

taken seriously. No amount of tinkering will correct all the deficiencies of a rank structure which mindlessly imitates bureaucratic and commercial hierarchies. Those systems are quite inappropriate to a university. As long as we all do the same sort of work for different amounts of pay and status, there will be problems.

#### NOTES:

1. Between 1947 and 1950 there were two staff members identified in the Calendar as 'Senior Lecturer or Reader'. Presumably their titles varied according to what they did at different times of the day.
2. F.A.U.S.A. submission to the Academic Salaries Tribunal, 1975, p.58.
3. This interpretation is much more flattering to Adelaide's Readers than is Mr. Justice Eggleston's. It is also in line with the statement in the *Academic Salaries Tribunal, 1976 Review* that "in general, readerships and associate professorships are obtained by promotion." (page 106).
4. F.A.U.S.A. submission to Academic Salaries Tribunal, 1975, p.51.
5. Five of the nine are women and four of the women are in departments of language or literature. This suggests that systematic, albeit unconscious, discrimination against female academics exists in these areas of the university.
6. This is recognised by Mr. Justice Campbell in *Academic Salaries Tribunal 1976 Review*, p.124.
7. This course of action is foreshadowed in the *Universities Commission Sixth Report, 1975*, p.201 and in the *Academic Salaries Tribunal 1976 Review*, p.124.
8. Some specious reasoning from statistics is introduced in order to justify setting a limit on the proportion of staff in the upper grades. It is said first that "the distribution of full-time teaching and research staff by grade in Australia has not varied greatly over the past ten years", Professor's constituted 10.2% in 1965 and 10.2% in 1976; Associate Professors and Readers constituted 8.8% in 1965 and 10.8% in 1976. (Universities Commission, *Report for 1977-79 Triennium, July 1976*, pp. 64-65). Therefore, it is concluded, we might fix the proportion of these ranks at something like 20% of the total without departing drastically from the status quo. This line of reasoning ignores the fact that in the established universities the proportion is already

near or above 20%. A limit would require a freeze for several years at Adelaide, Tasmania, and the A.N.U., along with a near freeze at Queensland, Melbourne and Sydney. In reality it is not the older universities which are "top-heavy". It is the new universities which are bottom heavy.

9. The structure might again encourage mobility if the proportion of upper level positions were fixed. Frustrated senior lecturers at the older universities where promotions were frozen might *reculer pour mieux sauter* by taking lectureships at new universities where their merit could eventually be rewarded.
10. There is no central compilation of the research publications produced each year in Australian universities. Lists of books and articles in most university Calendars are notoriously unreliable.
11. There are, of course, professors and readers who did no visible research before their elevation and have maintained unblemished records since. More instructive is the case of Hugh Stretton at Adelaide who published nothing during his long tenure as Professor of History but who has produced three major books since he degraded himself to Reader. He has refused nomination for a personal chair, so his industry cannot be explained by second thoughts about his lost professorship and disappearance from *Who's Who In Australia*.
12. This average and that for professors below is based on data from The University of Adelaide only.
13. Calculated on the basis of A.U.C. statistics, *Sixth Report*, p.200.
14. Salaries based on F.A.U.S.A. reports following the 1976 Academic Salaries Tribunal review. Nine hundred and forty-one professors receive an extra \$7,068,792; 965 readers and associate professors receive an extra \$2,795,605.
15. Such an annual awards ceremony would do a great deal to bring academic excellence to the attention of the public in a nation with an outsized respect for money. The top award winners would be given extensive coverage by television, radio and newspapers. Academic superstars from overseas might well be attracted to our universities by rewards of this magnitude. Special awards for excellence in teaching would correct the present impression that publication alone constitutes academic merit.
16. This practice is common in many English universities. Reader is often a title of honour awarded without any extra salary.
17. Professors would have to be excluded from the scheme because most vacant chairs do not revert to lectureships; filling their posts would multiply the total number of professorships.
18. Increasing mobility would involve some extra cost because of the expenses of advertisement.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE "STEADY STATE"†

Terry Hore\*

### Background

If one were asked for a one-word description of the past two decades of university education in Australia, the answer would be "growth".

In the government sector the buoyant economy in the last twenty-five years made finance available to support expansion in the university system; for example, eleven of Australia's nineteen universities were created. In the same period university student numbers quadrupled. The pressures leading to this spectacular expansion are complex and interacting, but significant trends can be teased out:

- 1) Increasing numbers in the 17-22 age group;
- 2) More of this group staying on at school;
- 3) A greater proportion proceeding to tertiary education;
- 4) A demand for the product of higher education in commerce, industry and the public sector: for example in 1974 the public sector took 70% of all Australian university graduates, except those remaining to complete higher degrees;
- 5) Widespread electoral support for a high financial commitment to higher education;
- 6) Students perceived the economic and status advantages which accompanied a degree;
- 7) The system of funding for universities responded to the demand for places.

