

14. Statement by the Minister for Education, The Hon. Wal Fife, *Statement on Commonwealth Education Policy and Financial Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions*, 4 June 1981.
15. *ibid.*
16. *Report for 1982-84 Triennium*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 1, p 28.
17. *ibid.*, p 33.
18. *ibid.*, p 4.
19. *Review of Commonwealth Functions*, op. cit., p 24.
20. *Statement on Commonwealth Education Policy and Financial Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions*, op. cit.
21. *Report for 1982-84 Triennium*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 2, p 23-4.
22. *Report for 1982-84 Triennium*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 1, p 22.
23. *Statement on Commonwealth Education Policy and Financial Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions*, op. cit.
24. In the light of the 1975 budgetary situation, the Government set aside the reports of the Universities Commission, the Commission on Advanced Education, and the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education which recommended financial assistance for their respective sectors for (what was to have been) the 1976-78 triennium. Instead, the Government decided that, for funding purposes, 1976 would be treated as "a year outside the triennial progression".

AN AGREEMENT ON TRAINING UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: THE UK EXPERIENCE

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to review the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain and in the light of national needs and resources to advise Her Majesty's Government on what principles its long term development should be based...

The Committee's report was published in October 1963 and contained a total of 178 wide-ranging recommendations.⁵

Only one of these related directly to academic staff training — namely, that "all newly appointed junior teachers should have organized opportunities to acquire the techniques of lecturing and of conducting discussion groups." In arriving at this recommendation, the Committee noted 'excessive complaints' from both university teachers and student organizations concerning methods of instruction.

In its consideration of teaching, the Robbins Committee confined itself to general questions connected with the use made of teaching resources. This was because in March 1961, only one month after the appointment of the Robbins Committee, the University Grants Committee (the funding authority for all UK universities) appointed a Committee on University Teaching Methods, under the Chairmanship of Sir Edward Hale. The terms of reference of the Hale Committee were

to make a comparative study of undergraduate teaching methods and practices current in the universities and colleges of Great Britain in the fields of arts and pure and applied science.

The Committee's report was published in November 1964.⁶ As did the Robbins Report, the Hale Report referred to criticism of the universities on the grounds that university teachers are insufficiently trained for their work. The Committee inquired into the extent to which university teachers should receive training or instruction in how to teach. As a result of discussions with university delegations, it became clear to the Committee that any proposal to make full-time course of training a mandatory prerequisite for university appointment would receive no support at all. Nevertheless the Committee expressed the view that the haphazard nature of existing arrangements for training resulted in much university teaching being less effective than it should be.

The Origins of Academic Staff Training in the United Kingdom

Universities have for centuries rejected the idea that academic staff require any formal training for their jobs other than that which is subject-matter based, and it has long been the tradition that staff need receive no formal training whatsoever in teaching administration — or indeed in research.

Only in the last forty years has this tradition been openly challenged in any real measure. Truscott, for example, argued that the only effective remedy for 'appalling' teaching is for lectures to be made better by "subjecting all would-be university lecturers to a specific course of training,"¹ and this theme was pursued by a growing number of individuals over the next decade.² Despite such concern however, the ranks of academe remained largely unmoved. Radcliffe noted that the idea of training new recruits to university teaching was largely "shrugged off with a quantity of humorous or supercilious comment."³ Nevertheless, this period marked the beginnings of a recognition in the United Kingdom of the need for professional training of university teachers and a growing questioning of the tenability of the traditional view of university teaching as either a self-taught art or a craft passed on informally from master to apprentice.

This post-war period also marked a beginning interest by the AUT (The Association of University Teachers) in the improvement of university teaching, and twice during this time (in 1945 and 1954) the union approached the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) on the question of training for academic staff.

National Initiatives

The period from 1961-1974 (when the Agreement on Probationary Procedures and Criteria came into being) was remarkable for a number of national initiatives in the university sector which were subsequently to colour the whole area of academic staff training in the U.K.⁴ Of all these initiatives perhaps that which has had the most far-reaching consequences for the UK university system was the Report of the Robbins Committee on Higher Education in 1963.

The Committee on Higher Education, under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, was appointed in February 1961 by the Prime Minister

The Committee suggested that training in lecturing and tutorial teaching should be given as a matter of course. The Committee also pointed to a need for operational research in university teaching to be conducted on an inter-university basis, advancing the view that such research might result in the existence of advisers in lecturing techniques who could visit universities by invitation to advise and assist individual members of staff.

