Security risk and loyalty oath and other matters concerning the central administration? Galenical conditions has a reduced piaces of universities, as such, speak of adequate teaching institution. They need adequate conditions similar to inarticulate pupils. For example, there used to be a difference between a university and any other post secondary teaching institution. If there is one centre, for convenience, the tendency will be to treat them all the same! This might be Sweeney’s Law! It was Mr. Justice Sweeney who found that the financial rewards of similar classes of staff in universities and colleges of advanced education should be broadly the same.

The proposition that the senior staff of a university speak with authority, not under authority, is the very essence of university education. In order to do this, they need adequate library and other appropriate facilities. They are considered to need long-term appointments, for it is considered to be necessary to enable them to develop a significant body of learning.

These are important questions because universities, as such, will disappear if they are reduced to places where immature scholars instil orthodox instruction. For example, the present day “Economics” applied to human thought, is a conflict between similar Galenic medicine. It is wise to recall Galen’s final statement in his treatise on Medical Experiences: “Inverted mirrors provided to you that the sum of everything used in healing was discovered by logos alone and then it was demonstrated that we had reached the limit of this science. In every aspect of our human condition we are as deliciously inverted as Galen himself but not all in self-satisfied. Optimal conditions for the questing able mind should be the primary reason for the existence of every university. But can these be self-assured if all Australian universities derive their resources and pressures to conformity directly from one central authority? Will such a condition as the Federation’s model tenure statute be acceptable to the central government? Or will staff enjoy security of tenure only if they are members of the Public Service Officers’ Association duly vetted for security of tenure by a loyalty oath and other orthodoxies? At present there is the thin barrier of state treaties between the universities and the Federal Treasury but once this goes the Federal Treasury system of yearly accounting and omniscience may well prevent acceptance of many opportunities for fruitful or quick adaptation. Its habit of deducting from government subventions the equivalent of local benefactions certainly depresses local enterprise. And would they be much better provided under a Central University Authority?

Earlier in this review the independent stance adopted in the early days was mentioned. It is very doubtful whether the Federation intended to have such a fraction of what it has in fact achieved it had been obliged to another organisation for space, staff and money. The present policy of asking the universities to provide accommodation and relief from duties for officers of the staff associations savours a little of the grace and favour system. But the most serious sound heard in the wind is a growing cry for Federation representation on the Universities Commission. If anyone thinks that this is the Federation’s views will be more effective than as freely and forcibly presented in any manner available to the Federation, it might be well to consider the history of such minority representation with its duchessings, purchasing and hypocrisies of the amour propre.

In conclusion, remember those who led in establishing a strong, resourceful and successful Federation: Thorpe and Buckley, Somerville, Brett and George Smith. They posed continuing questions for the University Authority?

The Universities Commission addressed itself to the fact that our universities are entering an environment in which there will be no growth. The Commission pointed out (p. 3.25) that, given that intakes were held constant over the 1977-1979 period, there would be a significant reduction in the relative opportunities for school leavers to enter universities. That might suggest to us that as we come out of the current economic recession the universities can begin expanding once more. I suggest that, apart from the newest crop of universities, we face a steady state for many years to come. Nevertheless, the number of 18-year-olds will peak by 1979 (precisely when undergraduate numbers are to be held constant), and then a trough occurs building up to another peak about 1989, after which the number will slowly decline.

School leavers are not, of course, the only source of new undergraduates. Already at A.U.N.U., in 1978, 52% of new undergraduates were not school-leavers, and 57% reported that they had attended a university, or college of advanced education before entering one. Nevertheless, the problem of resumption expansion will be continuous when student numbers increase upon pressure from social groups who, and political recognition of it, rather than population increases.

The Universities Commission pointed out that “inherent in a situation of no growth are problems which do not arise in the standards of teaching and research” (par. 1.17). In this paper I want to discuss some aspects of a no-growth situation, and some measures which might be taken to preserve flexibility and vitality, on the basis of a detailed study of the academic staff of the School of General Studies (B.G.S.) at the A.U.N.U. which in the relevant respects functions as a typical Australian university. (All my future references to A.U.N.U., except where stated otherwise, will be to this school.)

