%	72.2%
Headmaster localisation in provincial high schools	38.7%	35.2%

Looked at another way, one Goroka diplomate replacing one expatriate teacher will save government his training costs within a year. So when the provincial high schools are closer to

complete localisation, programmes will need to be developed to localise the upper secondary schools (national high schools).

### **Conclusion**

There is, perhaps, an over-emphasis on the problems of secondary teacher training in this article, but it is hoped that it will have provided a more useful source of reference than a recently published review of the universities in Papua New Guinea[20] which gave little information about the universities and made no mention of Goroka Teachers' College.

### *Higher Education in Papua New Guinea 57*

One comparison between the Waigani campus of the University of Papua New Guinea and Goroka Teachers' College is that between the universities and polytechnics in the United Kingdom as exemplified in a recent paper by Ramsden [21]. GTC could be compared with the situation in the polytechnics where, in general, there is less emphasis on research and lower entry qualifications for students, fewer resources available for students and staff, but more emphasis on the processes of teaching and learning. This comparison would be an interesting and important area for further research.

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58 *Education Today* 36,2

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*Higher Education in Papua New Guinea* 59