AUT Initiatives

Following yet another approach early in 1961 to CVCP about academic staff training and the need to examine teaching methods, the AUT established a Panel on Teaching Techniques in January 1963. This panel, in an interim report, made a number of suggestions for improving university teaching.⁷ These included a strong recommendation for the establishment of inservice training courses for both new and experienced staff.

In March 1966, in its quinquennial submission to the UGC, the AUT proposed the establishment of a national staff college to act as a focus for future developments, and a conference on university coordination (held at the University of Nottingham in 1967) considered the question of whether coordinated action on the part of universities, either nationally or regionally, would produce more efficient, economic and soundly-based systems of training for academic staff. Following this conference, the CVCP invited the AUT to set up a Working Party on the Training of University Teachers with a remit to consider the extent of training currently provided, to estimate the value of such training, to suggest topics for training and to recommend ways in which effective and acceptable training might be made available to universities.

The AUT Working Party on the Training of University Teachers reported in February 1969 recommending:⁸

- that a number of preliminary courses of training for newcomers to university teaching should be mounted immediately;
- that certain university departments of higher education should be given additional resources to enable them to provide 'field officers' who could visit universities by invitation to advise on training and help with evaluation of new methods; and
- that CVCP should appoint a body to evaluate the experience of mounting the first preliminary courses, and to assess the resources available to increase the provision of courses so that all newly appointed staff and also older members of staff could have the opportunity of receiving the same formal training.

Finally, the Working Party recognized the need for regular planning by CVCP or by some agency acting for the universities as a whole.

NUS Initiatives

In a memorandum to the Hale Committee on University Teaching Methods published in June 1961, the National Union of Students (NUS) referred to the necessity of ensuring that the university teacher is suitably qualified to lecture and to supervise tutorial work.

Reporting in April 1969 the Commission recommended that all lecturers should be trained either before taking up their posts or, where that was not possible, during the first three years of their appointments. In addition, the number and range of short training courses for lecturers already in service should be expanded and lecturers should be more actively encouraged by their institutions to make use of these courses.

A Groundswell of Opinion

In short, the movement for an improvement in the standards of university teaching gathered momentum over the thirty year period from 1940-1970 such that the traditional view outlined in the opening paragraphs of this paper — namely that university teachers required no training outside their subject-matter — came under increasing attack from a widening variety of sources. The few individuals who in the 1940s (and previously) had pleaded for training were now joined by a growing awareness on the parts of the UGC, the CVCP, the AUT, the NUS and academics themselves. The expansion of the university system in the late sixties and early seventies lent urgency to a problem which at long last was becoming formally recognized and seriously considered by all parties involved.

Government had already accepted the need for training — indeed in its report on university salaries in 1968, the National Board for Prices and Income had recommended a probationary period of four to five years for all academic staff entering the university at assistant lecturer or lecturer level. In addition, the Board had seen a need for passage beyond probation to be rigorously controlled, instead of being automatic as it then was in many universities.

The University Grants Committee, perhaps mindful of the zealously guarded institutional autonomy characterising the universities, recommended that the method of implementation of the Board's recommendations should be left to each institution's own discretion. In its letter of May 1969, the UGC wrote:

The normal period of probation should be three years from initial appointment, with a possible extension (at a university's discretion) to four years. It would be for each university to decide its own method of judging whether or not a teacher has successfully completed probation. If probation is to serve its true purpose, entrants to university teaching must be given full opportunities to develop appropriate skills and to demonstrate their

suitability and competence before a decision is taken to confirm them in appointment. The Committee attaches importance to the development by each university of appropriate arrangements (where these do not already exist) for systematic training in the early period of appointment.

It was clear that something had to be done — but what? The need for training had been clearly established and the will for it to happen had been demonstrated by the relevant national bodies, but would the individual university institutions accept the need and implement actions? A solution was found (or so it seemed at the time) in what might loosely be described as a "pay and productivity" agreement between the employers and the union and government.

The 1974 Agreement on Probation

Following a withdrawal of the standing reference on the pay of university teachers from the National Board for Prices and Incomes, academic salaries became subject to a new negotiating machinery involving two separate committees: Committee 'A', made up of union and employer representatives (the AUT and the University Authorities Panel — UAP — respectively, and Committee 'B', made up of AUT and UAP on the one hand and Government on the other. (The University Grants Committee was represented at meetings of Committee A and representatives of the UGC acted as confidential advisers to the Government in Committee B.)

