CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

LIST OF CENSURED UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIONS

According to information supplied by the Canadian Association of University Teachers the following university administrations are under CAUT censure:

President and Board of Regents, Memorial University of Newfoundland (1979).

Board of Governors, University of Calgary (1979).

The third stage of censure was placed on these universities in May 1980. Under this stage of censure, the CAUT recommends that members of faculty associations not accept appointments at the censured universities.

Requests for information about the events which led to censure should be sent to:

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THE CASE FOR SMALL UNIVERSITIES —"IS SMALL BEAUTIFUL?"

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The Growth of Australian Universities.
The oldest university in Australia, The University of Sydney, was founded in 1852. Its first principal described a university as comprising

> *a school of liberal and general knowledge, and secondly a collection of special schools, devoted to the learned professions... the former considers the learner as an end in and for himself, his perfection as man simply being the object of his education. The latter proposes an end out of and beyond the learner, his dexterity, namely, as a professional man.*

In 1853, the new university had 15 students; by 1900, it had 569 enrolled in four faculties and by 1939, 3,771 in ten faculties. There was a steady increase in enrolments during the second world war to 4,803 in 1945. Rapid growth followed the end of the war, with enrolments jumping to 8,509 in 1946 and peaking at 10,404 in 1948. Enrolments declined during the 1950s and did not reach the peak of the 1940s again until 1960. Another surge of enrolments took place in the 1960s. This tapered off in the 1970s, and the new decade began with the largest enrolment ever, just on 18,000 in 1980. This pattern of growth was reflected in the six state universities during the pre-war and post-war period. The two largest universities in 1939 were Melbourne (with 4,469 students) and Sydney (with 3,771); the smallest was the University of Tasmania with 457 students. In that year, the average number of enrolments in each Australian university was about 2,300. Forty one years later, in 1980, there are 19 universities, Queensland 18,358 and N.S.W. 18,359 being the largest, and Griffith 1,998 the smallest; the average number of students was 8,400. Any discussion of the case for **small** universities, then, must take into account the fact that even within a single country, there can be very considerable and rapid shifts in the size of the institutions; and that Australian universities of established reputation and international standing have been "small" by today's standards. It is not surprising, therefore, that our notions of the advantages and disadvantages of "smallness" arise in part from intra-sectoral comparisons. In Australia, we have stressed the homogeneity of the university sector, and refer frequently to the maintenance of international standards and activities in our universities, and the delineation of a special set of characteristic and important functions which mark off the universities from other institutions of higher education. There is a general expectation, therefore, that all universities will offer very similar experiences (both academic and otherwise) to their staff and students.

The Definition of a "Small University".
What then is a "small" Australian university, in the 1980s? No simple quantitative measure can provide an adequate definition. Rather, we suggest that a combination of at least four is necessary, namely, the total enrolment (in Equivalent Full Time Students); the E.F.T.S. in each department; the number of academic staff (in full-time equivalent academic staff units) in each department; and the number of departments. (By "department", we mean the academic unit comprising a group of staff and students organised for teaching, learning and the expansion of knowledge in a particular scholarly discipline[1]).

(a) *Total Enrolment (in E.F.T.S.)*

In its Report on a Fourth University in Victoria the Australian Universities Commission[2] expressed the view (which the Williams Report[3] refers to as a "precept") that an Australian university providing courses in humanities, sciences and social sciences, and with less than 4,000 equivalent full-time students had costs per student relatively higher than those of larger universities, i.e., that it "...could not be efficient and economical...". This recalls a remark in the Martin Report[4], that there are "disadvantages" of smallness for universities of less than 4,000. The Williams Report remarked that this "precept", while it may be generally true under present funding practices and growth patterns, is not necessarily so. It recommended that the Universities Council should review its assumptions about size and economic operations, pointing out that a university which had been planned to offer only the liberal arts and sciences (one, that is, that would not have met with the approbation of the founders of Australia's first university) could be economic with a smaller enrolment; and consequently, that the enriched funding per E.F.T.S. currently received by the smallest universities might be reduced if a smaller range of subjects were offered.

However, unless such a change is made, it seems to us that the funding arrangements for Australian universities do imply a significant change in the economy of operation at a size of about 4,000 E.F.T.S. (see Table 1) and, therefore, that the first criterion of a small university is a student enrolment less than this figure.

