the problem was more or less ducked, not solved by leadership, consultation and clear decision-making, but largely avoided by diffuse decision-making and generally slow response to computer needs. Universities muddled through, preferring a lukewarm response to computer possibilities to decisiveness and possible disruption of established patterns.

One university policy — or non-policy — was to compensate somewhat for not providing widespread personal computer access by arranging discount purchase schemes for academics prepared to buy equipment themselves. Such schemes cost the institution no money and blunted some of the demands for the university itself to improve computing facilities.

The MacRobertson case

Many of the issues were brought into sharp focus by the MacRobertson (a fictitious name; readers will recall the academic's real name) case, a notable event occurring as early as 1986. Joan MacRobertson, a senior lecturer in a newer, smaller university, and herself one of the early NCs, put a proposition to her Vice-Chancellor. She felt incensed by what she saw as the too-little-too-late response to the local 'Computers: 1985 and beyond' report and insulted by the discount purchase option — her employer, surely, should provide the basic tools for the job.

She proposed a contract: the university would provide her with a fairly powerful personal computer and a communication line, and she would undertake to repay the university over three years by reducing the calls she would make on secretarial and various other help. She also nominated several specific ways in which her teaching and research performance would rise. Her side of the bargain would be easy to fulfil and the university could not lose! Her staff association gave her the requested support, although this was lukewarm as the association had scarcely considered computers, still being up to its ears in the local superannuation and tutor problems, and in addition feeling some rumblings from the general staff association.

The Vice-Chancellor was strongly tempted: MacRobertson had a good research record and would probably deliver; there was a clear logic to the proposition; he valued his reputation for focussing on academic effectiveness over bureaucratic regularity; and he did retain a cowboy streak, usually well repressed. The precedent-setting aspect did not worry him: his university could do with the fillip in image that would come from being a successful pioneer. He realised more clearly than most of his staff how concerned many students and parents were about computers and the changes they were bringing to Australia. From each Tuesday's *Australian* he knew that 'one-per desk' (OPD) was becoming standard for personal computers in American business: he had visited the US a little *time* before, travelling in aeroplanes in which many other business travellers were carrying their own computers. He had visited several of the pioneering campuses on which every student was required to have a computer. (The machines were scarcely well-used yet, but there were sufficient positive signs to show that the writing would not be taken down from the wall).

So it was with some misgivings that he rejected the MacRobertson initiative. He felt that the university was not ready for any sizable disruption of its general staffing pattern. There were two or three influential and notoriously anti-computer professors whose support he simply had to retain on a couple of other current major issues. And the computer centre had just received for a song $3 million in hardware as the result of a complicated agreement with a multi-national. Perhaps the university should learn to make good use of this equipment before rushing to buy small machines? The issue was decided when on the critical morning a report reached him setting out a more than usually alarming account of the university's short-term cash flow position. Even as he signed the memo to MacRobertson he felt — rightly as we can now see — that history may well identify that moment as a sad one in the development of his university.

MacRobertson went public with her case and prompted a few letters to the newspapers. Staff association reaction was perhaps surprisingly slight, but then the NCs had never really identified staff associations as an avenue for pressing their case, the associations felt themselves very stretched with other issues and there was no special reason why they should have been able to perceive computer futures any more clearly than could university governing boards. General staff associations showed more concern, but they saw themselves as mainly on the defensive, needing to stress working conditions and job preservation. Academic staff associations did eventually take up the issue of adequate support and training for sometimes reluctant academics expected to adopt particular computer uses. With hindsight, they should also have taken up the earlier question of employer-to-provide-essential-tools. They did not, and so the ironic contrast persisted, between business, with its keenness to introduce desk-top computers and concern to persuade and train its staff to exploit them, and universities, in which staff eager to explore computer applications were forced to buy the equipment they needed out of their own pockets. What price the university charter to seek excellence and be at the forefront?

Professional Education Inc.

The first MacRobertson surfaced again a year or so later when she first went part-time, then resigned in order to help found Professional Education Inc. (PEI). PEI was a commercial venture aiming to provide qualification and updating courses for carefully selected professions. Their rather cocky plan was to pick the eyes out of the tertiary education market and to compete commercially with publicly funded institutions by providing a better product. Starting with computer science, and some aspects of accountancy and business, and soon including parts of law and medicine, they developed course materials making heavy use of computers, video and phone connections, and designed for use at home. They tailored the courses to the requirements of the professional accrediting bodies, especially for the periodic refresher education then beginning to be required by law.

