

have all been tried many times in many countries. There is however no known method of achieving quality research and teaching other than through the responsible exercise of academic freedom. Weber, writing in the turbulent times of Imperial Germany, can hardly be improved upon today:

*The result of . . . a castration of the freedom and disinterestedness of university education, which prevents the development of persons of genuine character, cannot be compensated by the finest institutes, the largest lecture halls, or by ever so many dissertations, prize-winning works and examination successes*²⁰

While the central place of academic freedom cannot be disputed, it is also the contribution of modern organisation theorists that the individual members of an organisation, or a whole society, facing rapid change to its environment, must not be threatened in their personal security if those changes are to be successfully mastered. Personal and group security is based on confidence about the future; any system which institutes the possibility of arbitrary and possibly capricious dismissal or redundancy will be highly dysfunctional, possibly hastening the destruction of the group and society, and is therefore inefficient in the pursuit of its goals.

*The authors would like to thank several friends and colleagues for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

References

1. J. Carter, *Keeping Faith, Memoirs of a President*, Bantam Books, New York, 1982.
2. P. Kimbre, *Scholarly Privileges in the Middle Ages*, Mediaeval Academy of America, London, 1961.
3. Max Weber, *From Max Weber* (translated and edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills) Galaxy, New York and Oxford University Press, 1958, p.202.
4. Max Weber, *Max Weber on Universities* (translated and edited by Edward Shils), University of Chicago Press, 1973, p.19.
5. Fritz Machlup, 'Tenure in Colleges and Universities', *Encyclopedia of Education*, (Editor-in-Chief, L.C. Deighton) Macmillan and Free Press, New York, 1971, 2, p.257.
6. *ibid*, p.258.
7. Richard Davis, 'Free Academic or Council Servants? Tasmanian University staff before the Murray Report', *Vestes, The Australian Universities Review*, 28, 2, 1985, p.33.
8. Sir James Mountford, *British Universities*, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p.161.
9. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in higher education*, AGPS, Canberra, 1987, p.57.
10. Minister for Employment, Education and Training, *Higher Education, a policy discussion paper* (The Green Paper), AGPS, Canberra, 1987, p.57.
11. *ibid*, p.59.
12. Machlup, *op.cit*, p.260.
13. Geoffrey Brennan, 'Tenure: Continuity or Change?', *Financial Review*, September 25, 1987, p.12.
14. Peter Karmel, 'The Changing Conditions of Academic Employment', *The Australian Universities Review*, 30, 2, 1987, p.8.
15. Brennan, *op.cit*, p.12.
16. Machlup, *op.cit*, pp.260-261.
17. CTEC, *op.cit*, p.9.
18. Canadian Association of University Teachers/Association canadienne des professeurs d'universite, *Policy Document*, November 22, 1985, p.39.
19. John Fox, 'Tenure: Continuity or Change?', *Financial Review*, September 25, 1987, p.12.
20. Weber, *Max Weber on Universities*, p.21.
21. *ibid*, p.20.
22. Machlup, *op.cit*, p.262.
23. Malcolm R. Fisher, 'Tenure of Employment in the Universities', *Vestes*, 25, 2, 1982, p.12.
24. Charles R. Milton, Lanny Entekin and Bruce R. Stening, *Organisational Behaviour in Australia*, Prentice Hall, Sydney, 1984, p.410.
25. *ibid*, p.401.
26. Dexter C. Dunphy, *Organisational Change by Choice* (in collaboration with Robert C. Dick), McGraw Hill, Sydney, 1981, p.208.
27. Richard M. Steers, *Introduction to Organisational Behaviour*, Goodyear, Santa Monica, 1981, p.311.
28. *ibid*, p.363.
29. Charles Perrow, *Complex Organisations, a Critical Essay*, (Third Edn) Random House, New York, 1986, p.10.
30. Weber, *Universities*, p.20.

Job satisfaction of academics in Hong Kong

W.L. Grichting

James Cook University

During the last few years more and more Australians have accepted academic posts in Hong Kong. This tendency is probably due to the significant contraction of the educational system in Australia and the concurrent expansion in Hong Kong. In addition there has been a veritable exodus of local academics to obtain a foreign passport before 1997. Beyond these obvious reasons it may well be the case that the job conditions in Hong Kong attract a considerable number of Australian academics to the 'cockpit' of Asia. What can the Australian academic expect in Hong Kong? I propose to answer this question first by comparing the Australian and Hong Kong educational scenes in general and, second, by

presenting the findings of a recent staff survey of one of the five institutions which are funded by the Hong Kong University and Polytechnic Grants Commission (UPGC).