A comprehensive review of the salaries of non-clinical academic staff took place in 1971 under the auspices of this new machinery and led to agreement on a revised structure and salary scales with effect from October 1971. In February 1972 the UGC spelt out the terms of this salary settlement which included the following provision in respect of probation:

Lecturers

Probationary period to be 3 years with possible extension to 4 years in doubtful cases. Training procedures to be improved with thorough review prior to confirmation on the basis of revised and improved procedures and criteria.

As Matheson notes, it was to take a further three years before detailed agreement was reached by a Working Party of Committee A on the procedures and criteria to be used in connection with the probationary period, and a formal UAP/AUT 'Agreement on Probation' was not circulated to universities until October 1974.⁹

The agreement, formally known as the *Agreement concerning the procedure and criteria to be used in connection with the Probationary Period*,¹⁰ covered the following areas: the nature of the probationary review, selection, training and development, criteria

for confirmation, and review procedure. The sections of the agreement which dealt specifically with training for probationary lectures were as follows:

"Selection, Training and Development"

4. The Working Party is of the opinion that Universities must maintain high standards of selection procedures when they are considering making appointments to their academic staff. Where appointments have a probationary period it is incumbent on universities to provide training for the probationer of a helpful and comprehensive nature. Advice and guidance by a senior colleague nominated for this task, and encouragement to attend formal courses of instruction should be included. Attention should be paid to developments in the training of University Lecturers at a national level as well as to internal courses of instruction. The probationer should receive a co-ordinated development programme which lasts throughout his probationary period and permits appropriate reports to be made, and remedial action to be taken where necessary, at regular stages. Universities should also ensure that the day-to-day duties and workload allocated to a probationer are appropriate for a person of his age, standing and experience.

Criteria

5. The primary consideration for the employing university in deciding whether or not to retain a person at the conclusion of his probation must be the long-term interests of the university itself, of the other members of its staff, and of its students. But it is recognised at the same time that a university has a responsibility to assist the development of a member of staff in his probationary period; and also some concern for the future of a probationer whom it does not wish to retain.
11. An employing university which declines to retain a person on grounds of inadequate performance or insufficient promise or personal unsuitability should be able to show (a) that training in university teaching was made available and (b) that continuing advice and help towards improvement were offered and due warning given of inadequacies by the Head of Department or other responsible person."

It is clear from these extracts from the Agreement that universities were (and are) called upon to fulfil three requirements in respect of probationary training. These requirements are:

• Development Programme

The provision of a co-ordinated development programme throughout the probationary period.

• Training

The provision of training of a helpful and comprehensive nature including:

- (i) advice and guidance by a senior colleague nominated for this task;
- (ii) encouragement to attend formal courses of instruction at both local and national levels.

• Duties and Workload

The allocation of day-to-day duties and workload appropriate for a person of the probationer's age, standing and experience.

Under the terms of the agreement, an employing university which declines to retain a person should be able to show that these requirements have been met. How individual institutions were to meet these requirements was not spelt out in the Agreement document and the ensuing debate on what constituted *training of a helpful and comprehensive nature* has continued unabated ever since despite the many attempts at clarification.

CCTUT welcomed the Agreement and felt that some form of best practice would evolve over the next twelve months and that the Committee would have a role to play in assisting universities to recognize such practice in the area of probationary training.

However, the experience of the Co-ordinating Officer was that there was considerable confusion about the status of the Agreement. And indeed the predominant theme that emerged at a series of regional meetings convened by the Committee over the winter of 1975-76 was the training offered to probationary lecturers and the implications of the Agreement for such training.

As a result of these regional meetings it became obvious that universities were at different stages of implementation of the Agreement and that many would welcome further information and advice. The Committee therefore convened, in June 1976, a National Working Conference which was held at the University of Birmingham. The basic aim of this conference was to consider the training implications of the Agreement for universities.

An edited account of the findings of the conference in the form of a preliminary draft document for discussion and consideration by universities was produced in the Spring 1977 following comments made on an earlier draft at a second series of regional meetings. It was not intended to be a rigid prescription of how to implement the Agreement. Although a number of the Committee's contacts in universities felt that the publication of the document would add a much needed impetus to the consideration of training issues by universities, opposition to the document led the Co-ordinating Committee to abandon its plans for publication and *The Training Implications of the UAP/AUT Agreement on Probation* remains an unpublished document.