PEI was successful, despite its hefty fees and the fairly large improvements made in the distance education offered by several universities. When PEI started to market courses for school-teachers, and had modest success, there was sufficient alarm for one or two university figures to attack their alleged slick presentation and lack of intellectual depth. PEI replied with statistics on student satisfaction and examination success. Of more lasting significance were behind-the-scenes moves by universities to improve the lot of their students who were enrolled for regular courses but who wanted to use their own computers to help them do much of their learning from home.

One or two NCs wrote sardonic notes in *Vestes* pointing out how, where their own drawn out advocacy and argument had failed, the threat of competition had at last induced universities to do some of the things they had long urged.

Finally, it is worth recording that university adrenalin was aroused when in 1988 a more than usually perceptive Federal junior minister, long an advocate of information technology, used the PEI example to berate universities for their lack of responsiveness to educational need and technological opportunity. But two political scandals in quick succession grabbed the headlines and soon after that the minister was demoted. Nothing had changed, but the universities' pulse rates subsided and they turned their attention back to other questions . . .

In conclusion

This brief sketch has omitted many important parts of the ten year story. Video, after a generation of unrealised promise, is now quite widely used and valued. The reusable computer-controlled videodisc contributed, but the main reason was simply that video equipment became so cheap, ubiquitous, easy to use and of such high quality that people were led to experiment and they often liked what they saw.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is still in 1995 renowned as the field in which more outlandish claims and forecasts have been made than in any other. It is now history that the Japanese Fifth Generation Project fell rather short of its grandiose aims. But it did spark a great amount of R&D in the US and Europe which led to the impressive new systems that make headlines these days. For some years progress was difficult to track because intelligent systems were seen as commercial goldmines and so were kept behind locked doors until ready for very noisy public release.

A notable early event was the marketing in 1987 of the first home doctor expert advisor. It ran on the larger personal computers of the day and operated by engaging the user in a simple dialogue about the patient and his or her symptoms. It incorporated little beyond information widely available in books and it did direct the user to human medical help for anything beyond minor complaints, but even so there were some early and short-lived attempts to ban its import into Australia. It sparked great — and overdue and entirely justified — debate in professional and academic circles. Those privileged people who had stood just a little aside as computers had changed so drastically the working life and job prospects of blue collar, then white collar workers began at last to take seriously the prospect of real change to their own working roles. To some extent academics had been lulled by the great amount of computer use on campus into thinking they were up with the times and that nothing fundamental could change about their own working lives.

Looking back it is luxuriously easy to say what Australian universities should have launched into in the innocent days of 1985. On the whole they moved in the right direction, but 'too little too late' is now written clearly on most of the computer things they did. Their own reports of the time made reasonable proposals for initial advance, but without recognising the extent of conceptual change the computer would bring to academic thinking. The NCs on the whole got it right but sometimes over-stated the case and of course could not back their visions and exhortations with evidence.

We cannot take the universities, those pluralistic, diffuse institutions, too severely to task for not foreseeing how pervasive the computer permeation would be and how valued computers would become as we learned how to exploit them. But we can deliver a harsh judgement on their seeming blindness to overseas developments and the slowness with which they fostered experiment and then exploited the lessons of the experiments that did work. Are not universities meant to lead? More perception then and the universities would now have been in a much stronger position in contemporary society. Ah, to be able to turn the calendar back and have a second try at the decade from 1985 . . .

Part-time and evening students: profiles and prospects in the Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney

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Introduction

As a centrally situated metropolitan university, the University of Sydney offers an appropriate location for classes for students in outside occupations. In fact the University has a record of evening classes for degree purposes stretching back to 1884[1]; however in recent years a number of faculties which offered such classes have abandoned them, and in mid-1982 the Faculty of Arts set up a committee to enquire into the situation of students attending evening courses[2].

At that time twelve out of twenty-seven departments were catering for some courses in the evening, most offering a much more limited selection than in the daytime[3]. The University does not maintain any separate register of students attending in the evening, all students being registered as either full- or part-time since 1980. The proportion of students enrolled as part-time to those enrolled as full-time has increased; in 1983 this ratio was 28:85. Part-time students, however, may be attending classes solely or partly in the day-time, whilst full-time students may be attending part or all of their classes in the evening. One of the arguments advanced by those anxious to see the abolition of evening classes is that the vast majority of those attending evening classes fall into the category of full-time students for whom evening classes are at best a convenience rather than a necessity.