The "effective full-time students (efsts)" notion is what Trow<sup>1</sup> called "enrolment-driven", i.e. funding reacting to demand rather than moulding it.

Academic staff entering the profession in the last twenty years enjoyed the richness of job opportunities, fairly rapid promotion, accessible support for research and a cadre of research students eager to fill the academic positions opening in the universities and later the colleges of advanced education. One result has been a relatively young group of senior academics; for example, the average age of professors, associate professors and readers at Monash is 45 years 11 months. (This figure excludes medical professors and part-time appointments).

### The Present and Foreseeable Future

Trends which will affect the universities are those acting upon the system now, like inflation and the faltering economy, and those which have the potential to upset the system, such as the falling birth rate, fewer numbers of school children

progressing to sixth form and less of this group wishing to enter tertiary education. A reversal of the trends mentioned in the previous section can be documented, but for the purpose of this paper a statement of the situation can be found in the Universities Commission Report<sup>2</sup>.

*"The lower annual growth rate in student numbers evident in 1975 has continued in 1976 and further decline in growth is expected over the next few years until, by 1979, the increase will only be about one half of one percent."*

These calculations are based upon an admitted "uncertain" immigration rate. Also, given that 70% of graduates go into teaching and the public service, vocations which are overstocked or first in line for cut-backs when the economy is tight, and that overproduction of graduates is occurring in other areas (engineering<sup>3</sup> and law<sup>4</sup>), it is likely that the unemployment or under-employment of graduates will cause many potential entrants to question the advantages of a university education.

With "enrolment-driven" funding a decline in student numbers would permit government to reduce funds allocated to the university. Three options for the institution seem possible.

- 1) Counsel students to enter university for other than vocational reasons.
- 2) Change the rules by which the university is funded, from "efsts" to "wefts" ("weighted effective full-time students"), weighted to balance the loss of cash attendant upon decreasing customers. This "changing the rules" tactic to forestall unpalatable occurrences has been used recently in Britain where the oversupply of teachers raised requests to increase the length of teacher-training by one year or improve the teacher-pupil ratio, or both. Good educational reasons were provided, but educational decisions are rarely made for educational reasons.
- 3) Work harder at attracting students to your institution. If the "normal entrant" (the sixth-form-leaver) does not seek admission then institutions must chase the "abnormal". Already moves in this direction are apparent: increasing numbers of mature students in Arts faculties, (e.g. at Monash 25% of 1976 entry was over 25 years of age), increasing numbers of schemes to admit the "non-matriculant", increasing recognition that women should be encouraged to consider careers in engineering, or other previously predominantly male professions. The competition for female students took an interesting turn recently when Footscray Institute of Technology used a "women wanted" poster, about which the Melbourne *Herald*<sup>5</sup> suggested that readers would "be forgiven for

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† Many of the ideas mentioned in this paper are developed in a book *The future of higher education in Australia* to appear later this year. (Eds. Hore, T.; Linke, R.D. and West, L.H.T.)

thinking that a massage parlour was doing the recruiting".

The Sixth Report<sup>6</sup> seemed favourably inclined towards an increase in mature students:

"...by introducing into institutions more mature students...the universities will be enriched and their capacity for scholarly work enhanced."

#### Effects on Academic Staff

A general effect of slow growth, seen in America and Britain already, is the increasing move to what has been called "accountability". That is not only IN the sense of staff being ready to speak up for the values of university education,<sup>7</sup> but also in the stricter sense of being more accountable to the public for how money is spent. Pressures along this line can have a strangling effect on teaching and learning as this extract from a recent American book<sup>8</sup> suggests:

"Instructors are being asked to provide evidence that students learn as a result of their teaching...Educators must develop and adopt relevant standards of accountability. Otherwise, state legislatures, under pressures from their constituencies, will impose efficiency criteria which might have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning process." (Emphasis added).

While it is unlikely that Australia will move so far down this path it is true that "the day is past when institutions could lay the full blame of student failure on the shoulders of the student himself".<sup>9</sup>

The external pressures for accountability relate to limited national resources and consequent competition from all levels of education, but there are also internal pressures. The incoming student is likely to be more mature and work-experienced, more ready to question the offerings. Again the more extreme view can be found in American writings<sup>10</sup> where the Human Rights Movement sees students as "citizens of the academic community, with the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, not merely transient guests of the faculty and administration".

Both these pressures, while sharing the same goal of "value for money" may be conflicting. For example, outside pressures may praise moves to reduce or eliminate tutorials whereas the inside pressure from students clamours for more individual attention. Whatever the outcome academic staff are going to be the focus of more public scrutiny during periods of slow growth.