Table 1

Some Indicators of Size in Australian Universities — 1978

University Classification	Name	Total E.F.T.S.	No. of Depts.	E.F.T.S. per Dept.	Equivalent Academic Staff	E.A.S. per Dept.	Student Staff Ratio	Recurrent Expenditure per E.F.T.S. $
SMALL	Griffith	1,539	15	103	152	10.1	10.1	5,285
	James Cook	1,693	22	77	208	9.5	8.1	6,550
	Murdoch	1,736	18	96	173	9.6	10.0	6,242
	Wollongong	2,195	20	110	189	9.5	11.6	4,560
	Deakin	2,419	22	110	211	9.6	11.5	4,756
	Tasmania	3,123	35	89	321	9.2	9.7	5,788
	Average	2,118	22	96	209	9.5	10.1	5,482
INTERMEDIATE	Flinders	3,436	32	107	334	10.4	10.3	5,270
	Newcastle	3,685	28	132	362	12.9	10.2	5,058
	Average	3,560	30	119	348	11.6	10.2	5,160
LARGE	New England	5,968	35	171	446	12.7	13.4	3,696
	La Trobe	7,318	33	222	541	16.4	13.5	3,666
	Macquarie	7,700	25	308	651	26.0	11.8	3,644
	Adelaide	8,279	59	140	761	12.9	10.9	4,678
	West. Aust.	8,635	50	173	748	15.0	11.5	4,439
	Monash	12,727	52	245	1,020	19.6	12.5	4,242
	Queensland	14,782	62	238	1,250	20.2	11.8	3,990
	Melbourne	14,926	62	241	1,203	19.4	12.4	4,338
	U.N.S.W.	17,050	62	275	1,450	23.4	11.8	4,266
	Sydney	17,775	80	222	1,410	17.6	12.6	4,200
	Average	11,516	52	221	948	18.2	12.1	4,160
Australian Average (Excluding A.N.U.)		7,499	40	190	635	16.1	11.8	4,338
	A.N.U.	4,811	39	123	455	11.7	10.6	15,505

NOTES:
1. Equivalent full-time students from Tertiary Education Commission, Selected University Statistics 1978.
2. Number of Departments derived from calendars.
3. Equivalent academic staff (filled positions) from TEC statistics 1978. E.A.S. is full-time staff plus full-time equivalent of part-time.
4. Recurrent expenditure from TEC statistics 1979.
5. A.N.U. is not included because of its special responsibilities for research through its Institute of Advanced Studies. Figures are shown for comparison.
6. . All figures are for 1978, the latest official figures available.

(b) *E.F.T.S. per Department*

The values presented in Table 1 suggest that a second criterion of a small university is a student load of about 100 E.F.T.S. or less in each department. Such a calculation cannot be precise; three of the smallest universities (Murdoch, Griffith and Deakin) are not organized into departments. For these, estimates of the number of departments have been based on a count of the number of "disciplines" listed in university publications, as falling within their various schools or faculties. (We believe that our estimates are likely to be too small rather than too large).

(c) *The Number of Academic Staff in each Department.*

The third indicator of a small Australian university is an average of ten, or fewer, equivalent full-time academic staff per department. (i.e. full-time staff and part-time staff in full-time equivalents).

(d) *Number of Departments.*

The small universities also have fewer departments; that is, their size is reflected in a smaller spread of academic skills and disciplines than are available in the larger universities.

Using the above four criteria, the following are clearly to be regarded as small universities: Griffith, James Cook, Murdoch, Wollongong, Deakin, and Tasmania. Four of these (Murdoch, Griffith, Wollongong and Deakin) have been established since 1974; one (Tasmania) is the only university in its State, and has a spread of departments approaching that of the larger universities, though with an enrolment well below 4,000 E.F.T.S.

Two other universities of less than 4,000 E.F.T.S. (Flinders and Newcastle) exhibit some characteristics of both "small" and "large" universities: their enrolments approach 4,000 more closely than the six universities already referred to; both have relatively large numbers of departments; and

Newcastle has a relatively high number of equivalent academic staff per department. They may be regarded as being in an "intermediate" state.

The remaining universities are "large".

