

directed at staffing policies and especially at the trend toward more short-term appointments. Opinions on this were often expressed in strong language and respondents spoke of "bitterness", "hostility", "manipulation" and "tragic situations".

*We have lost numerous staff members, they have all been young, the most energetic, the most involved pedagogically... If you freeze the department it can only get worse; there is no influx of new ideas and new people.*

*The whole business of fixed-term appointments, temporary appointments, has become one of manipulation... they say "You might get promotion if you can get this done."*

*Fixed term contracts affect the quality of teaching. I think rigid rules about contract employment will cripple the intellectual growth of the University.*

*The most dramatic effect is that the young ones have no career prospects. It's messing them about disastrously. In some cases they've been committed to becoming academics...*

Monash respondents were asked their views on alternatives. Some saw fractional appointments as exploitative or unworkable. Early retirement was viewed more favourably provided it was not compulsory. Other suggestions included: development of new courses to attract students, introduction of staff exchange schemes, and active seeking of support from industry.

Most respondents at UNSW were critical of institutional policies but there was no consensus as to what ought to be done. Suggestions included: more equitable distribution of resources, a review of tenure provisions, reduction in the number of students, creation of shared positions, and a heavier commitment to continuing education.

Almost all respondents at WAIT claimed that policy changes had resulted in a decline in conditions of employment. Many stressed the need for changes in leadership style towards a more consultative mode. Almost everyone mentioned the need to strengthen institutional links with the community. A number argued for the introduction of doctoral programmes and there was considerable support for contract appointments to be extended from three to five years.

### Conclusions

At the end of each interview the respondent was asked to reflect generally upon the positive and negative effects of the current situation upon the professional lives of himself and his colleagues. The major negative effect was seen to be through staffing policies which lowered ceilings, increased the proportion of contract appointments and reduced the number of tutors and support staff. The long-term consequences were seen as being intellectual stagnation, a decline in the quality of teaching, and increasing feelings of stress and uncertainty. There

was also a widespread feeling that the quality of academic life had declined as study leave provisions and career opportunities were eroded.

The positive effects, although much less prominent, included: greater pressure to introduce new courses, being forced to think more rigorously about what one was doing, more efficient allocation of resources, and a more co-operative departmental spirit "because of a feeling that we have a common enemy".

Allowing for the fact that the data relate only to a small number of staff in three institutions, the overall conclusion must be that the working lives of academics had not at the time of interview been very much affected by budget reductions and the end of an era of rapid system expansion. Research activities have been influenced to a negligible extent. There has been a small but widespread increase in teaching loads and it seems likely that the quality of teaching has been impaired although the extent and nature of this is very difficult to gauge.

Several themes which are unrelated to the impact of current conditions are identifiable in the data and these could well provide topics for further research into the academic profession. Staff appear to be not greatly concerned about students except insofar as declining demand for entry affects their view of their own situation. A number of staff display a rather low opinion of some of their colleagues. There is a good deal of evidence in the data of a lack of awareness of and concern for the institution as a whole: the department appears to constitute the academic universe for many people.

There were few marked differences in the pattern of responses as between institutions. The progressive development of CAEs is leading to an increased emphasis on research in contrast with the early remit to concentrate resources upon teaching. There is evidence in the WAIT responses of tensions being created for staff when they are asked to increase research productivity without any compensating reduction in teaching load. A number of UNSW staff claimed that because resources had always been inadequate any cutbacks inevitably had a greater impact. Some also cited the size of the University as an explanation for what they saw as the impoverished quality of campus life.

The major impact of the changed circumstances in which academics now find themselves has been upon morale. If a substantial proportion of the profession comes to feel that its work is undervalued and subject to increasingly hostile scrutiny then this will have serious implications for the future well-being of our universities and colleges. Effective leadership is likely to play a crucial part in the maintenance of morale and there is a good deal of evidence in the data that staff are very much aware of this. Senior administrators and departmental heads need to attend closely to their responsibilities in this area if the decline is to be stabilised or reversed.

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## FAUSA AND THE ACTU: THE CASE FOR AFFILIATION

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At the 1979 FAUSA Representative Council Meeting and again at the 1980 Annual General Meeting the question of whether FAUSA should affiliate with the ACTU was debated. A decision has been deferred until the 1981 Annual General Meeting to enable further consideration to be given by member associations. Although the present level of support for affiliation is not high<sup>1</sup> it does appear to be increasing. That the question of affiliation is being seriously considered does, however, represent a significant change in attitude on the part of university academic staff associations. Even as recently as five years ago consideration of this question would not have been entertained. The ACTU would have been seen then as it still is by many academics, as having nothing to offer members of the academic staff. Indeed, academics have traditionally seen their interests as at best tangential to, and in many instances in conflict with, those of the ACTU. The ACTU has been seen as representing the interests of blue-collar workers whereas academics have, by and large, seen themselves as an elite professional group with little if anything in common with other groups of workers and with the union movement generally. The present moves to affiliate with the ACTU must be seen then as reflecting changes both in the conditions of employment of academics and in the structure and image of the ACTU. The aim of this paper is to detail these changes and to show that FAUSA has much to gain from affiliation with the ACTU.