Basic Comparisons

There are many similarities between the Australian and Hong Kong educational systems which might suggest that Australian academics should find it relatively easy to adjust to the new environment. Both systems represent a peculiar combination of the American and British models of higher education. The British influence is readily noticed in the professional training of undergraduates who upon graduation are expected to be ready

to enter the workforce. (The American undergraduate course is devoted to a liberal arts curriculum in preparation for professional education at the post-graduate level.) Students in Hong Kong as a rule observe the American custom of attending 15 to 20 classes per week rather than follow the British model where students read for degrees and consequently spend most of their time in the library. In Hong Kong, libraries are more likely used as convenient study halls to learn from assigned textbooks and lecture notes rather than as research facilities to engage in independent inquiries of individually chosen topics.

Like Australia, Hong Kong recognizes tutors, lecturers, readers and professors.

tutors, lecturers, readers and professors. There are considerable differences in rank and remuneration between the two universities (Hong Kong University and Chinese University of Hong Kong) and the other three UPGC-funded institutions (Baptist College, Hong Kong Polytechnic and City Polytechnic of Hong Kong). Except for medicine, a given rank earns the same amount across all disciplines. Promotional opportunities are rather comparable between Hong Kong and Australia and are largely based on the "publish or perish" syndrome. Tenure in Hong Kong is somewhat more difficult to obtain, particularly for expatriates or "expats" or "gweilos" as persons from overseas are usually referred to. Indeed tenure for "expats" at polytechnics is practically not known as most non-locals are on renewable contracts of 2-3 years' duration. And foreign heads roll easily whenever the 'face' of individuals or collectivities is in jeopardy.

Gaining admission for students to tertiary institutions in Hong Kong is very difficult as a mere five per cent of the eligible cohort can be accommodated. About twice as many go overseas for tertiary studies and are required to pay rather forbidding tuition. This may put an extraordinary financial strain on a student's (extended) family. However, the proverbial Chinese family solidarity coupled with the clear expectation of upward mobility of one's offspring seem to prepare most families to reduce their standard of living to put aside the necessary funds. The seriousness of competition for admission to tertiary education is perhaps best reflected in the rejection rate of qualified applicants. At Baptist College roughly nine out of ten applicants are disappointed because no offer can be made to them.

Given the steep competition it should be obvious that the quality of Hong Kong students is superior to most Australian students and their willingness to work is beyond comparison. However the critical ability and questioning approach to material presented in lectures and textbooks leaves quite a bit to be desired partly because of the innate respect for the teacher by the Chinese and partly because of the deeply instilled rote learning in primary and secondary schools. The considerable drill required to learn Chinese ideograms may partly explain such an attitude. I am still reminded of the student who at the end of the semester thanked me profusely on behalf of her fellow students: "Sir, you have taught us seven different theories but you never told us which is the correct one!"

There is also an insularity of worldview with students' attention focused almost unwaveringly on matters relating to

examinations to the exclusion of other world events, movements, theories and developments. It would be difficult to maintain an informed discussion on such topics as unionism, feminization of poverty, governmental priorities and environmental pollution. Such attempts are frequently rendered difficult as the Chinese rendition of the names of people, place and countries is very often quite unlike the original. Students frequently fail to recognise such differences. As a consequence horrible confusion can result as in the case when an entire class mistook Australia for Austria until it finally dawned on one of them that Australia is not in Europe! I find this a major 'technical' problem in my attempts to open up the world, its history and the history of ideas. The low level of oral English competence presents a major constraint to the development of an atmosphere of free and fluent exchange of ideas. Coupled with the prevailing conservatism and teaching/learning style classroom presentations other than lectures tend to degenerate to teacher monologues.

The remuneration of academics in Hong Kong is rather generous, particularly in the case of expats. With all the fringe benefits (subsidized housing, educational allowance and health care cover) the lesser cost of living and the significantly lower tax rate (currently no more than 15.5 per cent of total income) the average academic can probably save twice as much as in Australia. A major saving results from the excellent public transport (though crowded at peak times) which obviates the need for a private car. The typical gratuity-bearing contract results in a generous golden hand-shake of 25 per cent of the basic earning during the contractual period. In the case of superannuation the contribution by the institution is about three times the amount paid by the staff member. Typically the gratuity-bearing contract is subject to tax (as are educational allowance and other fringe benefits) whereas the superannuation lump sum is tax exempt as a rule.

