

Faculty of Architecture Implementation of Academic Board Review Recommendations

<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Communication Systems</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the clear success of the restructuring, the Review Team supports the Faculty in its commitment to continue working towards improving communication and towards strengthening the sense of community throughout the Faculty. In developing its systems of communication, the Faculty needs to develop a stronger sense of ownership across the Faculty of key documents, such as the Teaching and Learning Plan and Self-evaluation Report. The Team noted the views expressed in some quarters that the dissolution of the old departments had resulted in a reduction in contact with students and encouraged the Faculty to find ways to rebuild this.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>Applied for and successfully received a TIF Grant for three projects, including implementing a Faculty-wide Intranet System – Dr Kirsty Beilharz, Project Manager.</p> <p>Staff part of Intranet Project up and running – now has the T&L Plan, Self-Evaluation Report, AB Review, etc. on line.</p> <p>For the student part of the Intranet Project – accrurement of sample of student work commenced; areas for inclusion identified (technical troubleshooting and reporting, gallery of student submissions, interdisciplinary discussion forums, staff-student e-noticeboard, student bulletin board, portal for direction to community groups [e.g. Planning, Design Computing, Architecture], news, policy documents and forms, connections to USYD intranet, SAC forms, student showcase for employers).</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>Student segment of Intranet under development: AsProf Peter Phibbs (Policy), Dr Kirsty Beilharz (Web design) and Dr Andy Dong (Intranet Security) are directing construction with input from students. To date: 300 students surveyed, 3rd year BDesComp project current designing student portion of Intranet. Final building will be completed over the non-teaching time (November to March); rollout expected in early 2004 to coincide with term start.</p> <p>An evaluation of the prototype by the student community will take place at the end of Semester 1, 2004.</p> <p>Dr Beilharz will manage the project delivery and discipline heads will be responsible for relevant content.</p>

Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	Staff sections of the Intranet have been a boon to intra-Faculty communication. The same is hoped and expected for student sections of the Intranet, eg, the facility for students to post work and correspondence is expected to build communication and community.
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Academic Staff Workload</p>	<p>The Faculty is encouraged in its recognition of and commitment to improving the issue of workload for teaching staff. The development of workload models and the recent new staff appointments are welcomed. However, the Faculty needs to continue to consider ways to keep to a minimum the impact of increasing staff:student ratios on both the staff and the student experience.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>AsProf Peter Phibbs, as Head of School, is monitoring this and working with all staff to implement the Faculty workload model and try to reduce teaching loads. The issue has been floated at School Meetings, and staff have made a number of suggestions that the HoS is considering. Policies on minimum class sizes are in place for electives (currently 12 students) and electives have been cancelled minimum numbers aren't reached, and where staff have been overloaded. Some unexpected staff changes have meant that this semester is a difficult one for some staff but new hirings in 2004 will help this situation. The most recent School meeting (10th September, 2003) had a major discussion on workload. Staff took the view that if in the short term the ability to reduce workload was limited, an important issue was the need to make improvements to the workplace. The School currently sponsors an exercise program for staff in conjunction with the Sports Union- other initiatives round improved catering for staff giving evening classes and better internet access from staff residences are being discussed. Very busy staff are being provided with funds to employ research students to assist with administrative tasks.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>The School is considering extending the system of administrative support for staff with heavy teaching workloads. Increasing the minimum size of electives to 15 students. Staff training in digital graphic presentations, and purchase of equipment to support digital presentations by staff. Discussion of student number caps – and request to the SDVC – in graduate coursework programs.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>A start has been made on this issue but increases in load are difficult to manage in the short term.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Communication Systems</p>	<p>The processes for disseminating University policy (such as, for example, Academic Board policy on academic honesty and intellectual property) should be reviewed to ensure that they are drawn to the attention of all staff and students, who should have access to the actual policies, rather than only being made familiar with the essence of them.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>Another reason for the Faculty Intranet Project – . Staff part of Intranet Project up and running – now has the T&L Plan, AB Review, etc. on line, with links to relevant University documents. The Staff Intranet is updated as needed by the Head of School and the staff of the Academic Support Centre.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>No further actions required.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>The staff portion of the Faculty Intranet is clear, usable and highly used. It seems to be an effective tool in enhancing staff communication regarding University as well as Faculty policy.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