Three of Australia's five non-metropolitan universities are in the small group, as is the "intermediate" Newcastle. The fifth non-metropolitan university (The University of New England) has a substantial external enrolment; in 1978, out of a total enrolment of 8,143 students, 4,740 were external. The three small (and the "intermediate" Newcastle) non-metropolitan ("regional") universities have features which distinguish them from the other small universities, such as Murdoch and Griffith. These include

— a predominantly local "catchment area" for internal students
— fewer opportunities for "resource sharing" with other universities
— more opportunities for close interaction with a regional school system
— greater opportunities for service within a **particular** community i.e., a city or region
— some sense of isolation from the mainstream of Australian academic life.

These considerations point up a very important fact, namely, that as the circumstances and prospects of universities differ, each should plan for its own special "future".

The "case" for small universities — problems and prospects.

Our consideration of the "case" (i.e. problems and prospects) for small Australian universities is based on the following assumptions:

— that the future which can sensibly be discussed is the period to about 2000; and especially, the current decade (the "anxious eighties"!)
— that for the next ten to fifteen years, there will be no increase in enrolments in the university system, and perhaps even a decrease.
— that in consequence, there will be increasing competition for students both within the university system and (especially within each State) between the universities and the colleges of advanced education.
— that the real resources available to universities will at best remain close to present levels.

Problems of Small Universities.

In general terms, the problems of small universities may be related to educational and economic issues, and to the achievement of "status" in a competitive situation.

(i) Educational Problems.

The range of disciplines available: Table 1 makes it clear that the small universities offer fewer academic disciplines than the other universities. They are therefore unable to conduct teaching and research in many important fields of knowledge; in consequence, they experience greater difficulty in developing multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary activities. They have less capacity than larger universities for initiating or responding to significant shifts in the boundaries of particular disciplines. There is also a danger that their teaching programmes may become unduly weighted towards studies which are currently popular; it is difficult to carry, within a small institution, the staff necessary to maintain important subjects which lack current appeal to students (at the moment for example, classical languages and physics are in this category).

Concentration of academic skills within a department: Within each department in a small university, two general problems may arise. Firstly, if the department is to offer a satisfactory teaching programme, it must either concentrate its attention on particular sections of a discipline, or accept a range of scholarly interests in its staff which spread across the field of study. If it adopts the former approach, the teaching programme will be seen as limited by both staff and students, and may become rapidly outdated by the development of the discipline. If it adopts the latter, it becomes prone to superficiality in its treatment of its discipline. Secondly, the commitment of academic staff time to non-academic activities may be relatively high. The demands of academic administration within departments, faculties and the university generally have an element of fixity about them, unrelated to the size of the institution; this is especially true in the Australian system with its emphasis on the homogeneity of its constituent parts. In consequence, such activities may seriously erode staff time available for teaching and research, more so than in larger universities.

Maintaining depth and flexibility in research: If (as is common in the interests of the teaching function) a department recruits staff whose scholarly interests span a discipline, the consequent wide spread of research interests may severely limit opportunities for developing group research projects, and for effective intellectual stimulation within the staff group. It may also increase the costliness of the department's research programme, as there will be fewer opportunities for sharing research facilities within the department.

Development of the "critical mass" of students: It is important that the student group in each department should be of such a size as to elicit a sustained lively response from academic staff in their teaching, and during informal contacts with students. Staff morale is enhanced if it is clear that courses are attractive (and an important element in gauging attractiveness is the size of the classes); staff morale can be sapped by small or declining student numbers especially when these are linked to the allocation of resources (the practice of relating departmental funding to student load in some fashion is universal in Australian universities). Finally, the size of student groups may influence the maintenance of academic standards.

Nearly all assessment has a significant comparative component; if the student group is very small, it is difficult to be confident about the level of competence reached by the best and the worst students.

We believe also that student interactions with other students are most productive when the group has achieved a critical size. Students can contribute much to each other's education in small teaching groups and informal exchanges. The value of these exchanges will be greater when the student body is large enough to embrace a wide variety of interests, backgrounds and personalities. This is not to say that too large a student body may destroy much of value in university life. The problem is that of achieving an appropriate balance in student numbers, staff numbers and the number of departments. Student numbers must not be so small that it is difficult to generate and maintain lively and intellectually active student groups; and on the other hand, not so big that it becomes impossible to give any real attention to the education of individuals within it. The former difficulty is more likely to occur in small universities. For example, in The University of Wollongong, about 40% of the first year subjects in 1980 had enrolments of less than 30, and about 50% of the second and third year subjects had enrolments of less than 15.

(ii) Economic Problems.
As we have remarked above (and as is shown in Table 1), present funding practices in Australia provide enriched funding (relatively more dollars per E.F.T.S.) for small universities. This practice is probably a reflection of the emphasis placed on homogeneity in the university system in Australia, which aspires to a general similarity of responsibilities, standards, facilities, and style of operation. (Indirectly, it may also reflect the importance placed on having each university accepted as a member of the "international community" of universities, which is often thought of as possessing a much greater degree of homogeneity than perhaps it really has.)

Consequently, there is both internal and external pressure for small universities to behave like big ones. Their staff and students expect the same kind and quality of academic services (libraries, computers, staff development opportunities); student services (unions, sports officers, careers and counselling staff, deans of students, accommodation services); internal government (with extensive participation of academic staff in a great variety of academic and university committees, each serviced by the administration); and bureaucracy (Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, staff officers, faculty administrators, technical and clerical staff). External authorities (such as the Tertiary Education Commission, Universities Council, AVCC, and government departments) increasingly request information, statistics and commentaries from all universities; and the growing involvement in industrial action generates a further burden. Overall, demands for administrative effort, by both academic and general staff, mount steadily, and it is much more difficult for a small university to respond to this pressure.

Internally, academic staff and students complain about the high cost of "the administration" and the decreasing time available for teaching and research. They do not, however, readily accept reductions in, or streamlining of, administrative activities. It is difficult to make economies without raising the suspicion that administrative convenience and a desire to centralize authority are the motives, rather than organisational efficiency or dealing with economic necessity. Nor, in a small university, can academic staff readily come to terms with economies in the academic sphere. Departmental staff numbers are often too small to permit reductions in staff without serious impacts, amounting to loss of educational effectiveness. For example, in The University of Wollongong, if one academic staff member were removed from each department, the total staff would decline by about 11%, and the average number of staff in a department would diminish from about 9 to about 8). Externally, public concern has been expressed about the costliness of "small universities", and suggestions made that we have too many universities and that there should be some differentiation within the university sector. The Williams Report referred to the excess cost of maintaining the eight universities with less than 4,000 E.F.T.S. in 1977, noting that "...the student load at these universities is only 14% of the total, and the excess cost is probably in the region of three to four per cent." Nonetheless, small institutions feel particularly vulnerable to adverse public comment on their costliness. The impact on the morale of staff of the small university can produce doubts about whether or not the institution should survive, and if so, in what form.

Internal cohesion: There is another difficulty which may appropriately be discussed here, as it arises largely (though not entirely) from economic problems and their consequences. This is the matter of the sense of common purpose and internal cohesion developed within the institution.

A large university has no choice but to accept the fact that it is internally differentiated and that its various units will have a wide geographical dispersion with less frequent personal contact between academic staff, administrative staff and students. In such a university the official organs of communication will for the most part be the main source of information. On the other hand members of a small institution can obtain information (or more commonly, misinformation!) about almost everything that happens from a variety of sources. The consequence is frequent excitement about imaginary "proposals" for action or incorrectly reported events. It is extremely difficult to correct this university-wide, informal, and often inaccurate, flow of comment by means of the official information system. There is, therefore, greater difficulty in avoiding needless internal tension; and it becomes harder both to get things done and to maintain a sense of institutional cohesion and purpose.

(iii) The Problems of Status.
The public standing enjoyed by a university is a complex function of age, the number and type of disciplines offered (and perhaps especially the number of professional disciplines), the quality of teaching and research, the achievements of graduates in society, and responsiveness to community interests. Perhaps the most significant of these to smaller universities is the range of disciplines. An enquiry about the scope of such a university's work frequently leads to a surprised and apparently disapproving response ("oh, you don't have law, or medicine, or veterinary science, or agriculture...? a real ivory tower, to be sure!").

Why does such an attitude constitute a difficulty for the university? Firstly, because it encourages doubt among staff and students about the value and vitality of their institution; secondly, because it can diminish the general acceptability of qualifications and awards; and thirdly (and perhaps most importantly) because it may hinder the university in obtaining much needed social, political and financial support. This difficulty may be overcome, however, by developing a special responsiveness in the small university to community needs; we return to this point later.

Competition: The standing of a university also has considerable significance for its operation during a period of increasing competition for students, such as we assume the coming decade or so to be. Indeed, all the difficulties so far discussed will influence (and mostly weaken) the competitive position of small universities. It is difficult to think of a way of regulating competition with the sole aim of preserving or protecting a small institution, simply because it happens to exist, without raising serious educational, social and economic questions. To deny qualified students access to larger and more prestigious institutions, to commit scarce resources to maintaining a small university with limited educational activities, requires a better justification than mere existence. As we argue later, the solution to this difficulty, and the resolution of the problems of competition, seem to lie in the identification and development of special excellence in the teaching and research of the small university, or in the unique educational service which it can offer to a particular community.

Advantages of Small Universities.
Small universities have one extremely important educational advantage, which we have already touched on in describing the desirable balance to be achieved in the size of the student body; it is, in brief, the opportunity to offer the maximum amount of personal interaction between staff and staff, students and students, and staff and students.

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of this advantage to a university. At the highest level of formal education, the most important lessons may be learned not from the content of lectures, tutorials, seminars and laboratory classes, but from the opportunity to observe at first hand particular disciplines being "lived out" and worked on by experienced practitioners in the academic staff, and by student colleagues at different levels of attainment. A small university can provide such opportunities for all its students — and staff — more readily than a large one.

This feature of small universities is particularly valuable today. At a time of awesome expansion of the technology for data storage and retrieval, the mere acquisition of bits of information (although important) does not constitute "education". Knowing how to get information is relatively easy; but it is another matter altogether (and one which in fact becomes more difficult with the expansion of data banks) to acquire the intellectual perspective and skills which permit the effective selection of relevant information, and the correlation, comparison and synthesis of this information in the formulation of concepts and knowledge. These mental skills can be learnt effectively, we suggest, only through a real "academic apprenticeship", in which there is regular personal interaction between "scholars and masters", in the old but still appropriate phraseology. The staff of universities think and work as experienced scholars within their particular disciplines. Their contacts with students throughout undergraduate courses and during postgraduate training are of crucial importance in passing on the professional and scholarly skills that are the fruit of effective university education; and these contacts can be arranged more readily in smaller universities. Consequently, we consider the enhanced opportunity for personal interactions to be the single most important — and very important — potential advantage of a small university.

The same notion — that the opportunities for direct interaction between members of small institutions is extremely valuable in personal and social development generally, has been argued at length in a recent book by Kirkpatrick Sale, *"Human Scale"*[5]. Sale puts forward the proposition that the size of institutions will influence significantly the way in which our civilisation develops. He believes that institutions of "human scale" are essential. "Human scale" is an architectural term applied to the components of a building in relation to the people who use it. Sale extends the concept to include

> *Social arrangements, economic conditions, and political structures (which) could all be designed so that individuals can take in their experience whole and coherently, relate with other people freely and honestly, comprehend all that goes on in their working and civic lives, share in the decisions that make it all function, and not be intimidated or impotent in the face of large hidden forces beyond their control or reckoning.*

Sale's concern for size leads him to comment unfavourably on the increasing size of universities in the United States of America, and the difficulty of seeing institutions with enrolments of up to 70,000 as being universities at all, in the sense that they are institutions where

> *knowledge is imparted and minds are developed and the higher learning is undertaken.*

He quotes with approval Cardinal Newman's concept of a university as

> *an alma mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.*

These remarks remind us that size and effective function are interrelated, and that there should be some limitation of scale if the universities' essential and unique responsibilities are to be discharged adequately.

In Australia, critical scrutiny has focussed (as in this paper) on universities that have not reached a size that enables them to operate economically and effectively. There appears to have been little detailed exploration of the problems of "bigness" in universities. Perhaps such a study would be an illuminating companion piece to this paper; taken together, the two might offer some useful insights into desirable patterns of development for the university system to 2000!

We would note also in passing that in small **regional** universities, a second important advantage is the opportunity for developing a more effective response to community needs. This is not directly related to smallness, but rather to the fact that there **are** local communities within which the university operates, alongside a local school system, local industry, local government, and local cultural and social groups. There are special openings, therefore, for developing a harmonious and supportive partnership between "town and gown", and for informing perhaps relatively disadvantaged socio-economic groups about the opportunities for, and the significance of, higher education. Such universities are probably also better placed to increase the access of such groups to courses of study.

"Futures" for Small Universities.

Let us now consider some possible "futures" for small universities, in the sense of defining a number of possible paths for development in the next ten to twenty years.

Stay small, with enriched funding.

For most of the small universities in Australia (James Cook, Wollongong, Tasmania, Murdoch, Griffith) such a future would imply continued existence at about the present size, and with the present educational responsibilities. We believe that this goal could be achieved only if strong political support is forthcoming from an influential body such as a local community (a city or region speaking through its political representatives) and a state government. The critical question to which an answer would need to be provided is "why should the community support an institution whose degrees cost significantly more than those of the larger universities when, presumably, the quality is at best comparable?" A satisfactory answer may well depend on the small university being able to make a case on grounds other than the conduct of teaching and research. A parallel may be seen in arguments for industry protection where considerations other than economy and efficiency are introduced, e.g., the value of decentralization, or other socio-economic objectives. In any event, it would seem necessary that

- the university establish and maintain significant community esteem for the quality of its activities and its community service. This service would have to be offered without unduly distorting either the academic programme or the role of the university as a critic of society
- some way be found of translating community support into effective pressure on state and federal governments and co-ordinating and funding authorities.
- the university identify those disabilities which because of its size and circumstances are most severe, and take effective action to minimize their impact (e.g., careful selection of faculties, departments, courses and subjects for development; deliberate promotion of co-operative research; development of efficient and economic arrangements for administration and general servicing).

Stay small, and accept standard funding.

It seems to us that this is not a realistic proposal. The disadvantages of smallness would become intolerable; staff and student morale, and public standing and support, would all diminish to unacceptable levels. This is particularly so in the competitive situation we envisage. The small university would inevitably attract unfavourable comparisons with other universities, which would be hard to refute. There would probably be little public resistance to further weakening, or even removal, of the university as a separate institution.

"Federate" with another institution of tertiary education.

By "federation", we mean the merging of separate institutions under a single governing body, which continues to maintain and develop the characteristic educational activities of the original institutions.

The most likely partners in such a federation are a university and a college of advanced education; they could be brought together only with support from State and Commonwealth co-ordinating authorities, and with formal approval and probably legislative action by Commonwealth and State governments.

The federation of a university and a college could enable the institution to offer a range of courses leading to the award of associate diplomas, diplomas, bachelors degrees, masters and doctoral degrees, and postgraduate training and research. The academic work of the federated institution would have two discernible focal points, one a centre for research, postgraduate training and those undergraduate degrees characteristic of universities, and the other, a centre for more vocationally directed undergraduate degrees, diplomas and associate diplomas characteristic of the advanced education sector. Its academic structure would need to ensure the effective maintenance of the two types of higher education, but with a maximum of internal co-operation and collaboration in teaching and research.

Such a federation might be particularly appropriate in non-metropolitan areas, where the federating institutions are in close proximity and are capable of building together a more effective relationship with the local community. Federation could permit readier access to higher education in the area served by the institution; greater responsiveness to community needs, because of the broader educational base and spread of academic and practical skills; and greater economy and efficiency in the use of resources.

"Integration" with another institution of tertiary education.

By "integration", we mean the merging of two institutions under one governing body, without any internal differentiation of education function or style of operation. As for federation, integration would require action by Commonwealth and State governments and co-ordinating authorities.

Integration could be achieved most readily between universities (perhaps in the form of a multi-campus university), or when one university becomes a college of another university. In general, one might anticipate increased flexibility in staffing arrangements; increased availability and flexibility of deployment of resources for research; and more economical development and use of expensive facilities such as libraries, computers, equipment, student services and the like. The university/university-college integration could also permit a measure of specialization, perhaps emphasizing activities of local relevance on the smaller campus, especially if this were located in a different city or region. On the other hand, because of the remoteness of the governing body and the larger part of the institution, the college could become less responsive to local needs than the university from which it originated.

It would also be possible to contemplate integration between a university and a college of advanced education. But **integration** implies the loss of the characteristic activity of at least one of the partners. Thus, the university might, for example, reduce its postgraduate training and research activities and become more vocationally directed in its academic programming, with less emphasis on the liberal arts and sciences; or the college might, for example, begin to lose the vocational orientation of its courses, and perhaps even some of its sub-degree programmes completely. In appropriate circumstances, either type of change might be acceptable — for example, in a metropolis. It seems highly unlikely, however, that it would be satisfactory elsewhere, as access to the full range of higher education is usually dependent on the continued operation of a single university and a single college, or at least a separate university and advanced education programmes.

Closure.

By closure, we mean the complete removal of the university, without either replacement or transformation. We believe that the industrial, social, political and educational difficulties of such a course of action are so severe as to make it extremely improbable.

Is Small Really Beautiful?

So much for possible futures! Which of them should small Australian universities aim at? Indeed, should our small universities take any special action at all now?

Our own answer to the second question is "yes". We doubt that any of the small institutions can contemplate with equanimity the medium or long term future with present student numbers and facilities. Few of us have planned deliberately for operation in such a restricted compass, in competition with larger and more diversified institutions, both universities and colleges. It is essential therefore for each of the small universities to ask whether the disadvantages we have described affect it seriously, and how it might go about minimising the impact of these disadvantages. These universities will do so, of course, only if they are convinced (as we are) that their present size is too small to ensure their continuation as educationally effective institutions. If they do share that conviction, they must in fact feel that their smallness is not beautiful, and that to grow a little bigger, in a carefully planned fashion taking account of their individual circumstances, is highly desirable — no, essential. We say "taking account of their individual circumstances" because we believe that it is not possible to lay down any general prescription for the immediate future development of all small universities. Their opportunities and needs differ so greatly. For example, there is one (Griffith) which has planned its development in such a way as to permit growth by the accretion of relatively self-contained "schools", so that the problem of achieving the "critical mass" of students is minimised; there are others (like Tasmania and James Cook) whose geographic location provides a powerful and perhaps sufficient argument for acceptance of disadvantage; there is one (Deakin) whose special responsibility for external studies will probably shape its future to a very large extent and permit continued growth. Nevertheless, we believe each university should explore and be clear about the ways in which it will grow out of its small classificat

(as we have defined it) and how it will cope with the most severe disadvantages meanwhile. That will involve each in a serious examination of the kinds of issues we have considered in this paper. It will certainly be necessary, we believe, for each small university to formulate publicly supportable reasons which it would advance for its continued support by government and the public.

Finally, we do not think that any of us should shrink from examining even those actions which could lead to the disappearance of the university as a separate institution (that is, either federation or integration). There are circumstances when such transformations could readily be accepted as best for staff, students and the development of higher education itself; if, for example, competitive pressures decrease the numbers of suitably qualified students so greatly that neither adequate resources nor achievement of the critical mass for the student body could be assured; or if a university and a college, competing for the same students, found that their educational development was hampered by inadequate funding and that the deficiency could be overcome if they pooled their separate resources: then it would be eminently sensible for the institutions themselves to generate proposals for integration or federation. We claim after all, to be expert in preparing our students for imaginative and effective activity in greatly changing economic, social, industrial and political circumstances. It would be strange indeed if, as a system, or as units in that system, we were found lacking in the ability to adapt our institutions to changes occurring here and now!

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. The definition of a "discipline" is itself a matter of some dispute. In our view, at any one time it is possible to define a set of related pieces of information and concepts, which have been accumulated by using particular kinds of intellectual and practical techniques; and in which students can be trained so that they can in turn understand and build on existing knowledge. That corpus of information and the skills which are necessary to understand, sustain, and expand it, constitute the basis of a discipline. The basis will change, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly. Nevertheless, at any given moment it is possible to approach a particular aspect of man's knowledge about himself and his world from within the boundaries of a particular discipline. The organisation of knowledge in disciplines is useful because our minds cannot encompass the complete range of man's understanding; we need to fix, around particular areas of knowledge, boundaries within which we can conduct research, teaching and learning.
   There is, of course, a danger that these boundaries are assumed to be more permanent, part of "the nature of things", than they really are, and that they therefore impose restrictions on desirable intellectual development. But it does not seem to us that these dangers have prevented the growth of the new disciplines from older ones (for example, bio-chemistry) or of multi-disciplinary activities (for example, in "schools of inquiry", as in Griffith University). Indeed, an adequate and continuing grasp of the content of "disciplines" is essential for strong and effective multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary work!
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3. Education, Training and Employment: *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training* (Professor B. R. Williams, Chairman). Canberra, A.G.P.S. 1979.
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THE RATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TASMANIA

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In February 1980 the State Government accepted an offer from the University of Tasmania to assume responsibility for courses given by the College of Advanced Education in Southern Tasmania. The University stated that if it were given such an opportunity, it would become a broadly-based dual-purpose institution. The University recognised the need for flexibility in a small state and stated:

> *The University indeed welcomes the opportunity to evolve into a comprehensive regional University new to Australia which could well be a model for small universities in other parts of the Commonwealth. Under this scheme the University would maintain its traditional scholarly activities but also offer a broad range of courses and services more usually offered by colleges of advanced education in other states.*

To understand the problems behind the rationalisation of higher education it is necessary to realise that Tasmania is not at all like other states. The population and interests of the community can be clearly identified with three major regions: the South, the North and the North West. The Tasmanian system of parliamentary representation, based on five seven-member electorates, contributes to this regional pattern of interest as does the division and ownership of the media. The total population is only a little over 400,000. Of these about 160,000 live in greater Hobart, 100,000 in Launceston and the rest in towns of less than 20,000 people or in the country.

Like their mainland counterparts, vocal sectional groups in Tasmania seek a wide range of educational opportunities and would like them to be at their doorsteps. However, there are limited resources available and it is not possible for every tertiary sector to be represented in each region in Tasmania. Thus some tension and conflict is almost inevitable but is compounded by an extraordinary jealousy between the North and the South, specifically between Launceston and Hobart. An equally important factor is a sense of deprivation, freely expressed by representatives of the three major towns in the North West.

The sense of deprivation is well founded in fact. Tasmania's participation rates of 7.1% for the University and 6.3% for the College sector do not compare well with the national averages of 9.5% and 10.0% respectively. They are consistent with the low retention rate to the final year of schooling — 25.4% compared with a national average of 35.3%. Decentralisation of the population and low retention rates to year 12 schooling are linked factors, the lowest participation rates being found in the areas outside Hobart.

In the metropolitan centres of the larger states, universities and colleges can each limit their offerings but collectively provide a very wide range of opportunities in the one city. Many universities have chosen a limited role, emphasising research and scholarship, without being seen by the community as failing in their duty. Over the last three decades there has been a substantial change in the distribution of students between courses at various levels. Postgraduate teaching and research have expanded dramatically and at the same time there has been a decline in sub-graduate teaching. Sub-graduate courses accounted for 27% of all students in 1954 and only 10.4% in 1963. Subsequently many of these courses were phased out or up-graded to full degree courses in the late 1960s following the Martin Committee Report.

It is perhaps ironic that the large institutions which can relatively easily be "comprehensive" now have no need to be, while the smaller ones in more remote communities, are urged to be "comprehensive" but have to wrestle with problems of scale which inhibit such diversity. In the Tasmanian experiment the University will be required to broaden its base and to provide some courses which in other areas may be found in CAEs.

History

To understand the latest moves to rationalise higher education it is necessary to review the history of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (TCAE). Perhaps because the University was not providing the breadth of service needed by the community, a decision was taken in the late sixties to set up a CAE in Tasmania. The potential student population was quite small so that the arguments for a college depended on breadth of opportunity rather than on numbers or the associated costs of the institutions involved. It might have been expected that, since more than half Tasmania's population lives outside Hobart, the College would have been established in Launceston, the second city. However, the argument that no capital city could be without a CAE prevailed and in 1968 the TCAE opened its doors on a site at Mt Nelson which is almost contiguous with the University grounds. Subsequently the College took steps to develop a second campus at Newnham in Launceston.
The new College incorporated a previously existing School of Art, a Conservatorium of Music, and a