While these benefits sound almost too good to be true there are also costs and disincentives that must be borne by expats. Some of them are associated with the minority status of 'gweilos'. Ninety-eight per cent of Hong Kong's residents are Chinese who speak a language (Cantonese) which defeats most foreigners despite all good intentions. The large majority of locals do not understand either English or Mandarin. While the Chinese ideograms are easier to learn than may appear at first glance, many a text remains a firmly sealed book because of the idiomatic usage of them in a culturally foreign context. This can be most frustrating not to say humiliating. It may

ultimately be rather embarrassing to fail to recognize that an 'original' essay is little more than a translation of a Chinese text. And plagiarism is tolerated with impunity.

No less stress comes from the fact that foreign academics in Hong Kong belong to the elite in more ways than one. First, most of them are hired at senior levels and consequently are often seen as blocking promotional opportunities for the locals. Given the desire to localise and to terminate the economic, political and cultural colonialism of the last century and a half, considerable envy can render difficult the most genuine efforts to provide the leadership expected of senior academics. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that overseas academics are usually hired on more favourable terms than locals particularly with regard to housing allowance, an expenditure which frequently amounts to one-third or one-half of one's basic salary.

Since most 'gweilos' live in housing quarters specifically built for them by the institution, the difference in comfort is perhaps less noticeable on a daily basis but an apartheid existence in a white ghetto is hardly conducive to cultural sharing and personal exchange with the locals. Last but not least, the relative distance of economic fortune between the common man and the average academic in Hong Kong is several times as large as it is in Australia. And most Chinese in the spirit of true Confucianism seem to so know their station in life that they have been labelled good servants and poor masters. On the other hand, most academics would be hard-pressed to join in many of the activities of the overall 'expat' community a large sector of which consists of wealthy businessmen who are readily able to afford such privileges as clubs, boating, overseas weekends and prolonged holidays, etc.

The physical environment of some of the tertiary institutions, on the other hand, leaves quite a bit to be desired. In general they are very crowded. Even senior staff find themselves sharing offices. One of the five UPGC-funded institutions is currently in a commercial centre, another is beset by noise, dust and smoke with a fairly run-down general appearance. The Chinese University of Hong Kong is quite far out in the New Territories and makes participation in Hong Kong's exciting cultural life rather difficult.

The psychological stress from all these factors is further compounded by the physical environment of Hong Kong which exacts a disproportionately high health cost from many expats. The high pollution of air and water, the presence of all sorts of bugs, germs and allergens as

well as the sheer pressure of high-density living in a humid and subtropical climate are frequently disproportionately difficult to tolerate in the insular existence that is Hong Kong. Of course, all but the very rich and very poor live in flats rather than houses in Hong Kong. Truly a sociologist's dream and a psychologist's nightmare! Last but not the least, the outdoor life of Australia is very hard to emulate, especially since cars are very expensive to buy and maintain and a major nuisance in Hong Kong's traffic. Adding up the assets and liabilities of an academic post in Hong Kong obviously produces different sums depending on the relative weights one uses in this basic accounting procedure. The survey results of the next section will further confound an already complex situation.

Survey Results

A major survey of the 197 staff at Baptist College was conducted in 1987/88. Baptist College was founded 32 years ago by the Hong Kong Baptist Convention and in 1983 chosen to join the UPGC scheme. It is a degree-granting institution of some 2,600 students and rapidly expanding to 3,000 and by 1996 to perhaps 6,000 students. The purpose of the survey was to examine the impact of Christian conviction and commitment on teaching excellence. The survey netted 101 responses (51.3%). Extensive comparisons with non-respondents failed to reveal any serious bias and thus suggest that the respondents are representative of the entire teaching staff. They in turn are quite comparable to the general population of academics in Hong Kong except for the fact that probably a larger proportion of Baptist College staff consider themselves religious, namely 65 per cent. The mean age of the respondents is 37 years and two-thirds of the staff are male. Seventy-two per cent are Chinese and 28 per cent Caucasians. Some 33 per cent hold a PhD, 48 per cent an MA and the remainder typically a BA degree with honours. On average the respondents have been at Baptist for 4.2 years and in academia for almost 10 years.

Given these characteristics of the respondents the various measures of stress which were part of the survey section on job satisfaction can be seen in the proper context. I first report some univariate measures and basic statistics of the respondents and then proceed to examine the differences between actual and ideal situations as perceived by the respondents.