Recommendation 4 Units of Study Syllabi	It is recommended that the Faculty implement strategies to ensure that the graduate attributes relevant to units of study are made more explicit to students, particularly in unit of study outlines.
Actions taken by Faculty to date	Many of the UG units now carry this info in the most recent edition of the Faculty's <i>Handbook</i> .
Further planned actions	The Dean has asked the Teaching & Learning Committee to work on five related matters, of which this is one, and to bring firm recommendations for implementation to Faculty this semester. In this case, the recommendation might be for a uniform unit of study syllabus proforma, on the Faculty Intranet, that would have a segment requiring all staff to insert information on generic skills and graduate attributes.
Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	The problem seems to have been alleviated; it is expected that the new recommendations will eliminate it. No further action therefore required.
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Staff Development</p>	<p>The Faculty is encouraged in its stated commitment to ongoing improvement in teaching and learning practices and to achieving wider involvement of staff (including those of longer standing) in the latest developments in the theory and practice of teaching (see Self-Evaluation Report (s. 2 (b))). It is suggested that greater use could be made of staff development opportunities offered by the University's Institute of Teaching and Learning.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>The Faculty requires that all new, incoming academic staff, unless they have significant prior teaching experience, to undertake and complete at least the three-day ITL Workshop on Teaching and Learning. From mid-2003, the Faculty now also requires all new, incoming academic staff, unless they have significant prior teaching experience, to undertake and complete the full GradDip in University Higher Education.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>No further action required.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>The quality of teaching has improved year by year, with student SCEQs now among the highest in the University (especially from the BDes[Arch] program). Teaching can and will improve more, but is now generally very good across the board, with no known areas of great deficiency.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Tutor Training Program</p>	<p>The Faculty is encouraged to develop a more formalised approach across the Faculty to the recruitment, orientation and support of Design Tutors and other visiting and sessional staff. This could build on good practice already existing in some areas.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>A second part of the TIF Grant, under the co-direction of Ms Kristine Sodersten, AsProf Terry Purcell and Dr Harry Margalit, is to migrate Tutor Training across the Faculty. The Faculty's very successful Tutor Training Program for all design tutors in the BDes(Arch) degree is being migrated across the BDesComp and BArch undergraduate programs, with discussion about migrating it also across the 13 graduate coursework programs.</p> <p>Organisation of intensive tutor training workshops is underway for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The relevant part-time staff are being identified, so workshops can be scheduled. We have been hampered in our implementation by the absence for most of this year of the ITL's Dr. Christine Asmar, who assisted the Faculty in previous years with tutor training. With Dr Asmar's recent return, however, the Faculty will proceed with the organisation of training workshops funded by the TIF Grant.</p> <p>The Faculty has also implemented a policy of formally interviewing all potential tutors (at 50% load in a unit of study or more) in all programs to ascertain their suitability.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>Specific workshops for tutor training, with support documents for tutor information.</p> <p>CST has requested that one of our leaders in tutor training, Ms Kristine Sodersten, work with others in the College to see how the best practices in tutor training across the College can be trans-migrated to other faculties.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>Very successful in the BDes(Arch) and BArch Programs (ca 50% of EFTSUs); early days in BDesComp and the 13 graduate coursework programs.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>WebCT</p>	<p>While it is acknowledged that there may be courses (such as those based in the studio) where WebCT may be of limited or no use, it is recommended that a more co-ordinated approach is developed to the use of WebCT be implemented across the Faculty.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>A program of WebCT boards was planned by Professor Tom Heneghan and architecture staff for integration with studio-based teaching in both the BDes(Arch) and BArch during 2003. The plan was modelled on the experience of the architecture program at the University of Hong Kong, where design tutors supplement face-to-face teaching by short daily web-based discussions. The system has not yet been implemented at Sydney, partly because of the administrative workload for the co-ordinating academics who would be involved in constantly updating the changing student and tutor lists, and because of the extra workload the WebCT system would place on part-time tutors.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>The system has been shown, at HKU, to be extremely useful for improving the teaching of design, and that it can lead to profitable design discussions that might not have arisen in a studio tutorial. It is also useful for emphasising the notion that design is an all-week process, which has an intellectual (written) component, that ideas, knowledge and strategies are essential in addition to its graphic component. A former colleague of Professor Heneghan's was involved, five years ago, in establishing Japan's first web-based architecture and design school, in Kyoto, in which all teaching is done by web-based tutorials, supplemented by occasional studio-based intensive workshops. Both examples will be studied with a view to establishing the best practice at Sydney. One of the obstacles to a coordinated approach is the lack of a cohesive monitoring system to identify where WebCT is used in the Faculty.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>As the system has not yet been implemented, no comment can be made on its effectiveness. The Teaching and Learning Committee is considering how a monitoring system might be implemented, with a view to it being set up by 2004.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Professional Links for the BDesComp Program</p>	<p>The Faculty clearly has strong and effective professional links for most areas. However, in light of student feedback (see s. 5.20), it is suggested that the Faculty may wish to consider ways to strengthen such links in the area of Design Computing.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>The academic staff in Design Computing, under the leadership of Professor Mary Lou Maher, is continuing to develop professional (job-opportunity) links. One example is the use of design computing professionals to help develop and deliver the content of the 3rd year DesComp studios. After the March semester in 2003, a group of students were invited to present their designs to the Directors at Woods Bagot.</p> <p>A second example is the forthcoming October Design Computing Student Exhibition, organised by the Faculty and coordinated with the Research Conversazione organised by ECE and the School of IT, where key industry leaders and firms who may be hiring are being invited to showcase their firms and meet with potential student graduates.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>No further action required.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>The planning seems excellent; we'll await the results of the actual implementation this semester.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

Recommendation 9	Mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that, as far as possible, advertised units of study are offered.
Offering of Units of Study	
Actions taken by Faculty to date	This recommendation may impinge on workload issues. Cancelling units of study with small enrolments increases budget efficiencies and helps reduce workloads. However, we are trying to use historical enrolment data to identify units of study at risk and not advertise them. Some recent cancellations have been due to unexpected staff changes. The HoS with the manager, Student Administration, now checks the active unit list for the following semester, and are removing low enrolment units.
Further planned actions	Some elective units will continue to be advertised, but if enrolments don't meet the Faculty's minimum numbers for the unit to be viable, they will be continue to be cancelled. The HoS will continue to monitor cancellations.
Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	We loose a couple of units each semester due to low enrolments. With the attempt to weed some of these out, we do not think there is a significant problem here. There should however be a stronger requirement on staff to show whether there is a sufficient demand for their units. The issue seems to be resolved, but bears watching. No further action required at this time.
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>Communication Systems</p> <p>&</p> <p>Graduate Research Student Management Plan</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Faculty review its management plan for postgraduate research student support and training with a view to ensuring minimum standards of quality across the Faculty. Matters suggested for particular attention include:</p> <p>(i) the need to develop a stronger and more active research community across the Faculty, and thereby avoid the sense of isolation currently experienced by some students.</p> <p>(ii) the need to develop appropriate strategies for safeguarding the quality of postgraduate research supervision. For example, one strategy could be to require supervisors to complete the Postgraduate Supervision Development Program run by the University's Institute for Teaching and Learning.</p> <p>(iii) the need for a more co-ordinated and systematic approach to resource support for postgraduate research students. The aim is to ensure that research students across all discipline areas receive appropriate levels of resource support and that they are made better aware of the resources available to them.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>(i) The Faculty Intranet addresses the first of these matters (see Recommendations 1 & 3 for details). The Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), AsProf Warren Julian, is responsible for implementing the CST/Faculty research management plan. Developments to date include – with active encouragement from the Dean, 4 out of 5 disciplinary groups now hold regular research seminar series, and with the direct encouragement and support of the Dean, the graduate research students have applied for and received funding from SUPRA to organise cross-Faculty research student social events, all of which are aimed to increase intra-group and inter-group communications.</p> <p>(ii) The Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) monitors student research progress annually, interviewing new students half way through their first year to identify any problem areas, calling for, receiving and reviewing annual research progress reports, following up on any problem areas, and conducting spot checks here and there of progress toward degree. New and/or inexperienced supervisor (staff) are required to complete the Postgraduate Supervision Development Program run by the University's Institute for Teaching and Learning. There is monitoring of supervisor performance and any who need remedial action can only act as associates.</p>