The Committee interpreted its brief as indicating interest in two major sets of attributes of current Arts undergraduates, these being characteristics differentiating 'day' from 'evening' students, and patterns of income and employment of students during 1983. These sets of attributes were seen as being to an extent interdependent with each other, and with sets of related attributes such as attitudes towards choice of university and course. It was decided to approach the day / evening student distinction in two ways, categorizing students firstly in terms of whether they were formally enrolled as full-time or part-time, and secondly in terms of their intended pattern of attendance at classes for 1983 (mostly during the day, some day and some evening, or mostly during the evening). As students enrolling for the first time might well be expected to differ in some of their attitudes and behaviour patterns from re-enrolling students, it was decided to treat these as separate groups for the purposes of questionnaire design[4].

The variables of interest were seen as falling into five groups:

Enrolment status: part-time or full-time, degree or non-degree, basis on which admitted, academic record to date at this university;

Proposed patterns of class attendance: whether solely in the evening; solely in the day, or a mixture of both,

Demographic variables: age, sex;

Economic variables: sources of support, amount and type of employment (if any);

Motivational variables: why students had chosen to study at the University of Sydney, and why (where relevant) they were attending evening classes.

The CTEC report, *Learning and Earning* (1982)[5] in part confirmed some of the Committee's hypotheses. It noted an increasing enrolment for part-time study[6], documented the increased number of full-time students actually engaged in part-time work, and suggested that such part-time work was typically temporary, short-term and low on skill content and development potential[7]. It identified fifteen per cent of enrolling students as having a previous higher education qualification, and gave some motivational data, stating that:

a wish to pursue studies in a particular area is one of the major reasons for student choice, often outweighing other factors which would discourage further study. Many students make considerable sacrifices to pursue studies in which they have developed a strong interest.[8]

Further data of strictly local derivation came from a study on Arts students relating to **Work Load and Time Commitment** conducted in the second half of 1982 by Clive Williams of the University of Sydney's Counselling Service[9]. Williams took 67 students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year English Literature and Anthropology, and, on the basis of a questionnaire and a diary kept by the students for seven days, showed that 54 per cent of the sample were engaged in some kind of part-time employment.

Method

The survey was conducted during enrolment week in February 1983, the population comprising all students enrolling in 1983 for undergraduate courses offered by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Sydney.

The population was treated as falling into two groups, students enrolling for the first time and re-enrolling students. Two overlapping questionnaires were devised and distributed at the time of enrolment by officers of the university administration, slightly differing procedures of distribution being used for the two groups. Response rates were as follows:

	No. of actual respondents	*No. of possible respondents	% Response
New Students	321	1317	24.4
Re-enrolling students	1741	2430	71.6
Total group	2062	3747	60.0

*As enrolled at 1st March, 1983.

The lower rate of response for the new enrollees was due to an unfortunate choice of distribution, one which did not enable the administrative officers to check whether students had completed the form. While there was no reason to believe that those who did complete the forms were a special group in any relevant aspect, this group has been omitted from the analysis because of its disproportionately small size.

The questionnaires consisted almost entirely of questions of closed format, of the forced-choice alternative and ranking varieties; in the accompanying analysis only answers to these objective-type questions have been included. They included a large segment directed exclusively at part-time students and at those people planning to attend at least some classes in the evening during 1983.

Results

Treatment: The questionnaires were hand-scored, and analysed during SPSS[10]. For the purpose of comparison, the population was broken into the following groups:

(1) students enrolled as full-time versus part-time (Table 1),

(2) according to proposed patterns of class attendance during 1983 — day classes only, mixed day and evening classes, evening class only (Table 1),

(3) according to expected sole or major sources of income for 1983, subdivided in terms of whether full-time or part-time, and pattern of attendance (Table 2).

The data were summarized mainly in terms of percentages. For continuously distributed variables such as age, certain descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) were calculated and the level of significance of the differences occurring between the sets of groups reported in Table 1 was examined by T-tests where appropriate. (Some of these results are reported in the ensuing discussion rather than in the tables.)