The Demography of Departments Expansion over the past 15 years has resulted in Australian universities having a very uneven age distribution in their academic staff. Figure 1 presents the retirement pattern (at dismissal of the tenured staff of the S.G.S. by year and grade)

The Australian National University

SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES

FIGURE 1

This imbalance does not in itself give cause for concern: if a fair proportion of staff now in their 30's and early 40's were likely to obtain academic posts, to be replaced by younger colleagues, the situation would be healthy indeed. Serious problems might arise, however, if the retirement rate could not be combined with a very low resignation (as distinct from retirement) rate. The O.C. report points out how the turnover of staff has been high in recent years, with a further 20% drop in the rate between the first half of 1975 and the first half of 1976. At A.U.N.U. resignations have been fewer than the Australian average, being 2.2%, 2.1%, 2.0%, 4.3%, 3.9%, 2.4%, 1.5%, and 1.9% in the years 1970-1976 respectively. So long as we were expanding, this low number of resignations did not excite attention. Now that we are in a no-growth situation, there is precious little room for flexibility. No doubt other universities are in a similar position.

FLEXIBILITY IN A STEADY STATE UNIVERSITY

Richard Campbell

Introduction

Since the report of the Murray Committee of 1957 Australian universities have weathered nearly two decades of rapid expansion. When the Whitlam government decided that the year 1976 would be devoted to the financial progress, many saw that this was but a temporary halt occasioned by economic difficulties. It is now becoming clear that a fundamental change is desired, and that we are entering a prolonged period of what is known in the literature as ‘steady state’. In its last report the Universities Commission addressed itself to the fact that our universities are entering an environment in which there will be no growth. The Commission pointed out (p. 3.25) that, given that intakes were held constant over the 1977-1979 period, there would be a significant reduction in the relative opportunities for school leavers to enter universities. That might suggest to us that as we come out of the current economic recession the universities can begin expanding once more. I suggest that, apart from the newest crop of universities, we face a steady state for many years to come. Nevertheless, the number of 18-year-olds will peak by 1979 (precisely when undergraduate numbers are to be held constant), and then a trough occurs building up to another peak about 1989, after which the number will slowly decline.

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Asian Studies and Science, those staff who resign before they are likely to be moving to new positions in other universities, which will likewise be restricted by the current economic climate and undoubtedly other factors. It follows, therefore, we are likely to be stuck — for better, for worse — with most of our tenured staff until they retire, unless we recruit new tenured faculty.

Further evidence pointing to the same conclusion comes from examining years of first appointment of A.N.U. tenured staff, in half of all departments staff in these categories have been here already on average between 11 and 14 years. That is, staff were appointed in the early years of the S.G.S. of the A.N.U. have shown little inclination to move on. The prospects of the resignation rate increasing do not appear strong, of course, while this produces a static and ageing status the effect is not altogether bad; other things being equal, we could expect to have better, rather than worse, academics by the year 2000, and thus to lose no more staff than they already lose (ii) by infilling with staff in the section headed "promotion".

Reviews

With the onset of a period of stringency, academic staff are coming under increasing pressure from four directions. One is to improve the quality of teaching. A majority of universities now have units to assist staff with their teaching, and partly under-student demand many are introducing formal means of linking poor performance or the request for academic staff to leave or join courses. A second is to improve the quality of research. While Australian universities have not received the "publish or perish" mentality, in order to justify their positions, academics are increasingly being asked about the amount and quality of their research. And in a static situation, it is only through research and scholarship that the intellectual resources of departments will be refreshed. Thirdly, recent moves towards democratisation of decision-making and the ever-increasing variety of staff methods have meant that much more of an academic's time is now taken up in meetings, discussions on these matters with colleagues and students, and in marking student work. Fourthly, the financial resources to support all this work are being reduced. Cutbacks are tending to fall more on the non-teaching academic staff. In short, academics are being asked simultaneously to improve their teaching, deepen their research commitment, and function with considerably less financial resources.