	<p>(iii) The Associate Dean (Research), Dr Simon Hayman, and the IT Staff Supervisor, Professor John Gero, have surveyed all PhD students to determine actual levels of infrastructure support, and rectified known discrepancies (mostly in the area of uneven computer support – now corrected). The Faculty also provides – and has for many years provided – the old-fashioned infrastructure support in terms of dedicated office space for full-time research students, access to phone, photocopying, inter- and intranet, etc., with little or no control, along with encouragement for research students to submit conference papers and assistance in funding them to present papers at refereed conferences.</p>
Further planned actions	<p>It is hoped that the fifth disciplinary group will also launch a regular research seminar series. The student portion of the Intranet Project will have a subsection for research students. Under consideration is the post of a new Associate Dean specifically for research students – to further monitor progress and to provide a more consistent approach to resource allocation.</p>
Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	<p>There is considerably more intra-group research communication, and the beginnings of more inter-group communications. Research supervision monitoring has pinpointed a couple of problem spots, which have been rectified. Some senior members of staff still have too many supervisees, but this is accounted for in that they are supporting some new students while new staff members serve their one-year research associate supervisory period.</p>
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Unit of Study Syllabi</p>	<p>Noting that many staff did not appear to be aware of the key issues emerging from (S)CEQ results, the Team recommended that the Faculty's processes are revised to ensure that the outcome of student evaluations (from CEQs, SCEQs, and staff/student consultative committees) is appropriately analysed, discussed and responded to within the Faculty and disseminated to staff across the Faculty. In accordance with Academic Board policy, students need to be advised of the outcomes of student feedback.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>The Dean has asked the Teaching & Learning Committee to investigate this, and to bring firm recommendations to Faculty this semester, with an eye to possibly creating a uniform unit of study syllabus proforma, on the Faculty Intranet, that would have a segment requiring all staff to insert a summary of relevant SCEQ and unit of study evaluations, followed by a statement of how the unit has been changed and improved in the light of that feedback. An attempt was also made to explain the various CEQ results at a School meeting.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>Make this a key part of the new staff induction process. Hold a Faculty Forum on Evaluation (sponsored by the T&L Committee).</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>To early to tell; will be monitored by the T&L Committee early in 2004.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>Evaluation of Studio-Based Teaching</p>	<p>The Faculty is encouraged to develop a student unit of study evaluation questionnaire which is appropriate for studio based work. The University's Institute of Teaching and Learning may be able to provide assistance.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>The Teaching and Learning Committee is considering how this may be done. The ITL is of the opinion that the current Unit of Study evaluations are relevant to studio teaching, and could be supplemented by the Faculty specific questions. The first step is to develop four Faculty specific questions for the Unit of Study Evaluations. This is underway, but is proving difficult given the diversity of offerings within the Faculty (science and arts based; undergraduate and graduate; didactic and project based).</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>Possible trial of a studio-based evaluation questionnaire to elicit studio-specific issues.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>Too early to tell – the four questions will be trailed, followed by a possible studio-based evaluation questionnaire, and the results compared.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