Failure to attract students to the institution or oversupply of graduates could result in the closure of some institutions or parts of them. For example, the Department of Education and Science in Britain proposed closing 37 teacher training institutions. The staff involved, wherever it occurs, face retrenchment and suffer loss unless the staff associations have been wise and strong enough to draft protective clauses covering retrenchment/redundancy. Of interest is the notion of

"changing horses in mid-stream" insurance<sup>11</sup>, in which the policy supports a staff member, who wishes to leave his academic post, for the initial years of his retraining or consolidation in his new vocation.

In reality, tenure, which for sub-professorial staff usually means "six months notice", is not as secure as it was once considered to be and legally only insures that six months notice is given.

One of the most difficult effects for the academic staff of Australian universities to bear will be the reduction in chances for promotion. Not only will the number of vacancies in the total system be few, but chances for advancement within institutions will also be reduced. In 1967 staff turnover (full-time lecturer and above) was 28%, in 1976 this reduced to 7.6%<sup>12</sup> and with the trend towards short-term rather than permanent appointments one would expect the turnover rate of permanent staff to reduce even further.

Earlier, mention was made of the relative youth of the professoriate. In fact, the age of the staff in general leads to the expectation that retirements over the next five years "...are expected to constitute only about one-half of one percent of the total academic staff of 12,000".<sup>13</sup> Consequent clustering of staff around the upper salary bars will occur. Greater unionization of staff is a possibility, demanding reduced salary differentials and ways of creating vacancies near the top. One such suggestion, seen in other countries, is the move towards early retirement at age 55. Whether this will be voluntary or "management-prompted" will probably depend upon the rate of retirement required.

"The growth of faculty unionism in an era of increasing austerity promises to be the source of the most important intramural conflicts in academe in the next decade."<sup>14</sup>

#### Teaching

The changes attendant upon some of the points discussed above, revolve around getting and maintaining student numbers and assuring the public that the physical plant is being used efficiently. Some anxiety may be generated in the academic staff by the emerging need to adjust to the changing clientele; a group about which few assumptions can be made regarding their preparation for university study. In a buyer's market the buyer (the student) does not need to adjust to the demands of the seller. The opposite will become the case, where the university and its staff will have to be more responsive to student needs: bridging courses for the unprepared, remedial courses for those with specific difficulties, flexible entry and exit points to courses, and the development of "learning packages" which will enable a student to learn without a teacher present, are examples of activities likely to increase. Independent learning and flexibility of courses could lead to the end of

the "academic year" as we know it and spreading the involvement of staff in teaching over the whole year.

#### Research

Cut-backs in money for research have occurred recently enough for all to recall. Many of our North American colleagues have already lost the chance for "personal" research (i.e. the chance to follow an idea of one's own) as "contract research" has grown. One writer<sup>15</sup> even asked "How much longer is such (personal creative) research possible at the universities, given encroaching societal pressures?" Many North American departments find that the **cost of tendering** for contracts is so high that they feel they cannot bid. From the sponsor's point of view contract research gives him more control over the limited finance available and hence one should expect it to increase.

A more pernicious effect of graduate unemployment and decreasing financial support for research is the slowing of growth in the basic disciplines, e.g. reduced infusion of new blood at lower levels of staff and research students leading to a reduction in personally initiated research.

#### Conclusion

"Many academics — particularly the older, Australian-born ones — simply cannot believe that the reality of zero growth is upon them at last."<sup>16</sup>

Some may consider that zero growth means "no change". But "steady state" is a more useful concept since it implies forces in equilibrium; as the students and their requirements change so too

must the academic staff if the balance is to be maintained.

For some, (particularly our colleagues in the colleges of advanced education), the steady state may mean a change of job; for all of us it will mean a change of attitude.

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## GROWTH, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

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#### Introduction

A growing organization provides opportunities for faster promotion and higher recruitment rates than those of a stationary organization. Many universities and university departments, which, until a few years ago, were growing at rates sometimes greater than 5% per year, are now already thinking seriously about the problems they are likely to be facing in a steady state or no growth situation. Areas of concern are the expected decline in staff turnover, the decrease in recruitment rates and the possible impact on promotion rates. At the Australian National University there are currently three departments in which there will be no staff retirement this century. In my own Department there will be one retirement during the next eighteen years and then, in thirty years' time, 63% of the Department will retire within a period of five years, providing there are no resignations or deaths.

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Many other Departments are no doubt in similar situations. These departments should be concerned about the possible stagnation that they may experience in a steady state situation.

Some of the possible measures that are being considered to alleviate the apparent stagnation of departments are:

- (1) accelerated retirement;
- (2) a recruitment policy which introduces a bias against staff in the 30-45 age group (or the largest age-group in the department);
- (3) a higher proportion of limited term appointments;
- (4) interchange of staff between universities, C.A.E.'s, C.S.I.R.O. and the Public Service.

The impact of no growth on promotion rates in a department has not received as much attention as the stagnation problem, but two possible measures to be considered are: