

CAE functions and academic staff, and to the university research thrust. If integration of CAEs with nearby universities was to be the eventual government strategy for places like Townsville, Armidale, Newcastle, Wollongong, and so on, the tragedy is that the process of integration was not begun years ago, during the period of rapid growth. In the western Canadian provinces, government teachers colleges were reasonably successfully integrated into the universities in the 1960s, but this took place in a period of rapid expansion and while the teachers colleges were still very small institutions (many offered only a one or two year course). Furthermore, generous funding provided opportunities for teachers college staff with inadequate formal qualifications to take leave on salary to attempt higher degrees. But this is far from the difficult situation being forced on a number of smaller universities and adjoining colleges.

Concluding Comments

For many educators, perhaps the greatest reason for disappointment concerning the recent Commonwealth decisions with regard to education is that 'ad hocism' has triumphed once again over rational and consistent planning, and that short-term political considerations have dominated at the expense of long-term national interests. A basic need in modern democracies is for governments to be able to develop consistent, well-thought-out, forward policies for education, based on adequate information and research, and on consultation, and for a high level co-ordination to be achieved in developing these policies in conjunction with policy on economic affairs, labour market needs, immigration policy, and social and cultural considerations.

A somewhat similar reason for regret is that the apparent problems have stimulated a short-term 'band-aid' approach, instead of asking whether other options are feasible, and whether there are fundamental long-term goals to which institutions and systems might aspire. For example, the issue of the sectoral boundary between advanced education and TAFE could well be questioned. At least for some geographic regions (and even whole states) the notion of multi-level, multi-campus regional colleges, incorporating both CAE and TAFE functions, appears to make sense;¹³ such a strategy may well be preferable to the forced amalgamations of CAEs with universities in places such as Armidale and Newcastle.

Another cause for concern is whether many tertiary institutions and state government agencies have the capacity to respond quickly to Commonwealth Government initiatives. For example, very few tertiary institutions appear to have separate institutional planning and research units, attached to senior management, and able to monitor changes in both the external environment and internal trends, and produce first-rate draft planning documents at short

notice. In the past tertiary institutions in this country probably did not need such units, but today's environment is distinctly different to that of the past.

Finally, there is one even more fundamental cause for concern. For much of this paper I have assumed that the Government's current moves mark an unfortunate retreat in terms of sympathetic consideration for education, a retreat dictated essentially by political necessity, and that education is undergoing a period of financial constraint demanded simply by Government economic policy. Some would argue, however, that recent developments especially with regard to tertiary education should be seen within the context of deliberate efforts by conservative interests in our society to move resources from the public to private sectors, to reduce the importance of all tertiary education that does not have a direct vocational relevance (hence the emphasis on TAFE and within advanced education on business studies and technologies), and to achieve substantial reductions in student enrolments in vocational programs training personnel essentially for public sector employment (e.g. teaching, social welfare etc.). The same line of argument would also see the moves as a subtle attack on the whole notion of a truly liberal education and the development of a highly educated, articulate, humane and pluralistic democratic society.

REFERENCES

1. *Ministerial Statement: Review of Commonwealth Functions*, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra, 1981.
2. *Statement on Commonwealth Education Policy and Financial Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions: Statement by the Minister for Education, The Hon. Wal. Fife, 4 June 1981*, Canberra, 1981.
3. *Ministerial Statement*, p. 21.
4. *Statement on Commonwealth Education Policy*, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
6. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 3 July 1981.
7. These fees will rise from 1982 as follows: first degree in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science from \$2,000 p.a. to \$2,200 p.a.; and other undergraduate courses from \$1,500 p.a. to \$1,700 p.a. The fee of \$2,500 p.a. for postgraduate courses, however, will remain unchanged.
8. *The Australian*, 1 May 1981.
9. *Ministerial Statement*, p. 23.
10. *Ministerial Statement*, supporting papers, p. 13.
11. Policy with regard to teacher education enrolments in Catholic teachers colleges funded as CAEs has provided a dilemma for governments. Because they are small and because to date they have had few problems in placing their graduates in Catholic schools, they have argued for exemption from enrolment reductions. Other CAEs, however, have argued that reductions should be shared equally.
12. *Ministerial Statement: The Future of Victorian Colleges of Advanced Education*, p. 12.
13. For a discussion of such a plan and other possibilities see G.S. Harman et al (eds.) *Academia Becalmed: Australian Tertiary Education in the Aftermath of Expansion*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1980.

A CASE AGAINST THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSITY FEES

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The Federal Government has announced its intention of re-introducing fees for second and higher degrees in Australian tertiary educational institutions. We believe this to be a short-sighted and socially destructive policy, whose financial value is in any case trivial.

In 1979, the Williams Report on education and employment restated the principle that university education should remain available to all persons of appropriate ability¹. This Report was endorsed by the Government when it appeared. The Government's proposed action will present a deterrent to persons of proved academic competence.

The Government does not intend to re-introduce fees for undergraduate students, who make up approximately 85 per cent of the student population. At the time that fees were abolished in 1973, they accounted for about 5 per cent of university income. Hence the re-introduction of fees will make a difference of less than 1 per cent to university finances. Its damaging effects, however, will be far greater than this small percentage suggests. The present proportion of graduate and second degree students is not simply the result of abolition of fees. In 1972, before abolition, graduate students already accounted for 10 per cent of the university population; since then, numbers have risen only slowly to the present 12 per cent. The Government may perhaps calculate that if the current proportion falls back to the 1972 level, this is not a dramatic reduction and will make comparatively little difference to the academic scene. We believe such a calculation to be mistaken. The re-introduction of fees is likely to have a double effect, i.e. to induce currently enrolled students to abandon their postgraduate studies² and also to deter potential graduate students from enrolling. Thus, the proportion may well drop significantly below the 1972 level.

In addition, the collection of fees will impose a significant administrative burden on the universities, the cost of which will largely consume the amounts collected. The establishment of such an organisation would, of course, create a ready-made structure for collecting fees from undergraduate students if the Government should decide to extend its policy to this level.

The Williams Committee pointed out that the highest proportions of graduate students were in agriculture, engineering, education and the natural sciences.³ Postgraduate research in agriculture, engineering and science is particularly exacting and makes heavy

demands on the students concerned. If fees are now added to the existing commitment, their deterrent effect could be considerable, especially as the problems of inflation and unemployment have made post-graduate study less attractive than it was a decade ago. The prosperity of Australia for the remainder of the century will be closely linked with the welfare of primary industry, the development of natural resources, and the ability of industry to adjust to rapid technological change. In the circumstances, to discourage graduates seeking advanced expertise in relevant areas is remarkably ill-considered. The history of the last 50 years demonstrates that losses of this kind are not easily made up. Companies engaged in resources development are reporting difficulty in recruiting specialist engineers, and are actively recruiting overseas. J. P. Cox, in a paper written for the Williams Committee, noted the likelihood of this shortfall, and the recent report of the Tertiary Education Commission comments that the demand for professional engineers, especially those with advanced qualifications, exceeds the numbers produced by the universities.⁴

The loss of graduate students will have serious effects on the level of research in the universities. Figures produced by the T.E.C. and by Project SCORE⁵ show that 40 per cent of university research is carried out by graduate students. A run-down in research within the universities will ultimately mean a decline in the quality of teaching and scholarship, particularly in smaller and more vulnerable institutions removed from the larger centres of academic activity. Such a run-down can only have a damaging effect on the cultural development of Australia, in which the universities have a particular role to play, quite apart from their function in producing graduates with specialised occupational skills. But the problem does not end there. An increasing proportion of graduate students are concerned not so much with research but with updating and extending their qualifications in a world where technological and socio-economic changes have effectively shortened the life of skills, knowledge and information obtained through a first degree. The cost of doing so will, of course, be disproportionately high for those students who have returned to university at their own initiative without institutional or corporate backing. The community will continue to make demands on the universities for the provision of new skills and the updating of existing ones. It will also continue to demand the kind of detailed and rigorous evaluation of emerging social, economic and political issues which institutions of

higher education are pre-eminently equipped to provide. Activities of this sort are particularly associated with postgraduate studies. As the economist Mark Blaug has observed, the central principle of educational planning should be to maximise the returns, however measured, from given amounts of resources⁶. The run-down of postgraduate studies would represent a significant failure to use the universities to their best advantage. The net loss to the nation as a whole is incalculable.

References

1. *Report of the Committee on Education, Training, and Employment*, Canberra, 1979, Vol. 1, p. 10.
2. Currently enrolled postgraduate students have now been exempted from fees — Ed.
3. *ibid.*, p. 146.
4. *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp 442-5; Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for the 1982-84 Triennium*, Vol. 1, pp 102-5.
5. Project SCORE — Survey and Comparisons of Research Expenditures — measures the financial and labour power resources devoted to Australian research and experimental development. This survey was last carried out in 1976-77 by the (then) Commonwealth Department of Science and the Environment (now Science and Technology) and published by the AGPS in 1980.
6. Mark Blaug, *An Introduction to the Economics of Education*, 1970, p. 26.

CHAIR OF AUSTRALIAN STUDIES HARVARD UNIVERSITY

An Australian Nominating Committee for the Chair of Australian Studies, Harvard University, has recently been appointed, exclusively responsible for nominating persons to be considered for this Chair by Harvard University. The Chair was established as a result of a grant by the Australian Government, in recognition of the American bicentennial celebrations, to further American understanding of Australia. The Committee has begun to work on the proposals to be made to Harvard for appointments beginning in the American 1983/84 academic year. Arrangements to fill the Chair to 1983 have already been made.

Past occupants of the Chair have been Professors La Nauze, Clark, Butlin and Davies and acceptances to 1983 have been made by Professors Blainey, Inglis and Kramer.

The Committee would welcome expressions of interest from persons wishing to be nominated for any period during August 1983 to June 1987. The Committee reserves the right to invite particular individuals to accept nomination. In all cases, it would be essential that persons wishing to be considered should provide a curriculum vitae and a summary outline of proposed courses to be given at Harvard together with dates at which they would expect to be available. In principle, no field of interest or specialisation is excluded though the relevance to Australian studies is vital. It is not necessary that persons willing to be considered should be academics.

Letters and relevant documentation should be addressed to Professor N.G. Butlin, Chairman, Australian Nominating Committee, Chair of Australian Studies, C/- Australian National University, Box 4, GPO, Canberra, ACT 2600 by 11 December 1981.

METAMORPHOSIS: A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE

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Over the last few decades there has been a steady shift in the balance of power within universities to more centralised administration. Part of this can be attributed to the rapid growth of universities and part to the aftermath of student activism begun in Berkeley in 1964. The latter factor is of interest because similar recent moves by staff towards the democratization of university government will produce further change in the distribution of power within universities. The effect is related, not to the more emotive issues of professorial versus non-professorial control of universities, but to associated changes in the organisation of administrative structures.

One of the major consequences of democratization is the introduction of limited periods of office for chairmen of departments, deans of schools and faculties, and members of various university committees. The effect of this is to place continuity of corporate memory in the hands of senior non-academic administrators who serve *ex officio* in a wide range of critical policy-making committees or function as secretariats to these committees. This change is further exacerbated by the accumulation of records within central administrative structures. In a sense these committees serve as extensions of central administration, so that members of the committee become less influential than the corporate memory of the committee itself.

Given the above situation, academic administrators who hold office for a limited period rely almost exclusively on the advice and information of permanent non-academic administrators. Furthermore, these academic administrators spend a greater proportion of their term of office learning how the system works than working the system. Thus the continuity of experience, the continuity of information, and the continuity of memory of the non-academic administrators give rise to a conventional wisdom as they see it and this becomes the sole *modus operandi*. While democratization gives the appearance of decentralization of power, it encourages the reality of centralization of power within the ranks of professional administrators. One consequence of this is that form will tend to dictate content rather than the reverse, which is an undesirable state of affairs.

There is no intention to question the administrative capabilities of the professional administrators in universities; but administration within universities must subserve their academic aims and functions. Decisions arrived at must be based primarily on academic considerations while taking into account

administrative feasibilities. The latter should never dictate the former. The lack of academic expertise within the ranks of professional administrators makes it necessary for these administrators to seek 'academic advice' from academics. Such academic advice comes mainly from those academics who hold academic administrative positions such as chairmanship of departments, deanship of schools and faculties, chairmanship of courses, Academic Board, Boards of Studies, and so on. Effectiveness of such advice is a function of the experience and knowledge of those academics giving the advice. The trend towards shorter periods of office for academic administrators must lead in the long run to a greater reliance by them on the conventional wisdom of professional administrators. However willing, professional administrators will find it difficult to place academic considerations before administrative ones.

Until recently, academic administrative positions were held by professorial staff who have, in general, tended to remain in office for long periods and in many cases, permanently. This is possible for professors who, in most cases, have reached the end point of their academic careers and who find the reduction in time available for academic activities, and in particular for research, less detrimental to their careers than it is for non-professorial academic staff. In this context it may be noted that chairmanship of departments and deanship of schools and faculties are in most instances full time positions. The commitment of non-professorial staff to long term or permanent administrative offices would inevitably have serious consequences on the career development of these staff members, and in any case would be contrary to the spirit of democratization. Consequently, the introduction of non-professorial academic administrators must lead to shorter terms of office with the undesirable consequence discussed above.

With the trend towards broadening university government, those most likely to move into academic administrative offices will be senior lecturers. Many will attempt to maintain their research interests while carrying out their administrative duties, if they are in any way motivated towards an academic career. However, in the majority of cases one or the other activity will suffer. Those who place priority on their academic careers will treat the period of administrative office as a cross to bear and to be discarded at the earliest possible opportunity. This will increase the proportion of power held by non-academic senior administrators. Those who place priority on the performance of their administrative functions and who