The Brynmor Jones Working Group on the Training of University Teachers

While the 1971 salaries negotiations were in train, the CVCP in March of that year and in collaboration with the UGC and AUT had set up a Working Group, under the Chairmanship of Sir Brynmor

Jones, to examine the future provision for the training of university teachers. In its report in January 1972 the Working Group stated that the time had come when present arrangements should be supplemented by a more formal scheme of training (organized at local, regional and national levels) including induction, initial training and departmental support, advanced courses for established staff and for those involved in providing training.

In March 1972 the CVCP circulated the Report to universities, inviting comments on the scheme and indicating that it (the CVCP) had no desire to lay down a uniform pattern of training.

To assist in the development of its proposed arrangements, the Working Group recommended that CVCP, as a matter of immediate action, should establish a Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers. CCTUT should be representative of CVCP, AUT and UGC and arrangements should be made for it to be adequately serviced. In February 1972 CVCP accepted this recommendation and the AUT and the UGC were invited to nominate members to the newly formed national committee.

The Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers

The Co-ordinating Committee (CCTUT), established by CVCP in February 1972, appointed a Co-ordinating Officer in September 1973 and in June 1974 convened its first national conference on academic staff training at the Manchester Business School. Thereafter CCTUT became the focus for national initiatives in staff training and a series of regional, national and international conferences, meetings and workshops followed until the Committee's demise in July 1981. The Committee's work is perhaps best exemplified in a Report on one of its national conferences.¹¹ (Mack, 1979). Its demise is reported fully in Matheson¹² and in brief by Mack.¹³

The Impact of the 1974 UAP/AUT Agreement on Provision of Training

There can be little doubt that a general groundswell of opinion in the decades before the 1970s led to the establishment of the Brynmor Jones Working Group, the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers and ultimately to the UAP/AUT agreement itself. Likewise, there can be little doubt that this agreement led to radical changes in the provision of training opportunities within individual universities. Both prior and subsequent to the agreement, there was substantial growth in training provision within individual institutions. Whereas by 1968 only eight universities had institution-wide training courses, by 1971 no less than forty universities had made such provision. In 1969 only eleven institutions had established Senate committees or working parties specifically charged with determining training policies, but by 1971 twenty-five institutions had established such arrangements.

By 1974 committees had been established in thirty-two universities, and by 1976 all but eight institutions had Senate Committees whose sole or major remit was the training of academic staff.

Like growth was also to be found in the number of central training agencies or units. Whereas only two such units existed in 1969, by 1977 the number had risen to fifteen.

Likewise, in 1971, training for new staff was compulsory at only three institutions; by 1973 attendance was mandatory at thirteen universities, 'encouraged' by senior staff at seven more, and entirely optional at the remaining twenty-five.

While growth in the provision of training might seem to reflect a now-healthy situation, such optimism must be regarded with extreme caution and it might be wiser to view the reported increases in training provision as intentions rather than as reality. There is no doubt that some growth in training activity has taken place over the past decade, but the generally low level of funding must be interpreted as indicative of limited progress.

The low level of funding reported in 1974-75 was still very much in evidence in 1976-77 and the position had not changed radically by 1979-80. CCTUT's final survey of training provision carried out in 1980, reported then in respect of the following year (1980-81), only six institutions planned to increase their level of expenditure on training, thirty-three expected to maintain the 1979-80 level and seven planned to reduce their level of financial support for training. The continuing programme of 'cuts' has meant further budgetary reductions in many institutions training provisions and 1982/83 is even less well funded.

It is true, as Matheson¹⁴ indicates, that the information which has been collected on financial provision for staff training

is not intended to infer a detailed picture of the training provision of particular universities. Any picture so derived will be incomplete. Nor can the data necessarily be taken to imply that staff at one institution have greater opportunities for personal development in teaching (or any other area) than staff at another institution. Nonetheless, it is evident that the number of training opportunities and the range of central training facilities varied enormously between institutions. Such comparative data for individual institutions, particularly when combined with comparative levels of expenditure can be misleading in the sense that in the final analysis it is the quality of formal training, the standard of central training facilities and the competence of training personnel that ultimately determine the worth to academic staff of an institution's provisions in this area. Another factor contributing to worth is the extent to which an institution's training provi-

sions meet the needs, both real and perceived, of academic staff. Unfortunately, little effort has been devoted to finding ways of assessing these aspects of training provisions.

