IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

This issue completes my thirteenth year as editor of Vestes, and I am handing over the reins to Mr. J. E. Anwyl, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne. May I take this opportunity to thank all those who have so generously contributed to the pages of Vestes, and the less visible referees who sometimes do more work than the authors. Every contribution submitted has been read by the editor and at least one other person, some by three or four. Their comments have been of immense value to Vestes and, I hope, also to the authors.

Finally may I thank our readers; they are the real justification for this issue. I would be surprised if the new editor will not some time during his term of office need to make a case for the continued publication of Vestes, but I hope you will support him as you have supported me.

Henry J. Cowan.
Faculty Budgeting

In 1976 Council introduced a system of formula budgeting which allocates the University budget to 21 budget divisions (including faculties). This system assigns responsibility for determining the allocation of faculty budgets to departments (formerly a central administration responsibility) now devolves back onto faculties.

The Deans of Faculties Statute — power of deans

Currently moves are afoot to change the Deans of Faculties Statute to regularize and strengthen the executive role of the deans.

The Melbourne University Assembly

In May 1971 Melbourne University had its worst experience of violence as the outcome of student dissent during the sixties and early seventies. The resulting enquiry recommended the establishment of a university assembly to constitute a forum for dealing with questions of principle and to serve as a body for consultation and discussion in relation to university affairs. It first met in 1974 with 114 elected members (44 sectional, mainly faculty etc. representatives and 70 general representatives) elected on the common roll principle from the university community which encompasses all academic and support staff, all students and graduates of the university.

The Professorial Board

Council is currently considering courses of action from the standpoint of the reform of the present 160 member Professorial Board. Current proceedings were initiated by the Board establishing a "Committee to review the role and functions of the Professorial Board" in mid 1975. Since then faculties, departments, the Assembly, the Melbourne University Staff Association and other interested parties have spent considerable time in developing and debating proposals for the needed reform of the existing Board and its committee structure.

While this paper hereafter (necessarily) will focus on the background, nature and significance of changes at the present relevant level, it will be assumed that in the real-life campus situation it is not possible to consider changes at that level in isolation from changes in and manifestations of reform in the university.

The Departmental Statute

Background

The documents and publications of the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations indicate the Federation's interest from its inception in 1952 in problems associated with university government and procedures. The Federation's interest in turn reflected the sustained interest of its member associations in these issues.

In the early 1960's the Federation played a significant part in influencing the structure of government adopted by Macquarie University at the time of its establishment. The Federation supported by members and subsequently published the proceedings of a seminar on university government held in Canberra in 1965.

Following considerable dissatisfaction amongst academic staff at the University of Melbourne over matters arising out of departmental government, the executive of Melbourne University Staff Association (MUSA) decided in September 1969 to "set up a sub-committee to undertake a radical examination of the departmental structure of the University and the power given to department heads." The outcome was a report in 1970 which won acceptance by the MUSA Executive and, later, impressive support by the membership when considered at a general meeting in March 1971 which had been called specifically for that purpose.

Early in 1971 the Professorial Board, through its Policy Committee, again became involved with the question of departmental reform when it set up a small sub-committee to investigate the difficulties and possibilities of enacting a Departmental Statute. As the result of its initial considerations, the sub-committee was restructured in March 1971 and its terms of reference broadened to include an exploration of the whole concept of departments and their administration.

In the same month a member of Council gave notice of motion "that Council appoint a Committee to consider the future structure and administration of the Academic Departments of the University . . . to report back . . . on any measures it considers would be likely to improve the efficient running and general harmony of the University and that in its deliberations the Committee should consult with the Professorial Board, the Staff Association and any other Bodies it sees fit." 13

In view of initiatives already undertaken by the Professorial Board in this field the Council deferred action till August 1971 (later December 1971) pending production of the report of the Board's sub-committee.

Its report (dated 4 November 1971) proposed a five-member "Departmental Statute Express Committee" in the necessary form. In making its recommendations the sub-committee stated: "It realises that it is proposing sweeping changes in existing departmental forms but it believes that much of the change does no more than recognise good practice in many departments.

In the following months good use was made by MUSA Executive of the Professorial Board's widespread dissemination of documents and its formal request for "searching and widespread discussion on the questions raised by the report" in all departments and faculties. There was a further discussion at a Policy Committee meeting on the proposed reforms at a MUSA general meeting in March 1972. These factors encouraged introduction of the Professorial Board (and its Policy Committee) to view favourably their sub-committee's radical proposals. Board approval was eventually gained until the Departmental Statute was finally passed by Council on 11 June 1973.

At the time the Statute (S.28) comprised four simple clauses (since amended to five clauses), Clause 3 provided for all the important questions about the structure of departments to "be determined from time to time by resolution of Council after consultation with the Professorial Board and the faculty or board of studies concerned." In the accompanying Preamble to Resolutions Under Statute 2.25.3 (as it has since been developed), Council has gone on to clarify, inter alia, its understanding of (i) the chairman's responsibilities in relation to the execution of his duties and (ii) the way in which procedures, by which the chairman may be assisted in the discharge of his responsibilities by a departmental committee and department meetings, are to be determined.

Following the enactment of the statute there was a further development by MUSA with a newsletter calling for the adoption of a draft model resolution for departments and a general meeting of members in an attempt to quicken academic staff interest in the framing of departmental and faculty resolutions. The campaign was assisted by the (widely publicised) early acceptance by the Faculty of Sciences in 25 July 1973 of a uniform resolution granting the department committees in each of its 17 departments power to determine departmental academic policy.

In the following months departments and faculties met to frame up their resolutions under Statute 2.25.3. The Professorial Board on 13 November 1973 tried the first of its departmental resolutions that seem to be in order should not be delayed for consideration of areas where there are problems, and that in the absence of any other powers for bringing to the next meeting of the Board. Difficulties would be referred to the Policy Committee and authority would be given in the Statute for the chairman of department to be appointed for 1974, before the departmental resolution has been approved by Council, the sub-committee was restructured in March 1971 pending production of the report of the Board's sub-committee.

In this climate, the first elections for (nominations for) departmental chairmen for 1974 took place and on 17 December 1973 Council appointed the first elected departmental chairman under the new statute (5 Professors and 4 non-professorial personnel).

Professor A E Alexander, in delivering the A D Ross Lecture in 1973 on "University Organization and Government: A Century Out-Of-Date?", stated:

"Having, I hope, established that many valid criticisms can be levelled at the existing system . . . should we put in its stead?"

"Firstly, a more democratic system of government, in which all permanent academic staff have, through elected representatives on all bodies concerned with policy making, a much more direct voice in university affairs; secondly, a change in the organization of the teaching units with the scrapping of the present Department and Faculty system. Finally, a more decentralized administration with far more responsibility being delegated to individual academic staff.

"To set up a new university with a novel democratic organization (for Australia as concerned) might appear difficult — how much more difficult would it be to bring about any major reform in existing universities? History would teach us that reform from within a certain difficulty, and anyone who has sought even modest changes in an Australian university will know just how frustrating and time-consuming this can be.

"Professor Hawar, writing some five years ago on the decline of the Australian universities, commented: 'In view of the experience of the last decade it does seem that the only body likely to stop the rot is the academic. Their present malaise, with one eye nervously cocked at the State Premiers and the other perceiving the likelihood of an eventual unwillingness of the rate of university decline. The academics remain the last hope. Mr Mr House and Sir Mark Oliphant are right; they may not constitute much of a body. But in a real university system, from Mr Butler, they are the best hope we have.'"

The impossible had happened — an existing university had brought about major reform from within — and the academics, with skilled, politically mature leadership had taken the lead. Student unrest occurring against a continuing background of staff disquiet about poor administration and polarised relations in certain departments lent fresh urgency to the arguments that the day of the 'God-professor' type chairman had been swept away by other rival academic affairs. Nor should it continue to refuse to release some of its best professional talent from being a permanent staff member and from the heavy burden of department management. All parties were ready for a departmental statute. The sight of Melbourne University [then 120 years old] still being given widely coverage in the media. This new democracy is diverting
said Ebenezer in the Middle Age.11 And somewhat cynically (and I believe as he has turned out) he went on to add:

Two years after it all ceased to matter, and at a time when greater authorities rather than mere librarians on show in America and Britain, Melbourne skips bitty into the 1930's.

This paper will reveal some of the developments over nearly four years of operating under the Departments Statute which reveal the lack of perception in his comment.

Statute 2.25 — The Departments and the Schools

The statute in its present form has been amended to provide for the existence of schools (which also can have their elected chairmen, school committees, school meetings etc) in addition to departments.

Sufficient reference has already been made to describe the main features of the statute and to explain how it is implemented through resolutions of Council.

The Extent of the Departments Statute's Application 1973-77

Once Council had finally enacted the Departments Statute departments and faculties generally moved quickly to make the legislation effective through the preparation of statutory regulations. The atmosphere was one of implementation first and clarification of consequential issues later, eg. what rights would an elected non-professorial chairman have regarding attendance at meetings of the Professorial Board? What arrangements would be made regarding office space and secretarial support for an elected non-professorial chairman etc?

