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## Academic Board Forum Notes

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### Notes of the Academic Board Forum held at 1 pm on Wednesday 14 June 2006 in the Professorial Board Room

#### Restructuring: What's in it for US(yd)?

**1. Welcome and introduction**

The Chair of the Academic Board, Professor Sutton, welcomed attendees to the Forum. He noted that one of the Board's function was to facilitate communication on academic matters, and that today's discussion would be opportunity to discuss the form restructuring would take and the benefits that could be gained from it.

**2. Associate Professor Fredoun Ahmadi-Esfahani (Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources)**

Associate Professor Ahmadi-Esfahani distributed a [set of notes](#) based on his presentation, and a copy of the article "Economies of Scale in Higher Education: Sixty Years of Research" (Brinkman, P.T. and Leslie, L.L. 1986, *The Review of Higher Education* Vol. 10, pp. 1-28). In his presentation he stressed the need for continued debate on the restructuring process.

Associate Professor Ahmadi-Esfahani was asked to comment on the public interest perspective of the proposed restructure. He responded that while some members of staff felt there was a political agenda behind the proposal he was approaching it as an opportunity to consider a range of alternative structures.

**3. Professor Iqbal Ramzan (Dean of Pharmacy)**

Professor Ramzan's [presentation](#) looked, in part, at the experiences of the Faculties of Dentistry, Medicine and Pharmacy with shared services, and the implications for smaller faculties.

The following questions were directed to Professor Ramzan:

Professor Ramzan was asked to comment on the recent abolition of the colleges. He stated that while college administration had been disbanded the key functions (such as human resources and financial services) were still present, and that talks were begin held to determine how these services will be offered in the future.

Professor Ramzan was asked to clarify his use of the term "unit" and he advised that he had used this term to cover existing faculties and schools. He noted that, depending on the new faculty structure, current nomenclature and definitions may need to be changed.

**4. Ms Jenny Leong (President of SUPRA)**

Ms Leong (President of SUPRA) gave a [presentation](#) looking at the impact of restructuring on students and student representation on the University's governance bodies.

Ms Leong was asked to comment on how international students might react to the proposed restructure. She advised that these students relied heavily on the support services offered by SUPRA and SRC, and that there were concerns about the use of international student fees in the funding of services for both local and international students.

## **5. Open discussion**

The Chair opened the topic for discussion and invited attendees to direct questions to the speakers or raise general or specific comments. He started the discussion by pointing out that he saw the Academic Board's key responsibility as upholding the University's academic standards and protecting those standards from any damage which could affect the University's position in the market place.

Issues discussed included:

- What will the management structure be in merged or grouped faculties; will the current faculty dean positions still exist in addition to the new executive dean?
- What impact would the restructuring have on the role of the Academic Board, including its membership? and
- What role does the Academic Board play in resolving the details of the new structure (the Chair commented that this would be limited to how any new structure affected the delivery of existing and new courses)?

The Chair thanked people for attending and thanked the presenters for their input.