Discussion

The tables present a profile of an undergraduate Arts population which departs in many, though not all, directions from the conventional expectations of university academics and administrators in the 'sixties and early 'seventies. In line with the stereotype, the results of this survey do indicate that the majority (about two-thirds) of these students are women, are enrolled as full-time students (four-fifths), and attend all their classes during the day (two-thirds). The mean age for those re-enrolling full-timers is 22.1, indicating that most of this group enter university straight after finishing school. Most are still admitted on the basis of Higher School or Leaving Certificate results (89.8%). More are dependent on their parents for financial support than on any other source of income (48.4%).

These majority figures, however, by no means indicate uniformity within the population. Breakdown and closer examination of the minority figures in the areas of main concern to this study, that is, enrolment status, patterns of attendance, and sources of subsistence reveal both complex interactions between them, and novel dimensions to the student profile. The most startling single finding was that three-fifths of the **full-time** enrolled group were working in one capacity or another (Table 1,I). We further observed that an additional nearly ten per cent were unemployed but seeking work. Our attention in further analysis was focussed on efforts to understand this situation.

The average number of hours worked in a typical week during university terms by **all** full-time students was 5.8 (Table 1,C). When we looked **only** at those re-enrolling full-time students who expected to work on a part-time or casual basis during the university term, the average number of hours worked per week rose to 9.4, with a large scatter of scores around this (standard deviation 6.291). Only a small minority of full-time students said their work would relate to their studies (Table 1,J).

These patterns bear a meaningful relationship to those revealed by a breakdown of students in terms of their proposed patterns of class attendance. Of the returning students attending only classes in the evening, 8.8% were full-timers. Those who attend all day classes were on the average employed for six hours a week. Even when classified on this basis, still only a minority of students in each group say their work is likely to be related to their studies (for example, only a quarter of those attending only classes in the evening) (Table 1,J). The main reason given for evening or mixed day and evening attendance is indisputable — paid employment. Other reasons — timetable clashes, child-minding, or preference for smaller adult groups — are totally subordinate to this one, which was professed by 86 per cent of those

Table 1

Results of questionnaire survey on re-enrolling Arts students:
(a) total group of respondents (N = 1741),
(b) respondents grouped according to whether they enrolled for full-time or part-time study,
(c) respondents grouped according to their proposed pattern of class attendance times

		Total	F/T	P/T	Day	Mixed	Evening
		$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			$\bar{X}$	
A	Age	23.9	22.1	3017			
B	Degree progress:						
	(1) No. courses attempted to date	5.8	5.9	5.5			
	(2) No. courses passed	4.9	5.1	4.5			
	(3) Expect to complete degree (mode)	1984	1984	1985	1984	1984	1985
C	No. hours worked in typical week:						
	(1) by workers and non-workers	9.8	5.8	26.1	6.0	11.9	33.9
	(2) by workers alone (mode)	8.0	3.0	35.0			
		%	%			%	
D	Sex: Male	34.9	34.7	35.8	35.0	33.1	37.8
	Female	65.1	65.3	64.2	65.0	66.9	62.2
E	Not wishing to do fourth (Honours) year	36.9	34.7	47.5	35.2	36.9	51.7
F	Officially enrolled as: Full-time	79.9			91.7	72.5	8.8
	Part-time	20.1			8.3	27.5	91.2
G	Proposed pattern of class attendance:						
	(1) only in day	67.8	77.6	28.4			
	(2) some day/some evening	23.6	21.5	32.5			
	(3) only in evening	8.6	0.9	39.1			
H	Basis on which admitted:						
	(1) HSC/Leaving Cert./Matric. exam.	84.4	89.8	63.8	87.8	80.9	69.5
	(2) Mature age entry	8.5	4.7	23.0	5.9	11.0	20.6
	(3) Special admission	3.4	2.5	6.4	3.3	3.8	2.3
	(4) Degree from elsewhere	3.7	3.0	6.9	3.0	4.4	7.6
I	Employment situation during 1983 university terms:						
	(1) regular full-time job	14.8	2.6	61.9	3.1	20.2	86.4
	(2) regular part-time job	26.9	30.0	15.0	29.9	27.4	4.3
	(3) casual work	24.6	28.3	10.3	28.7	20.7	2.9
	(4) full-time study	25.0	29.3	8.1	29.0	22.1	2.9
	(5) unemployed but seeking work (Feb.)	8.8	9.8	4.7	9.3	9.6	3.6
J	Work likely to be related to studies	17.8	12.9	31.0	14.8	21.3	25.5
K	Main reason for choosing Sydney University:						
	(1) its academic reputation	32.0	33.1	27.6	34.6	23.8	30.9
	(2) availability of special subjects	37.9	39.8	29.5	39.5	41.0	18.9
	(3) its prestige	4.7	5.3	1.9	5.2	4.9	0.0
	(4) convenience of access to it	19.1	0.6	31.9	14.8	25.0	40.0
	(5) preceded by members of family	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.1	1.3	3.2

students who attended some or all evening classes.