Univariate Results

The mean number of hours worked per week is 44.2 of which 9.3 hours are spent in direct class contact. Seventy-nine per cent of the respondents find such a

teaching load too high. This workload is perceived to be rather demanding resulting in a mean score of 6.5 on a scale from 1 (= low) to 8 (= high). Despite such a perception most respondents say they like their jobs which is reflected in an average score of 6.2 again on an 8-point scale. Or so it appears at least, as more than half (52%) would accept an equally good job at another tertiary institution in Hong Kong. Whatever this means, it is of considerable interest to note that some 56 per cent of the respondents do not agree with the statement that 'Hong Kong academics are better off than academics in other parts of the free world'.

Probably the single most important reason for this jaundiced perception of their situation is attributable to the return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997 which causes some 91 per cent of the respondents to worry about their future despite the solemn promise of 'one country — two systems' with the explicit assurance that the people of Hong Kong will be able to keep full control over the area and to maintain their civil, political and economic freedom for 50 years past the ominous reunion. The recent release of the first draft of the basic law clearly suggests that there is reason for concern as few rights are granted unconditionally and many of the assumptions of the 1984 China-Britain Joint Declaration do not appear to be warranted any longer. Thirty-four per cent of the respondents are anxious to find a suitable job overseas before 1997. The percentage would probably be higher were it not for the fact that many already have a foreign passport and thus are willing to await actual developments after 1997.

It is difficult to determine with any precision the percentage of academics who will be considering departure from Hong Kong. The effects on recruitment

and stability in the five UPGC-funded institutions are likely to be considerable and serious. The matter will get worse with the opening of the third university (of science and technology) in 1991. Few academics doubt that the good years will probably be over as a significant number of poorly paid colleagues (professional salary of full professor is about \$A1,200/year) from the mainland will make a bid for the privileged positions of their academic brethren here in Hong Kong. This effort most likely will be supported by the probable introduction of Mandarin as the official language of instruction after 1997. Australians considering a move to Hong Kong would be well advised to keep these matters in mind before they resign from a tenured, albeit less lucrative position 'Down Under'.

Bivariate Results

To put the above observations into an appropriate context it should prove helpful first to compare the actual and ideal time allocation of Baptist staff to standard responsibilities of most academics: Teaching, research, student counselling, general administration and participation in collegiate life (e.g. assembly, sports, fellowships). These comparisons will then be anchored into the perceived differences of actual and ideal emphases on various educational components. Differences between the actual and the ideal, between what is and what ought to be are reliable and valid indicators of psychological stress.

Table 1 illustrates that, on average, staff feel that they spend too much time teaching and performing general administrative chores at the expense of doing research. While such a perception is probably shared by most academics, in the case of Baptist it mirrors the past when research was largely deemed irrelevant in the missionary context of the Col-

Table 1: Mean Percent Distributions of Actual and Ideal Time Allocation to Major Academic Responsibilities

	A % Actual	B % Ideal	C % Difference
Teaching	52.5	41.4	+ 11.1
Research	13.9	29.9	- 16.0
Student Counselling	12.8	14.5	- 1.7
General Administration	15.4	8.4	+ 7.0
Collegiate Life	5.4	5.8	- 0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0

Notes

- Roughly how many percent of your time at HKBC during the past year did you spend on the following activities?
- Now suppose you were able to allocate your time as you see fit, how many percent would you like to spend on each of these activities?
- Subtracting the ideal allocation from the actual allocation produces positive results if too much time is spent on actual work and negative results if too little time is spent on it.

Table 2: Mean Perceived Importance of Educational Components in the 5 UPGC-funded institutions of Hong Kong by Baptist College Respondents

Importance of*	Actual	Ideal	Difference†
Immediate job preparation	6.5	6.3	+0.2
Long-term career opportunity	6.4	6.8	-0.4
Whole-person education	4.3	6.5	-2.2
Social responsibility	4.8	6.6	-1.8
Christian principles and values	2.5	3.9	-1.4
Critical/independent thinking	4.9	7.0	-2.1
Specialized skills	6.4	6.2	+0.2
Knowledge in general	5.2	6.5	-1.3
Respect for things Chinese	4.8	5.9	-1.1
Preparation for 1997	5.0	6.1	-1.1
Ability to earn money	6.7	6.0	+0.7
Western way of thinking	4.8	5.1	-0.3

* The respondents were requested to judge on an 8-point equal-interval-appearing scale (1 = low; 8 = high) each of the twelve aspects of tertiary education in Hong Kong "in terms of both what you perceive them to be (actual scores) and what you feel they ought to be" (ideal scores).