There has been little done by way of assessing the impact of these pressures in an integrated fashion at the university level, and there is not much indication that the means and the end is likely to be met. This problem may well be compounded by departments having posts disestablished through student interest draining away from them with no increase in overall student numbers to compensate for this. (Another aspect of this possibility is taken up below.) That is, if in any of the above departments such drift occurs after the chair is retired, the time which would elapse until a new tenured appointment can be made would be even longer. While the improbability of being able to restructure the department through new appointments could have a dampening effect on the quality of the field applying for the position, the magnitude of the number of these departments heights the need for the chair to be filled by a person who is able to bring fresh intellectual vitality to the department. Even if that relevance is in a degree of conflict with the views of existing staff members. With the democratisation of decision-making, even the casual academic staff leader rather than administrators to fill chairs, if we wish to retain the present staffing structure. This issue is discussed further in the section headed "promotion".

New Developments

In a rapidly changing world, a university which is alive must be responsive to — indeed take a leading intellectual role in — shifts in understanding and changing conditions of areas of concern. This is not the case at any rate, is not always the case now. A direction can only come from a new appointment from outside. That would be to underestimate the resonance of the resignation of the situation, who in many departments such cases would come a time when all the activities of their department are reassessed and new initiatives deliberately encouraged.

Changes in some universities this kind of model is already functioning with considerable success. One lesson which has been learnt from this experience is that such inter-departmental consortia need to be recognised formally, both for planning and budgetary purposes. There is great difficulty in maintaining such programmes on an informal co-operative basis. What happens in many departments and occurs often on the margins of their disciplinary concerns. Even the designation of inter-disciplinary groups do not go far enough. Under such an arrangement the field of studies is still to be seen within that department's sphere of influence, rather than as a genuine inter-departmental. One university which has developed this model in a significant way has found that the Chair and inter-disciplinary studies committee need to act in a way analogous to a departmental chairman. The chair is a natural leader of such consortia to run the consortia to run the courses, and the department's courses to survive in the intense competition for scarce resources we now all face.

Tenure

The problems posed by a static and ageing staff inevitably raise the question of tenure. Some senior academics with whom I have discussed these problems have advocated legislation to abolish all tenure.

• A number of existing staff could be redeployed to form inter-departmental consortia to run approved programmes of an inter-disciplinary nature. These could not consist simply of groupings of departements, but of smaller, co-operative groupings, with the intellectual interest and expertise in the field of study. In order to maintain direct contact with his discipline, a university which would have to form a committee, consultancy on the chair, who would still retain a position within his department. Lecturing commitments could, for example, be half and half where there is a need for new course units to be devised, rather than using existing units. Some new staff could (ii) be given dual appointments where appropriate. The members of such consortia would form the nucleus of staff for a programme, but could draw on other disciplines in a less formal basis where they could contribute.

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At some universities this kind of model is already functioning with considerable success. One lesson
A. Arguments made in support of tenure.

1. Tenure confers protection of academic freedom in that it assures staff that professional findings and statements will not be subject to interference or control by his position.

2. Tenure creates a faculty with strong long term interest in research and teaching.

3. Tenure is important in attracting staff of ability.

4. Tenure has some economic value in that it helps offset the limited rewards of higher education, enabling institutions to compete in fields which have highly developed markets for research and teaching.

5. Tenure removes the uncertainty of the future, thus enabling staff to concentrate on their teaching and research obligation. The uncertainty of renewal of short term appointments affects morale and performance.

6. Non-renewal of short term appointments provide no procedures for appeal and thus academic freedom is not adequately protected.

B. Arguments made against tenure.

1. Tenure imposes an inflexible burden upon B, of tenure B.

2. Tenure imposes an inflexible burden upon the tenured/untenured ratio. Doing so in the tenured/untenured ratio. Pursuing duties responsibly or reasonably expected level of performance of a lecturer on probation has the tenurable positions, year, we apply.

3. Tenure is a penalty. The appointment of each person in this second group and subtotals that from year to year in which each tenured in every 75 years that provides another interesting statistic. The average number of years of service (excluding resignation) is 33.

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Another aspect of this problem is highlighted in a recent study of the staff-stature structure of University College, London, which found that average salary level would remain constant in real terms with a growth of between two and three percent. For a growth rate less than this, the average salary level would rise (as "incremental creep") and appear likely to be a continuing problem for our budget planners.