Nevertheless, it must be conceded that the level of financial provision for training remains abysmally low — and there are signs that in the current economic situation it may fall lower still.

A second cause for some pessimism must be the cessation for funding for CCTUT and the subsequent reliance of training on local and/or regional initiatives.

In December 1978, CVCP established a Review Group, under the Chairmanship of Sir Harry Pitt, to review arrangements for the training of university teachers. The Review Group's report was circulated to universities in February 1980. The main outcome of the review, which recommended a strengthened Co-ordinating Committee with an increased budget and staff, was the termination of CCTUT in July 1981, and the establishment of a new committee (without any budget or staff) in August 1981 with a remit "to meet from time to time to review the current provision for the training of university teachers and to ensure that universities are made aware of this provision." As indicated above, from August 1981 the organization of training activities has of necessity been carried out solely by universities themselves on a local or regional basis. To date, little has been done on a regional basis. Only two regions — the Midlands and Scotland — have developed any formalized training activities. In the Midlands, the Working Party established in February 1977 continues to promote inter-university activities within the region. Since 1981, the Working Party has representatives from all Midlands universities and continues to sponsor regional workshops. More recently, three of the Midlands universities (Leicester, Loughborough and Nottingham) have established a consortial training programme at sub-regional level.

In Scotland, the Scottish Principals gave their approval to the establishment of a Steering Committee for Staff Development in Scottish Universities to promote "liaison between the Scottish Universities in matters of staff development in general, but, more particularly, in the provision of advanced subject-based meetings on teaching practice." The Steering Committee met for the first time in March 1978 with a membership drawn from the eight Scottish Universities, and has since sponsored a number of training workshops and courses.

While such regional developments are welcome they too suffer from a lack of any financial provision — and of course have little impact on the remainder of the country which has yet to develop any significant regionally-based activity.

In summary, the current situation looks bleak indeed. There is now little opportunity for national co-ordination, little regional activity and signs of a decreasing commitment at local level. On this positive side, interest in academic staff development has quickened over the past two decades. The provision made by UK universities for staff training and development has burgeoned. An increasing number of academic staff are devoting themselves, on a full-time, part-time or spare-time basis, to providing formal staff development programmes and informal help, guidance and consultancy for their colleagues. Opportunities abound in many institutions for academic staff to be inducted into their institutions, to improve their lecturing, to learn about groups, to examine assessment procedures and so on. More is written about staff training and development than ever before.

Despite all this, as Matheson observes, staff development is at risk:

It would take very little by the way of political or financial pressure to expunge existing formal provisions for staff development from the higher education scene. The likelihood of such pressure being applied increases at times of budgetary stringency. As universities themselves teeter on the brink of a new era characterized by enforced retrenchment, it is inevitable that the accomplishments of staff development are coming under scrutiny. The omens for staff development, if left untended, are bleak.¹⁵

Effects of the Agreement on Individual Members of Staff

The agreement which prompted such apparent activity at both national and local levels might be expected to also have a significant effect on individual members of staff. It is therefore a matter of considerable regret that **any** effect of the UAP/AUT Agreement on individual lecturers (beyond those actively engaged in the provision of training and development activities) is difficult to discern in our UK universities — indeed a casual survey of academics quickly confirms that a majority are not even aware of the Agreement's existence. Those who are aware generally know little of its content — or intent and the mainstream of British Academe remains unmoved; indeed untouched, by its advent.

One might expect that the Agreement, in implementation, would carry with it consequences for the individual lecturer — for instance in his or her working relationships with colleagues, head of department and with those involved in the provision of training and development activities.

There is some little evidence that, in the few universities where implementation has truly happened, some greater awareness and acceptance of the need for training has developed, along with a new understanding of the positive training role available

to senior colleagues and heads of departments. In overall, national terms, however, this little evidence pales into insignificance. The vast majority of lecturers remain unaware of the Agreement, its provisions and its potential. There remains, in a majority of institutions — despite the establishment of formal committees and the like — a distinct and pervasive feeling among staff that their institutions do not value training activities. In reality, most acknowledge that lip service is paid to the training ideal, but advancement in research continues to be the institution's (and ergo the individual's) goal. The probationary period remains much as it always was, with confirmation of appointment at the end of it little more than just another formality.