† A positive difference denotes an overemphasis while a negative difference indicates a shortfall of the actual when compared to the ideal score.

lege and limited funds forced the delegation of administrative duties to the general teaching staff. The sizeable expansion of central administration in the recent past has not appreciably altered this situation nor is it likely to do so because scheduled teaching and deadlines for submission of administrative assignments permit tighter control over academic staff than does independent research.

Table 2 presents mean scores of the respondents' perception of actual and ideal importance of twelve goals of educational philosophy. These goals were chosen to reflect the prevailing debates among staff and students alike. The respondents were invited to assess on an 8-point scale (1 = low; 8 = high) the relative importance of each of these twelve goals of tertiary institutions in Hong Kong 'in terms of both what you perceive them to be and what you feel they ought to be'. Table 2 presents the relevant material.

To do full justice to the interpretation of Table 2 would require more complex analyses than are set out here. Certain trends however are rather self-evident. Commencing with the perception of the actual scores it comes as little surprise that the ability to earn money is presumably of greatest importance in Hong Kong's tertiary education. After all Hong Kong is largely about making money. That of course goes together with the acquisition of specialized skills in the interest of both immediate job preparation and long-term career opportunity (6.5 and 6.4, respectively).

Between these pragmatic concerns and the educational goals of traditional university education is a wide gap. Even

the provision of knowledge in general and the preparation for 1997 are deemed to be stressed more than is emphasis on critical and independent thinking, frequently believed to be the hallmark of a true university education (see ideal score of that goal of 7.0). The perceived importance of assuming social responsibility is as high as the peculiar tie between 'respect for things Chinese' and 'Western way of thinking'. That tie is probably as much due to the fact that Hong Kong is the place where East meets West as it is to the mix of Oriental and Caucasian faculty. Emphasis on "whole-person" education is felt to be sorely neglected maybe because more students are in the care of polytechnics than are entrusted to universities. That the importance of Christian principles and values takes the bottom rank should not come as a great surprise in a world where Confucius taught many Christian principles and values some 500 years before Jesus did.

Turning to the ideal scores, that is, to the degree to which the twelve educational objectives ought to be stressed in Hong Kong's tertiary institutions according to our respondents reveals more about the latter than the former. A rank-order correlation coefficient of .26 between the two sets of scores certainly suggests that what is has little if anything to do with what ought to be. I leave it to the reader to surmise whether Hong Kong's academics failed to convey their value priorities or whether Hong Kong's pragmatism and preoccupation with means renders difficult the endorsement and pursuit of anything but the utilitarian and ephemeral. Looking at the differences between the two sets of scores may shed some light on the issue.

Looking at the differences between actual and ideal scores presupposes that what is and what ought to be are conceptually sufficiently comparable to permit meaningful comparisons between the two. Given that we make such assumptions constantly in everyday life I am willing to admit the legitimacy of the procedure.

It should be noted though that the respondents feel that there is insufficient importance given to nine out of twelve educational objectives. This is partly due to the fact that they were not required to determine the ideal importance under the constraints of a zero-sum situation but permitted to operate in a context where the sky is the limit. That critical/independent thinking and long-term career opportunity occupy the two top ranks in the ideal world of our respondents reflects their balanced concern between the theoretical and practical aspects of a tertiary education. However, critical and independent thinking is thought to be five times as much neglected (2.1 *versus* 0.4) as is long-term career opportunity. The greatest difference between what is and what ought to be is with regard to 'whole-person' education. Several factors may account for this. First, 'whole-person' education is the main shibboleth of Baptist's educational philosophy. Second, tertiary education at most institutions in Hong Kong is limited to three years and thus renders difficult both 'whole-person' education and adequate professional preparation. Third, Hong Kong's extreme pragmatism is hardly conducive to such a lofty goal. The charge of pragmatism is readily substantiated by noting that only utilitarian objectives such as the ability to earn money (+0.7), the acquisition of specialized skills (+0.2) and immediate job preparation (+0.2) are thought to be overemphasized in Hong Kong.

Given that emphasis on both social responsibility and Christian principles and values is deemed deficient one wonders whether the latter many not be perceived as a remedy for the deficiency of the former. Conversely it has been argued that traditional Christian ethics has stressed the importance of the individual rather than the collectivity and hence may have little to offer in terms of social responsibility. The centre and core of the Christian imperative clearly rejects such an implied accusation when it enjoins us "to love your neighbour as yourself". Whatever the answer to the debate may be there would be sufficient room for greater emphasis on Christian principles and values given its bottom position among the twelve educational objectives in our respondents' perception.