In its Fifth Report the A.U.C. suggested that rigidities in staff structure would be reduced if the proportion of non-tenured senior posts was increased and if posts which became vacant were not automatically advertised and filled — departments being required to argue the case for retention of these posts. The A.U.C. reiterated these views in its Sixth Report, and again in its Report for the 1976-79 Triennium, and urged universities to aim at raising the proportions of limited term appointments (par. 5.10).

Universities which adopt such a policy (and in Australia the University of Melbourne has led the way) will need to have thorough discussions with their staff associations. The Federation of Australian University Staff Associations (F.A.U.S.A.) has declared itself opposed to the use of limited term academic staff appointments as a means of introducing flexibility in the allocation of staff resources within a university, and as a means of promoting mobility of staff between universities. In such discussions, we believe that it is reasonable to consider relaxation of the prime purpose of tenure — the protection of academic freedom — with the industrial concern for economic security will have to be firmly resisted.

Before deciding on any policy on the tenure ratio, we should look into the long term and examine what an equilibrium situation would be like. Unless steps are taken to move towards such a situation, it will be locked into a seesaw in which the influx of new staff of the 60's and early 70's will be followed by a period of stagnation which will give way to another flood of new staff early next century, and so on.

As a contribution towards the discussion of this complex issue, I present an equilibrium model of the A.N.U. in a no-growth situation. By that I mean a model in which the number of tenured academics with the number of years of service does not change from year to year. (This model, of course, is only one of the many models which could be adopted.)

In the S.G.S. of A.N.U., limited term positions (tutOrships and senior fellows) and the relatively new lecturing fellowship carry a normal maximum period of five years. For our model let there be x people in the group, and y in the group of people appointed to tenurable posts. If one takes the year of first appointment of each person in this second group and subtotals that from year to year in which each tenures in age 75 that provides another interesting statistic. The average number of years of service (excluding resignation) is 33.

Now following the standard Australian pattern, persons enter tenured posts either from outside the S.G.S. of A.N.U., or from an untenured position (after three or four re-appointed). Let us call that x people in the former way. The number of tenured persons given tenure will be a fraction of x. Let us call this fraction .

The table reveals that in an equilibrium situation, changing the tenure ratio from 80:20 to 80: 60: 40 lowers this probability by 25%. Maintaining this probability at something better than 4% could well prove to be a necessary condition for attracting high quality staff to untenured positions.

The most desirable states, I suggest, are those indicated on the top line and the second if the resignation rate is 2% p.a. In these states, there is a probability of 1/4 to 1/4 of all tenured staff in a five year period (approx. 80 to 75 people), the tenure ratio remains at 80:20:20; yet untenured staff have about a half chance of gaining tenure at the same time as a substantial number of new posts to be filled. Most of new staff are imported from outside S.G.S., all of which appears to optimise flexibility.

Having identified what seem to be the most desirable forms of a 'steady state' situation, the hard question is: how best to move from our present situation, changing the tenure ratio 80:20:20 to 80:60:40. Two obvious moves is to try to encourage present staff to retire earlier, especially in the trough years 1976-1991. This is discussed in the next section. A third option is to dare one mention such a 'non-academic' consideration — we would be to avoid appointing to untenured positions persons aged now between 32 and 43.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, consideration of the model in the light of the actual retirement pattern at A.N.U. also suggests that we should keep the present tenure ratio of 80:20:20, filling as many tenured vacancies as finance allows, provided that the new appointees are now either over 43 or under 32 in age. Our problem now is not one of staff supply; quite the contrary, between the periods 1972-1975 we have appointed about 90 people to continuing
positions. Our future flexibility probes are a function of the availability of such a large intake. Whatever the financial attractiveness of replacing senior lecturers and readers by tutors might be, in general, academic staff should be replaced by young lecturers.

The upshot of this investigation is that, if it continues to be held that tenure is itself academically (and industrially) desirable for as many academics as possible, then the present 10:20 tenure ratio should be maintained in line with the current policy of the forthcoming tight period. The continued intellectual vitality of Australian universities in the long term could well depend on it taking deliberate steps to move towards such an equilibrium staffing pattern.

Early Retirement
One way of increasing the frequency of vacancies in tenured posts is to make early retirement easier and more attractive. What is possible in this regard is severely restricted by the provisions of the current superannuation schemes operating. As these are so varied, and none offers scope for the magnitude of early retirement likely to be of interest to universities, it will not be useful to detail them here. It is apparent that new and more flexible superannuation schemes would be required.