The incentive for this high propensity for even full-time students to take time away from day-time attendance at university in order to engage in outside work is clearly economic. Only 55 per cent of full-time students listed their parents or spouses/friends as sole or major sources of income[11]. A third rely on TEAS, but nearly two-fifths of full-timers mainly on paid employment. Almost all of the part-timers do likewise (Table 2). (Note that these figures are exaggerated, as some students listed more than one major source of income.) Whether or not our students voluntarily choose this form of financial independence from parental, governmental and other assistance is not revealed by this study.

We did not derive any evidence from this study that engaging in part-time or casual work as such has any deleterious effect on the progress of a full-time enrollee. More detailed data are, however, required before any such conclusion could be stated with certainty. Of course, being enrolled as a part-time student does slow down one's progress towards a degree. Of the part-timers, the average number of courses either passed or attempted to date is significantly lower than for the full-timers (Table 1,B). No significant difference was found between the mean ratios of courses attempted to courses passed for the two groups. This finding does not, however, seem fully to accord with the calculations of the University's Statistics Officer of relative success rates of the two groups versus the total undergraduate population for 1982. Using a ratio of Student Progress Unit to Student Load, she derived a success rate of .770 for full-time students as compared to .726 for part-timers[12]. Perhaps some of the less successful students in 1982 simply failed to re-enrol in 1983; we did in fact observe a difference in the same direction, though not a statistically significant one. The final quality of the degree is inevitably prejudiced by being a part-timer; most departments do not offer 'honours courses in the evenings and nearly half of the part-timers had no intention of proceeding to a degree with Honours, as compared to just over one-third of the full-timers (Table 1,E).

Certain special motivational characteristics of part-time students emerged from this study. When asked why they chose to enrol at the University of Sydney, convenience of access came for them a close second to 'availability of specialist subjects', which was first for both groups. For the full-time students, on the other hand, the second major reason for choice was 'Sydney University's academic reputation' (Table 1,K).

Conclusions

This study has revealed an undergraduate population in Arts which is characterised by its diversity. Large numbers of students do not match the

Table 2

Percentage frequencies of students according to their anticipated sole or major sources of income during 1983.*

	Total	F/T	P/T	Day	Mixed	Evening
1. Regular, full-time job	21.6	4.2	75.4	4.9	29.2	92.5
2. Casual or part-time work	36.1	38.4	25.2	37.8	39.3	9.7
3. Dependent on parents	41.4	48.4	6.9	48.2	32.8	4.3
4. Dependent on spouse or friend	9.6	6.6	20.5	10.9	6.8	6.5
5. TEAS allowance	28.4	33.6	3.0	31.1	28.4	4.3
6. Education Dept. Studentship	2.1	2.2	0	2.1	2.5	1.1
7. Social Welfare benefits	4.7	3.6	9.7	3.9	6.9	5.3
N = 1741						

*Some students checked more than one source of major support, hence these columns of numbers add up to more than 100. Percentages were adjusted where students either did not check a particular answer or identify themselves as belonging to a particular category.

Given the reasons for which the study was undertaken, the most striking observations are the very large numbers of full-time enrollees engaging in paid employment, and the lesser but still substantial numbers who are attending some or even all of their classes in the evening. It is quite clear from our data that these behaviour patterns are connected. The students themselves declare this to be the case, and this is backed up by the fact that more of the total group of full-time students assert themselves to be dependent on casual or part-time employment for subsistence than on TEAS. The academic community and the government must both face the fact that either they need to assist the students to support themselves via the job market by making courses available in the evening, or that they must increase the direct financial support available via the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme.

Of course any increase in the availability and amount of TEAS might induce some people to enrol as full-time rather than as part-time students. As the rate of progress of full-time students overall is faster than that of part-time enrollees, such a change would also cut costs indirectly. But it would clearly not be possible to convert all our present population of part-time students into full-timers. The former group is on the average older than the latter, and presumably its members have the greater financial commitments attendant on age; far more of them in fact qualify for admission on grounds of mature age entry and fewer on grounds of school leaving results.