Recommendation 13 International Teaching & Learning Benchmarking	The Faculty is encouraged to establish more formalised benchmarking practices with institutions, both nationally and internationally.
Actions taken by Faculty to date	The third portion of the Faculty's successful TIF Grant Proposal is for international benchmarking, starting with the largest program in the Faculty, the BDes(Arch)/BArch professional architecture program (ca 50% of all EFTSUs). A formalised international architectural education benchmarking project is underway, directed by Professor Tom Heneghan, with a hired PhD RA assisting. In addition, informal benchmarking is occurring through the AASA and the Council of Deans.
Further planned actions	Professor Heneghan is currently the External Examiner of the architecture programs at both The University of Hong Kong and Queensland University of Technology, and will benchmark the Faculty's undergraduate architecture program against these programs as a matter of course. As part of the first stage of the formalised benchmarking process, Professor Heneghan will travel to The University of Melbourne, RMIT, University of Western Australia and University of Hong Kong, accompanied to some universities by Dr Margalit, Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning), to formally benchmark against the programs of those universities. An ongoing report on the benchmarking will be maintained and analysed to suggest further directions for benchmarking studies. The report will form a basis for the 2004 Reviews of the BDes(Arch) and BArch program, on which Professor Heneghan has already begun work.
Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	Early days in the benchmarking project, with results expected by mid-2004. If it is successful, it will be migrated to other programs in the Faculty.
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>Student Representatives on Faculty Boards and Committees</p>	<p>In accordance with Academic Board policy, there should be student representatives on Faculty committees (such as the Teaching and Learning Committee, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Boards of Study, Faculty) (see Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching Part 4, s. 2 (1) (a) and (b)). Faculty is recommended to review its processes to ensure appropriate proactive mechanisms for electing student representatives to sit on Faculty committees. Also, it is suggested that there is a need to raise the profile of student representation on Faculty committees among the student body.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>The Faculty has been and continues to be very proactive in this regard. The Dean recommended to Faculty (approved) that the number of students on all boards and committees be increased. The Faculty Manager on behalf of the Dean and Head of School annually calls for student representatives for all committees. The Dean personally helps the student organisation (SUAS) conduct its annual elections, serving as stimulant, chair of the meeting and receiving officer. Once officers are elected, the students, however, are very slow to nominate and appoint student representatives to the various Faculty committees. The Dean personally reminds the officers at every opportunity about the importance of having students on the various Faculty committees.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>The long-term solution to this vexing problem is unknown. Perhaps the students are so happy with all decisions taken by Faculty that they feel no need to be physically represented at meetings?</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>Not effective, in that we still have few student representatives attending committee and even full Faculty Meetings. Not clear how to proceed to get students to take up the slots available.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	

Recommendation 15 Mid-Year Commencements	The processes for managing mid-year entry are recommended for review by the Faculty to ensure that students commencing course mid-year receive the same level of information, induction and support as students starting in first semester.
Actions taken by Faculty to date	Student orientations – the same in format but smaller in scale – are now conducted at mid-year for both undergraduate (very few) and graduate coursework students.
Further planned actions	No further action required.
Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions	Very effective. No known further concerns.
2004 Review Team's comments	
2004 Review Team's conclusions	
Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)	

<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>ESL Students</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Faculty consider strategies to ensure that students from non-English speaking backgrounds are appropriately supported and made fully aware of the language support provision available in the University, such as that provided by the University Learning Centre.</p>
<p>Actions taken by Faculty to date</p>	<p>Students with poor English skills are identified in the first year of the BDes(Arch) and BDesComp programs. They are individually sent information about the University Language Centre.</p>
<p>Further planned actions</p>	<p>The Faculty is considering a new Associate Dean (International), one of whose duties would be supporting all international students including those for whom English is a second language. The same person could support all students, including domestic, from non-English speaking backgrounds. Specific information about support will be posted on the Faculty Intranet.</p>
<p>Faculty evaluation of effectiveness of actions</p>	<p>Too early to tell; needs to be monitored in 2004.</p>
<p>2004 Review Team's comments</p>	
<p>2004 Review Team's conclusions</p>	
<p>Details of implementation (including time line if appropriate)</p>	