It is perhaps to state the obvious to say that before any system can have an effect on individual participants, it must first be implemented. The lack of effect of the UAP/AUT Agreement on individual lecturers must be likewise attributed to the lack of implementation granted by the universities. The rise of CCTUT has been seen only as a temporary hiccup — its fall has confirmed once again the status quo. Training does not matter.

Where did it all go wrong?

Blame for the current downturn in the futures of staff training and development have been laid at the doors of government, the CVCP, the general economic crises and the like. It is this author's contention, however, that the outcome which currently exists has had two main causes: an almost total devotion of resources to the improvement of teaching; and the lack of a properly authorized, funded and staffed national body which could have provided financial resources, manpower, information, encouragement and leadership in support of training and development activities within and for institutions.

As Matheson¹⁶ has pointed out, the restriction of staff development activities to those concerned with improving teaching has had far reaching effects:

the evidence suggests that staff development is regarded by many institutions merely as a minimally-financed fire-fighting capability confined to an arena, namely teaching, in which there is little consensus that there is any vestige of smoke...

In any case, since the traditional responsibilities of academic staff embrace not only teaching but also research and administration, any staff development provision that limits itself to 'remedial' training in teaching must necessarily fail to meet the full needs of academic staff. It is not surprising therefore that rumours abound of the possible closure of this or that local central training facility or the imminent demise of next year's training programme for probationary staff at the University of... Few universities, when faced with financial cuts which threaten the very livelihood of their

staff, can justify, on past performance, continued expenditure on those central training facilities, whatever their titles, which are seen as relating solely to improving the basic skills of university teaching.

The inability (or unwillingness?) of CVCP, and the universities to 'grasp the nettle' and provide guidance with regard to the standard, scope, and evaluation of provision within institutions has been central to the situation in which staff training and development now finds itself. As Carter points out:

The weakness so far of attempts to make training in higher education teaching a general policy has been the difficulty of giving any convincing answer as to what the training should include.¹⁷

or as Hewton indicates:

... despite the visionaries and despite the considerable thought and effort that is put into planning staff development, activity remains generally on a small scale, outcomes are intangible and benefits uncertain.¹⁸

The need for consensus and **national** leadership alluded to above has already been recognized. CCTUT, in its submission of evidence to the Pitt Review Group¹⁹ recommended a change in its own membership and remit, and listed the desirable functions of such a reconstituted national body as:

1. *The Promotion of Staff Development*
 - to promote staff development;
 - to help make the activity of staff development more acceptable in universities;
 - to co-ordinate staff development opportunities;
 - to monitor and encourage the growth of staff development;
 - to facilitate international contact and exchange;
2. *Policy*
 - to set objectives, policy or strategy;
 - to work to a development plan laying out future activities for a number of years;
 - to control finances;
 - to ensure that its own activities take account of current advances in research.
3. *The Provision of Staff Development*
 - to initiate activities on a regional and national basis;
 - to mount (i) courses for those involved in providing staff development within their own universities;
 - (ii) courses which are not viable at local level;
 - (iii) innovatory courses which need to be tested and assessed before local resources are invested;

to provide suitable courses which may be more effective at regional rather than national level;

to organize national courses where specialist topics can be studied;

to provide conferences/courses/workshops/seminars on a national and regional basis (on both general and subject basis);

to commission and test materials and resources.

4. *The Support of those Providing Staff Development*

to provide training facilities for academic staff (particularly those responsible for providing programmes within their own institutions);

to provide a mechanism whereby trainers can exchange ideas and become more proficient;

to provide official backing for trainers whose expertise is not generally recognised in universities as requiring the normal academic standards of scholarship;

to act as a centre for groups of staff development tutors from among practising lecturers over the whole range of disciplines;

to act therapeutically towards trainers by arranging meetings;

to provide a service to those responsible for staff development within their universities;

to provide an exchange of information;

to maintain a programme of publications;

to provide a forum for the discussion of ideas and experience.

Since the present terms of reference of the Committee, interpreted strictly, do not encompass these additional functions, it is suggested that they be widened by adding the following:

- (a) to set and monitor policy at national level;
- (b) to promote academic staff development in universities;
- (c) to provide a variety of staff development activities at all levels;
- (d) to actively support those involved in the provision of staff development within their universities.²⁰

The future of staff development in the UK is currently uncertain, and the closure of CCTUT may mean that the hard-won initiatives of the past twenty years are lost for the foreseeable future. Yet it is the

author's contention that a reversal of that decision (however unlikely such a development might seem) and the implementation of a revised national body is the key to the future success of staff development and ultimately to the success of the universities themselves.