Given the needs indicated by this study for the offering of classes in the evening, the Committee recommended that all present evening courses should be continued, and the Faculty has adopted this recommendation. What was also revealed by the study is that the lot of the part-time and/or evening student is not an easy one, and the Faculty agreed to consider the possibilities of starting evening classes later and of eliminating clashes in the evening time-table, as well as to draw attention to the problems of eating and bookshop facilities for students who attend in the evening.

What cannot be revealed by any survey of existing students is the nature of those groups in the community for whom present arrangements do not make adequate provision. The CTEC spoke in terms of 30,000 people 'lost' to tertiary education [13]. While timetabling and personal financial problems doubtless keep away many potential students who qualify under existing admission requirements, it is worthy of note that the main reason given by both full-time and part-time students for choosing the University of Sydney was the availability of specialist subjects. Thus the limitations of present course offerings in the evening must mean that the appetite of many of those who are obliged to work during part or all of the daytime is not aroused. The universities, however, are not presently in a financial position to expand the menu.

References and Notes

1. University of Sydney *Calendar,* 1885, p.308.
2. The Committee consisted of Sybil Jack (convenor), Nerida Newbigin and Alison Turtle.
3. The definition of 'evening' class is, however, a moot one. Officially, evening classes commence at 5.15 p.m.; at least one large department, however, begins evening classes at 4.15 p.m. In the 1880's, such classes could begin at 7, 8 or 9 p.m. (see University of Sydney *Calendars*).
4. The administrative aspects of the survey and formal design of the questionnaire were arranged through the University's Sample Survey Centre and funded by direct grant from the Vice-Chancellor.
5. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Report *Learning and Earning: A Study of Education and Employment Opportunities for Young People,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1982.
6. Ibid., ch.2, especially para. 2.12.
7. Ibid., ch.3, especially paras. 3.2, 3.25, 3.29, 3.5 and figure 3.3.
8. Ibid., ch.5, para. 5.13.
9. Unpublished report by Clive Williams on 'Workload and Time Commitments', 1983, also reported in *University of Sydney News,* 19 July, 1983, p.139.
10. N.H. Nie, C.H. Hull, J.G. Jenkins, K. Steinbrenner and D.H. Bent, *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences,* McGraw Book Co., N.Y., 2nd edn., 1975.
11. Significantly more of those relying on their parents were women; there were, however, no major discrepancies between the sexes in terms of any of the other avenues of support.
12. Personal communication, 26th January, 1984.
13. *Learning and Earning,* op.cit., para. 4.7.

What academics think about regular reviews of performance

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Regular reviews of individual performance were an emotive issue only two years ago. Following the release of the Teague Report, Tenure of Academics[1], conference speeches, public statements, letters to the editor, academic staff association meetings and FAUSA pronouncements addressed themselves to this issue: reviews — yes or no? Most connected in their reactions the issue of regular reviews with the issue of absolute tenure, seeing regular reviews as collecting evidence to revoke tenure of staff. Yet the question of the extent of tenure and reviews are not necessarily linked.

Pressures for more public accountability are relatively new in Australian universities, although there has always been some form of internal accountability. At the University of Queensland as in other universities there exists a system of established peer review procedures, at the point of selection for a position, when applying for promotion, a special studies program or study leave, or for research grants, and when submitting articles or other writings for publication. Some of these evaluations cover the whole range of academic functions, others only research. All of these evaluations are self-initiated. This enables academics to set the pace and the frequency for reviews themselves — those in a hurry to establish or advance their academic careers or to participate in the international community of scholars frequently and regularly subject themselves to some form of peer review. Others, once they reach a 'comfortable' position seek little or no feedback from peers by not engaging in any competitive activities, whether by applications for promotion or research grants or anything else. Internal accountability is not a demand which the institution makes; it is only implicit in the review procedures.

At the University of Queensland a system of annual appraisals for probationary staff was approved in 1981 and formalised in 1983. For the first time a group of staff were subjected to regular evaluation by the head of department. These annual appraisals though conceived to ensure that only the best get tenure after five years, have, however, also a large developmental component. In the annual appraisals the focus is on achievements and achievable objectives and how assistance might be provided.