The new Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme proposed by the Government is not as generous in this respect as the one currently in operation. One could well wonder how many academics would choose to retire early and at what age? As these are so utterly distinctive, it is too early to say. However, the new Act contains the possibility of making any contribution to the matter of schemes operating. As these are so severely restricted by the provisions of the current provisions, it is not possible under either the old or the new schemes to allow early retirement and, if the contribution, tax, or the total amount is to be sufficient to allow superannuation, either from superannuation or in lieu of long service leave, is likely to be ruled taxable if the person proceeds to some part-time employment immediately after officially retiring. Any changes to the Act to allow gradual retirement would appear too far down the line.

A general question which needs to be considered in connection with voluntary early retirement is: Who is likely to take up such an option? The hard-working, productive person who wants time to write, or the one-bright in whom the spark of intellectual enquiry has become dimmed? Might not an attractive scheme induce to leave precisely those who still have much to contribute? Or, in an ageing institution, is that offset by the benefit of new young staff?

In the short-term the benefit of a provision would offer only margin. Academic staff cannot now retire earlier than 55 under the F.S.S.U., scheme. As these are so severely restricted by the provisions of the current provisions, it is not possible under either the old or the new schemes to allow early retirement and, if the contribution, tax, or the total amount is to be sufficient to allow superannuation, either from superannuation or in lieu of long service leave, is likely to be ruled taxable if the person proceeds to some part-time employment immediately after officially retiring. Any changes to the Act to allow gradual retirement would appear too far down the line.

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I believe there is something to be said for the suggestion that there is no doubt that in academic communities status, as well as money, is an important and fundamental consideration. But, if it needs to be remembered that in North America periodic (commonly annual) reviews of staff salaries are undertaken individually by the university, it still is not "performing", their salaries can be lag to lag even in real terms. The assumption Tribunal looks a job whilst in North America a university tends to make a decision.

Wage incentives of this kind might indeed provide strong extrinsic motivation for academics to keep 'performing' within a steady-state situation, but it would mean a quite radical change as pointed out, in the system of salary determinations.

The equilibrium model discussed earlier does not help with the problem of promotion blockage. There are eight rungs to the lecturer grade and six to the professor grade. If 'performing' within a steady-state situation, but it is significant that the model for Dartmouth does not fundamentally support or reflect the way science is prospered.

By contrast, 'space' can be created in a static department by granting an academic extended leave-without-pay in order to take up a two or three year appointment. Until recently, Australian Vice-Chancellors have been somewhat reluctant to approve such leave but they have tended to prefer a resignation, which relieves their own flexibility problems. However, as we all come up against the same problems, such proposals could well be come at a different level.

In this respect the Institute for Advanced Studies at the A.N.U. has a crucial role to play. One of the functions originally envisaged for what became the I.A.S. was to be a research unit for the whole Australian academic community. It would have a significant growth of research and graduate study at other Australian universities in recent years the ways in which it fulfills this function need to be reassessed. I suggest that it would be mutually beneficial were both the I.A.S. at A.N.U. and the Australian teaching universities (including the S.G.S. at A.N.U.) to view the Institute as providing an intellectual "retreat" for teaching staff.

The Institute is currently moving towards having at most half its staff "permanently" appointed and where there will continually be many opportunities for short-term appointments at research fellow/senior research fellow level for which academics with specific projects can apply. In this way, in an extended period of little change, the I.A.S. could come to function as a "breathing" organ of the Australian academic community to 'breathe' in fresh ideas.

In addition, the possibility of simple exchanges between universities for short periods of leave-without-pay also exist. When staff are all affected with institutional rigidity, musical chairs, academic chairs could keep the blood circulating in our heads.

Concluding Remarks

The problems posed by our abrupt transition to a steady state following rapid expansion are many and interlocked. No single solution is to hand. As we react to this transition we need to reassess both the quality of our teaching, scholarship and research and the departments in which it is proceeding. Any university which is serious about enhancing the quality of life for all academics involved in research can only do so by throttling back or closing down some existing operations. That will be painful. The danger is that decisions which have long-term consequences will be made on an ad hoc basis.