The Australian Context

Are there lessons from the UK experience that may be learned and applied in the Australian context? Indeed there are. The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee's Working Party on staff development is to be applauded for the recommendations it has put to the AVCC. They are cogent, well argued, and timely — but they are also reminiscent of the UK recommendations of a decade ago. In their present form they represent the best of intentions — but they do not guarantee the best of actions. Australia would do well to learn the lessons of the UK experience in order that the initiative now gained should be built on rather than lost. In progressing the Working Party's recommendations through to implementation, academics would do well to consider the benefits of a properly constituted national body. The provision of such a body in Sweden under the auspices of the Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges (UHÄ) has helped ensure the real success of institutional staff training and development programmes. The lack of provision of such a body in the UK has ensured the relegation of staff development programmes to that of a minority interest.

If the recommendations to AVCC are to succeed in establishing staff development activities on a firm basis, then acceptance of an agreement and implementation of that agreement are not of themselves sufficient. There must also be an acceptance of the need to monitor and evaluate all aspects of implementation on an ongoing basis. Without such centralized and authoritative leadership it is unlikely, in the light of the UK experience, that the new initiative for staff development in Australian universities will survive to the year 2000.

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THE NEED FOR UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Amid the flood of conflicting opinions about what has happened to tertiary education over the past eighteen months*, only the most limited consensus has emerged. The base line was probably drawn by the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University and former Chairman of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Professor Peter Karmel, at the July 1982 conference of tertiary education administrators and academics at the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education. Disagreeing with the conference title, "The Reorganisation of Tertiary Education in Australia", Professor Karmel suggested that instead we had witnessed

a major readjustment of the resources in higher education devoted to teacher education to meet the changed circumstances of the 1980s.¹

Few would argue with that statement, but opinions as to why the readjustment happened and indeed whether it should have happened, are likely to diverge considerably.

There is one point on which there appears to be total consensus: the public by and large are at best indifferent and at worst antipathetic to the needs and purposes of tertiary education in Australia. At the 1982 Conference of University Governing Bodies sponsored by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the Director of the British Technical Change Centre and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor Sir Bruce Williams, listed the unfavourable climate of opinion towards the universities as his first concern about Australian tertiary education. Professor Karmel told the conference delegates that universities were seen as comprising:

a very high proportion of layabout bludgers who don't work very hard and when they do work don't do it very well. Undoubtedly there are a few of such people around universities, there are in every walk of life, the only reason they are picked out in universities is because there is a general hostility and antipathy towards higher education.²

In a paper delivered the previous day, the AVCC Chairman and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor David Caro, noted a statement by Mr. Christopher Puplick, a former NSW

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Liberal Senator and Chairman of the Government Members' Committee on Education, Science and the Environment, in the April 1982 edition of *Vestes*. Mr. Puplick said of universities:

In seeking to set themselves apart, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, in allowing themselves to remain apart, the universities have found that they have been threatened by the cutting edge of governments, they have virtually no protection and their cries for mercy have struck few responsive chords in the wider community.³

Professor Caro remarked:

"I have little doubt he is right. What should we be doing about it? The image of the universities in the public is important."⁴

Professor Caro was understating the case; the image of the universities in the public is vital. As both Professor Karmel and Professor Caro have observed, a pre-requisite for the universities' self-promotion is the certainty that their own houses are in order. Justified complaints by the community of inadequacies in management, staff performance and academic standards, must be faced and rectified. The universities must then go on to correct a situation that can be simply illustrated by two parallel lines. On the top line are people involved in tertiary education, convinced of its importance, of the need to maintain the system in a healthy state and decrying those on the bottom line, the politicians, businessmen, journalists and members of the public who allegedly make misguided criticisms based on ignorance. The lines are parallel, they do not intersect, there are few cross lines of communication, so the alleged falsehoods remain uncorrected to the continuing detriment of the system.

The proper relationship should be circuitous. The universities should promote a strong image in the public mind, backed by substance, that their work is vital to the well-being of society and is worth defending when its integrity is threatened. If the image cannot easily be impressed on the minds of the majority, then at least it must be first impressed on the minds of the influential. Universities will find only a tenuous basis for survival to fulfil their traditional and developing roles, unless they make the effort to explain themselves to the public. The pursuit of excellence must be explained if it is to be maintained.

*Article submitted in September 1982.