The identical actual scores for 'respect for things Chinese' and for 'Western way of thinking' conceal the fact that

academics clearly appreciate the greater importance of the former in an effort to redesign, as it were, the educational philosophy in Hong Kong. Such a reorientation could be particularly relevant as 1997 is but nine years away and it is clearly felt that insufficient attention is given to preparing university students for 1997. There is little doubt that the return of Hong Kong to China will revamp the educational system of Hong Kong in light of the mainland priorities whatever they may be. The present decision makers of Hong Kong's educational system are not unduly concerned about that matter. After all, most of them do have foreign passports!

Conclusion

What can be learned from the above observations in terms of likely job satisfaction of Australian academics considering moving to Hong Kong? Eight points merit repeating:

- job similarity augurs well for an easy and relatively painless adjustment;
- financial reimbursement is a definite

incentive;

- social isolation and insularity will tax the need for mateship;
- the higher demands of the job reflect the greater pace of life in Hong Kong;
- the teaching load is greater and time for research less generous;
- English language skills of Hong Kong students (and frequently staff) can render difficult a sustained discussion of more complex topics;
- staff perceive considerable discrepancies between what is and what ought to be emphasized in the tertiary curriculum;
- last but not least, job security both in the short and longer term is rather precarious.

To sum up, Hong Kong offers superior opportunities to the beginning academic who is able to return to Australia after a few years to continue his career as well as to the mature academic who is prepared to retire from academia before or by 1997. I would not advise anyone to come to Hong Kong in mid-career without a firm undertaking from his home institu-

tion to be able to return to his previous job. And do make sure that any understandings, promises and agreements are in writing!

References

- D. Murphy, 'Offshore education: a Hong Kong perspective in *The Australian Universities Review*, 30, 2, 1987, 43-44.
- D.G. Lethbridge, (ed.), *The Business Environment of Hong Kong*, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1984.
- J.Y.S. Cheng, (ed.), *Hong Kong in Search of a Future*, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1984.
- J.Y.S. Cheng, (ed.), *Hong Kong in Transition*, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1986.
- A.Y.C. King and R.P.L. Lee, (eds.), *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong*, The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1981.
- T. Mo, *An Insular Possession*, Picador, London, 1986.

Acknowledgement:

Thanks are due to Stewart Houston and Graham Bowtell for perceptive comments on a previous draft of this article.

Hidden inequalities: professional experience programme leave

Christine Wieneke and
Marsha Durham

Nepean CAE

Introduction

This brief article represents a synopsis of a longer paper¹ which looks at a number of issues related to Professional Experience Programme Leave in NSW Colleges of Advanced Education, particularly as it affects women. The findings suggested that the system of PEP leave discriminates against women in both direct and indirect ways.

In collecting the data for the full-length study anomalies were noted in the different colleges in relation to specific PEP leave conditions. Although colleges may argue that PEP leave conditions are 'beyond their control' (because they have been formally established in the Dunbar Report²), in fact, the variations discovered suggest a great deal of flexibility to change aspects of this leave. This paper will provide some general insights into this aspect of women's participation in academic life.

Some of the major PEP leave variations which occur in the college sector in NSW specifically operate to disadvantage women. This latter area is particularly

“Because greater numbers of women in the system are ineligible to apply for leave, the burden falls disproportionately on them to cover the duties of other staff on PEP leave.”

relevant in light of the fundamental restructure of higher education which is proposed in the Dawkins *Higher Education: A Policy Statement 1988* (or 'White Paper') and also in relation to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission's (CTEC) comments in a discussion document on the *National Plan of Action for Women in Tertiary Education* (1987, Section 35).

Higher education institutions have not yet had the opportunity to undertake an investigation of women's access to the study leave or professional experience

programs in the context of the White Paper or the CTEC document. It is imperative this question be investigated.

Findings About Variability

All NSW Colleges of Advanced Education were to address the issue of women's access to PEP leave, and examine the conditions which relate to such leave, in their Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plans. No comparative studies exist which have undertaken a thorough examination of the different conditions at different colleges, much less their impact on women.

Almost all conditions applying to PEP leave vary throughout the NSW college sector. In our longer paper, the variability in a range of PEP conditions for different colleges in NSW is shown. Here, general reference to conditions is made, with some examples of the degree of variation.

1. Eligibility

PEP is not a condition of service but a form of leave for which staff must become eligible and which an institution may grant at its discretion. Therefore,