### Unionisation of Academic Staff

The view once held quite widely among academics that they formed an elite professional group with no need to concern themselves with the supposedly mundane matters of conditions of employment has suffered a decline in credibility in the face of the steady erosion of these conditions in recent years. A worsening of the student staff ratio due to funding cuts to universities; reductions in and controls over

study leave; an increasing number of fixed term appointments and threatened attacks on tenure have forced academics to the realisation that they are vulnerable to such unilateral actions undermining their working conditions. The response by academic staff has been to seek the protection of industrial legislation in state jurisdictions and to make some moves to gain federal industrial registration. In New South Wales, for example, the University Academic Staff Associations of New South Wales (U.A.S.A.NSW) gained registration as an industrial union and is currently seeking to have an agreement on conditions of employment at the University of Newcastle registered. It is also affiliated with the New South Wales Labor Council.

These moves on the part of academic staff reflect the realisation by them that they do have much in common with other sectors of the work-force, particularly in the need to protect conditions of employment. Academics seem to have realised that they are no longer, if indeed they ever were, an elite group with secure working conditions. This realisation has done much to bridge the gap between academic staff associations and the union movement.

### The ACTU

The Australian Council of Trade Unions is the major peak trade union body at the federal level. Formed in 1927<sup>2</sup> it has traditionally been dominated by blue-collar unions. This, however, is in a process of change. At the 1979 ACTU Congress the major peak trade union body representing white collar workers, the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA) merged with the ACTU. ACSPA currently forms one of eight industry groups within the ACTU and as such elects one member of the executive. In addition, one of three vice-presidents of the ACTU who is also a member of the ACTU executive, is elected by the unions in the

ACSPA group. Furthermore, the remaining major white collar trade union body, the Council of Australian Government Employee Organizations (CAGEO), covering nearly a quarter of a million employees of the federal government will likewise merge with the ACTU at the 1981 Congress. Other white collar and professional associations have affiliated or are in the process of affiliation. In the education sector the Australian Teachers Federation affiliated in 1979 and the Federation of College Academics, which represents academic staff employed in Colleges of Advanced Education, has recently lodged an application to affiliate<sup>3</sup>. This means that university academic staff are the only group of employees in the education sector not represented in the ACTU.

These changes in the membership structure of the ACTU represent a move away from a predominantly blue collar membership to a more diversified structure composed of blue collar and white collar membership. A proposal to enlarge the ACTU Executive to reflect this change in composition of membership is currently under consideration and will be debated at the 1981 Congress<sup>4</sup>.

#### The Case for Affiliation

It has been pointed out in the preceding discussion that current proposals for FAUSA to affiliate with the ACTU have been the result of changes both in the attitudes of academic staff associations towards unionisation and the membership structure of the ACTU. For member associations of FAUSA to be convinced that affiliation is a positive step, sound arguments need to be advanced in favour of such a move. Such arguments have not hitherto been presented in any detail except for a few paragraphs in the FAUSA Newsletter.<sup>5</sup>

For FAUSA to take steps to affiliate it will be necessary for a majority of member associations to support such a move. The issues involved have not, at this stage, been widely canvassed among academic staff. At the 1980 Annual General Meeting of FAUSA some delegates reported that the issue had been voted on by little more than a handful of members. Although no reliable information has been gathered on the support for affiliation among academic staff, such support in other unions not affiliated with the ACTU is quite high. Rawson<sup>6</sup> found 41% of unionists whose union was not currently affiliated thought that it should be, with a further 12% undecided. He found also that one explanation of opposition to ACTU affiliation was that the ACTU was seen as being associated with the ALP. This misconception is also probably quite common among academic staff. There are no formal ties between the two bodies although many unions are affiliated to both and the fact that R. J. Hawke was president of both until recently may have contributed to the belief that the two bodies were closely associated.

Another common misconception concerning the consequences of affiliation is that the ACTU will interfere in the internal operations of FAUSA or that FAUSA may be forced to identify with views to which it is opposed.<sup>7</sup> Such an outcome is highly unlikely. It has not been the practice of the ACTU to involve itself in the internal affairs of individual unions since, if it did so, it would run the risk of losing that union and possibly others as affiliates. Any union has the option, at any stage, of withdrawing from the ACTU if it is not satisfied with its performance. Also, decisions reached by the ACTU tend to be identified with that body rather than with particular affiliated unions. Furthermore, ACTU decisions are not binding on individual unions. Thus FAUSA, if it were to affiliate, would in no way be obliged to support policy with which it is in disagreement.

As Martin<sup>8</sup> correctly points out there are little or no material benefits to be gained by individual unions as a consequence of affiliation. Activities of the ACTU tend to benefit the union movement as a whole regardless of whether or not particular unions are affiliated. Martin goes on to say that unions which are not affiliated "have for years enjoyed the fruits of the ACTU's arbitration functions without having to help meet the financial liabilities which the ACTU incurs in discharging it".<sup>9</sup> It could be argued that FAUSA has some moral obligation to affiliate and contribute its share to the benefits which accrue to members as a result of national wage decisions and other matters of general importance such as annual leave, long-service leave etc. This, after all, is the same argument used by FAUSA to persuade academic staff who are not members of their appropriate staff association to join. Martin<sup>10</sup> points out that the "charge that non-unionists are dishonourable, because they 'ride on the backs' of their unionist colleagues, is easily transferred to unaffiliated unions."

The ACTU has a range of facilities and resources to which affiliated unions have access. While FAUSA could perhaps gain some benefit from such facilities and services, this could not be seen as a major reason in favour of affiliation. The benefits here must necessarily be limited by the fact that academic salaries are determined by the Federal Government on recommendation from the Academic Salaries Tribunal, an independent tribunal. They do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It is unlikely that FAUSA would enlist the assistance of the ACTU in preparing submissions to the Academic Salaries Tribunal as on recent indications<sup>11</sup> it is in no need of outside assistance in this respect.

It is the role of the ACTU as a powerful body with the capacity to influence government policy which provides compelling reasons for FAUSA to affiliate. The ACTU represents some 2.5 million workers in some 150 unions. It is an extremely powerful and influential organization and as such can bring considerable

pressure to bear on governments, both state and federal. FAUSA is now the only organization representing the education sector which is not currently affiliated. Consequently FAUSA is denied the opportunity to influence ACTU policy on education and related matters. Such policy which might be established in these areas will be determined without input from the university sector. This may well lead to the long-term disadvantage of university staff.

It could be maintained that FAUSA has little in common with other unions in the education sector and consequently would prefer to attempt to influence government policy directly rather than through the ACTU. This, however, has not been the experience in New South Wales. UASA is affiliated with the NSW Labor Council and belongs to the education group along with other unions in the education sector. Through such representation UASA has been able to gain the support of the education group on several matters which have subsequently been endorsed by the Council and has a close working relationship with these unions. Whilst there may be some areas of disagreement between FAUSA and other unions in the education sector these differences should not be stressed at the expense of the substantial common ground between them.

It is argued, then, that it is in the long-term interest of FAUSA to affiliate with the ACTU and to gain representation on the various relevant policy-making committees. Experience in New South Wales suggests that the input from FAUSA would play a significant role in shaping ACTU policy contrary to assertions otherwise.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, can FAUSA afford not to contribute directly to policy which may well make an impact on future government decision making in relation to education?

The cost of affiliation is small and would make little impact on the FAUSA budget. There should also be no shortage of potential delegates with knowledge of the operations of the ACTU.

It remains now for representatives from member associations to put the relevant arguments relating to affiliation with the ACTU before their members. This does not appear to have been done adequately in many associations. If members are fully informed of the relevant considerations they are much better equipped to reach a decision on rational rather than emotional grounds. It has been the intention of this paper to provide a rational basis for consideration of this issue.

#### NOTES

1. At the 1980 FAUSA Annual General Meeting only three member associations reported that their membership had supported affiliation. Several others reported that opinion had been divided rather evenly and two had yet to put the matter to their members.
2. See Hagan, J. *The ACTU: A Short History* Sydney: A. H. and A. W. Reed Pty Ltd., 1977.
3. ACTU Bulletin, Vol 2, No. 3(C.). September/November 1980.
4. *ibid.* p. 6.
5. FAUSA Newsletter 79/1 pp. 5-6.
6. Rawson, D. W. *Unions and Unionists in Australia* Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1978, p. 77.
7. FAUSA Newsletter 79/1 p. 5.
8. Martin, R. M. *Trade Unions in Australia* Second Edition. Penguin, 1980, pp. 133-134.
9. *ibid.* p. 134.
10. *ibid.* p. 135.
11. See the submission by FAUSA to the Academic Salaries Tribunal, August 1980.
12. See the argument in FAUSA Newsletter, *op. cit.*, which asserts that FAUSA's voice would hardly be heard even within an education block.

## ACADEMICS' REAL SALARIES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM: A NEW COMPARISON

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#### Introduction

In 1976 we made use of the opportunity provided by a year's visit by one of us (K.N.) to an Australian university to make a comparison of the real value of

university teachers' salaries in Australia and the United Kingdom. The results, published in this journal,<sup>1</sup> indicated that on the basis of June 1976 data, the average Australian academic was about 40% bet-