The debate in this University about the proposed regular reviews of tenured staff was in 1982, I presume, as emotive as anywhere else. The Staff Association was alarmed and urgently called meetings; yet the mass of academics seemed unconcerned and did not seem to regard the recommendations of the Teague Report as a threat to their personal autonomy, to academic freedom or to their tenured position. The debate about reviews quietened down and moved to institutional committees; where supra-institutional organisations are formulating their standpoint, the discussion has not become public. At this University the Academic Board set up an *ad hoc* committee on staff development and evaluation to examine and make recommendations mainly on the Teague Report and the 1981 AVCC Working Party Report *Academic Staff Development*[2]. The *ad hoc* committee's draft report rejected the notion of regular reviews; however, the Student Union subsequently presented a response to the draft report which supports the Teague Report's opinion, i.e.,

What is required is a more explicit and regular review which is effective, and is seen to be effective, in ensuring a tenured academic is accountable for maintaining high standards of teaching, research and scholarship.[3]

The Union report is critical of many aspects of the committee's report and believes that *'The Committee's report accepts not only mediocrity but also inadequate performance'.*[4]

With a debate in a board committee on the desirability of regular reviews and the possibility, though remote, that regular reviews might happen either by government edict or by internal adoption of the principle and practice, it seemed necessary to me that staff be asked about their reactions to it. Although staff association and student union representatives were members of the committee both would be representing the opinions of their more articulate and involved respective clientele. Yet if reviews were introduced everyone, including the silent majority, would be affected.

In late 1983 I interviewed over a hundred staff in this University on their attitudes to evaluation, staff development, promotion and other aspects of their work. The majority of staff interviewed had had contact with the Tertiary Education Institute in the preceding nine months, either through participation in a seminar or workshop or by having their teaching evaluated. In addition, other staff from two departments were interviewed so that complete data on two departments became available. There does not seem to be any difference in attitudes between staff who were our 'clients' in the preceding nine months and those who were not. Consequently the group is treated as one. Of the 104 staff interviewed, 43 were 35 years or younger, and 12 were over 51. About half of the staff interviewed were lecturers, a quarter senior lecturers, and 15 were professors or associate professors. Staff from 43 of the 64 departments participated.

I do not claim that the responses are representative of the staff of this University. But I assume that their reactions to regular reviews do reflect the range of hopes and fears staff in any institution might have. Their responses are therefore reported below.

There was a clear indication that the majority of staff interviewed favoured regular reviews. In the following much is made of factors which might change a potentially constructive exercise into a destructive one. Negative or cautious comments should be read in the context of that generally favourable attitude. The set of conditions in section IV would, in the light of staff responses, facilitate staff acceptance of reviews and reflects principles of evaluation espoused also in the literature[5].

I. Reasons for approval of reviews

In the structured interviews I asked the following question after having discussed reactions to teaching, research, staff development and evaluation of teaching:

Last year the Australian Senate published a report on tenure of academic staff (the Teague Report). In it they recommended that all staff should be regularly reviewed in all aspects of their performance (i.e. teaching, research and service).

Do you agree with this/approve of regular reviews?

Most staff supported the notion of regular reviews; but most staff also expressed qualifications.

Reasons given by respondents for their approval of regular reviews fall into two main categories:

1. Reviews provide a means of identifying and telling people who are not performing adequately, and possibly of 'getting rid of deadwood'. They prevent slackness due to staff inertia, especially after tenure.
2. Staff must be accountable for their professional actions just as professionals elsewhere are.

Reasons categorised under 1. often spring directly from staff's own experience with colleagues, often senior colleagues, in the department and express the exasperation felt by many about the University's inability to deal with inadequate staff performance. Many staff quite clearly regard reviews as a means of not only identifying non-performers but of invoking 'punishment'. It might well be that the ability of departments to carry non-performers has decreased with decreased staffing.

Other staff, again mainly those who have worked in their profession before joining the University are used to being held accountable and acknowledge the community's right to open accountability. While a few of the opponents of reviews refer to 'academic freedom' which they see endangered in reviews, some of the supporters of reviews explicitly belittle the notion of 'academic freedom' if it is used as an excuse for not committing oneself fully to one's task.

Examples are:

In the Public Service, where I worked, there is more pressure on people to perform. I don't consider arguments against reviews as valid. It is only a protection of incompetence. The same principles as elsewhere should apply in the University.