It is also true that many of the possibilities I have discussed are difficult for one university to introduce alone. In this context I have drawn on details from one typical situation - the S.G.S. at A.N.U. — in order to render the discussion concrete. The problems, however, are general. We will need to tackle them in a concerted fashion. I hope this paper will contribute to that end.

REFERENCES:


INEQUITIES AND ABSURDITIES IN THE HIERARCHY OF RANK IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

N. Etherington*

Financial stringencies imposed by a 'no growth' situation show up the anomalies in our promotional list. Many of the better known institutions is illustrated from an example drawn from The University of Adelaide but applies equally to other universities.

Historical Background

Most Australian universities began as communities of equals. My own university, for example, began as a community of professors and as late as 1883 the Calendar listed the staff as "the Professors and Lecturer." (There was only one lecturer!). A great deal can be said in favour of the egalitarian establishment of one's self free from the temptation and the necessity to curry favour. Their relationships were disinterested in the best sense. What they did was done to advance knowledge, to edify students, to win applause or fame, but not to win promotion. Many of these first professors wrote important books, moulded public opinion, won Nobel Prizes without any incentive of rank or money being offered.

Regrettably, time and parsimony eroded the foundations of the academic republic. Lecturers, tutors, demonstrators and assorted part-time staff were filled in on a temporary basis, the university. By the end of the nineteen sixties it was clear, however, that academic positions and readerships were to be primarily promotional grants and that advertisements at these levels dwindled and now have virtually ceased.

Statistics on the recruitment of readers and professors at The University of Adelaide shed some light on the frequently debated metaphysical question: how do readers differ from professors? Mr. Justice Eggleston once ventured the opinion that "a reader is either an unlickable person for whom no Chair is currently available, or he is a person who, while of outstanding academic calibre . . . misses professional rank because his qualities or inclinations leave him short of the administrative or organisational or leadership qualities required for a professorship." Whatever the case may be elsewhere, a different answer may be given at Adelaide. A requirement for two is often put forward by both students and employers. Professors are senior academics promoted from within the hierarchy, (12 out of 15). Professors are senior academics promoted from within the hierarchy, (12 out of 15) and now have virtually ceased.

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Over the years, the senior lecturership has also been a promotional rank for most purposes. It is now the normal practice in The University of Adelaide that when a senior lecturership or readership falls vacant it reverts to a lecturership (except in the professional faculties). Many more chairs have been created for the new junior grades than there were in the past. Mobility of staff between universities might produce a fertile cross-pollination as lecturers through new development. To some extent this is already happening.

The problems have worsened in recent years with the establishment of a pyramidical hierarchy, with the incipient creation of a “ Harambe” system. This system was bad in so many ways that there is considerable optimism when, in 1950, senior positions may not be to attract visitors of some eminence and drive if funding is available here. Travel costs would be substantial in an era that may not be a problem if our funding is supplementing some small allowance from the visitor's home university.

Contrariwise, "space" can be created in a static department by granting an academic extended leave-without-pay in order to take up a two or three year appointment. Until recently, Australian Vice-Chancellors have been somewhat reluctant to approve such leave but they have tended to prefer a resignation, which relieves their own flexibility problems. However, as we all come up against the same problems, such proposals could well be come at a different level. In this respect the Institute for Advanced Studies at the A.N.U. has a crucial role to play. One of the functions originally envisaged for what became the I.A.S. was to be a research unit for the whole Australian academic community. It would have a significant growth of research and graduate study at other Australian universities in recent years the ways in which it fulfills this function need to be reassessed. I suggest that it would be mutually beneficial were both the I.A.S. at A.N.U. and the Australian teaching universities (including the S.G.S. at A.N.U.) to view the Institute as providing an intellectual "retreat" for teaching staff. The Institute is currently moving towards having at most half its staff "permanently" appointed and where there will continually be many opportunities for short-term appointments at research fellow/senior research fellow level for which academics with specific projects can apply. In this way, in an extended period of little change, the I.A.S. could come to function as a "breathing" organ of the Australian academic community to 'breathe' in fresh ideas.

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*Dean of the Faculty of Arts, The University of Adelaide.