In making the transition from appointed heads of departments to chairmen elected under S2.25 Melbourne University had a distinct advantage in that the terms "department" and "head of department" had not previously been defined and therefore contracts could not be written legally in those terms. Where necessary, in respect of contracts indicating specific areas of responsibility, negotiations were entered into regarding modifications deemed necessary in the light of the statute. All such negotiations have been successfully completed except in one instance which is currently being finalised.

The present position is:12

(i) academic departments electing their chairman under S2.25 61
(ii) faculties not divided into departments. Under S2.25.4 such a faculty “shall be considered to be a department and the Dean (elected by faculty under S3.41) shall be the chairman.” 3

Elected chairman 64
(iii) academic departments — election arrangements yet to be finalised (including one recently created department) 2

(iv) clinical departments where existing hospital agreements require the chairman to be a professor holding appropriate status within the teaching hospital. 14
(v) other (specialist) academic bodies and or research institutes — chairman or director appointed under other relevant statutes eg S2.22 Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research 6

Appointed chairman 88

Two elective departments currently permit the chairman to be nominated from full-time tenured Lecturer staff and above (all other departments limit nominations to Senior Lecturer and above). Sixty-three departments limit the electorate to full-time tenured Lecturer staff and above.

The number of elected chairmen from faculty groupings are as follows:13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Eligible population in electing depts.</th>
<th>Elected chairmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of elected chairmen by faculty groupings is as follows:13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Technologies</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professorial</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electing depts</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the above figures for faculty groupings (for comparison purposes) are adjusted to normalise to the university average the proportion of the eligible population who are Professors, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the relative likelihoods of an eligible Professor compared with an eligible non-professorial staff member being elected chairman.

(a) Humanities — an eligible Professor is 2.3 times more likely to be elected chairman.
(b) Technologies — an eligible Professor is 4.6 times more likely to be elected chairman.

The above statistics relating to the likelihood of election of non-professorial chairmen and the granting to departmental committees (or withholding) of power to determine departmental policy probably reflect the more conservative social, political and professional attitudes of academics who have been trained and experienced in their various professional fields have been in the areas of the sciences (including the medical sciences) or technology rather than in dealing with the more liberal ideas and practices encountered through the study of philosophy, history, politics etc.

At present there are two elected chairwomen — both in the Arts faculty.

Case Study — Departmental Administration Under the Statute 1973 to Date

Context of the Survey

The University of Melbourne is a complex institution comprising twelve faculties and several boards of studies in which staff teach and research in a wide range of disciplines, several specialist academic and research centres or institutes (eg. the Centre for the Study of Higher Education and the Centre for Environmental Studies) in addition to a number of associated institutions. It employs 1437 full time academic and research staff (including 100 Professors) and 1921 technical, administrative and general staff. Student enrolments currently are 13,605 undergraduates and 2,101 post graduate students.14

The genius of the Departments Statute is that the varied circumstances, staff reactions and requirements encountered in approximately 80 academic departments can all be accommodated through the combination of a simple basic statute and specific Council and (faculty) resolutions which spell out the fine print of the arrangements. Its operation encompasses both large and small departments, departments which in the past have been well run and have achieved a sense of unity and identity, and others which have been less fortunate in their administration and have suffered from internal friction, departments with varying traditions of interest in and varying degrees of commitment to the application of the ideas of democracy.

Nature of the Survey

A composite questionnaire/ interview format containing some 68 questions and headings for discussion was circulated to 20 senior academics who were drawn from the twelve faculties and one board of studies.

The views to be reported on in this paper were gleaned from 6 (where complete) and, more importantly, from 16 face-to-face interviews each of approximately one hour's duration and from one phone conversation with an academic who was leaving next day for overseas. These responses, which covered eleven faculties and one board of studies, were supplemented with information supplied in earlier discussions with three other senior academics.

All told the views of some 20 senior academics (9 Professors, 8 Readers and 3 Senior Lecturers) from as many departments were considered in detail in developing Part II of this paper. While up to 5 academics may have been drawn from a single faculty there has not been any opportunity to cross check the views expressed with those of other academics in the same department.
Seventeen of the academics who supplied information had been elected chairman of department and had served to date for an average term of two years. 13 are still in office. (Majority opinion favoured a three year term in the interests of efficiency in administration and economy of effort.) All had been effectively volunteers for the job. A surprising half of responding chairmen had been elected under departmental rules which required all eligible academics to allow their names to be put forward for election unless on account of health or study leave or other arrangements. One academic interviewed was currently serving as chairman of a clinical department without election. The other two academics, though senior, had no personal experience as chairman of department.

The paper is offered as a case study involving a quasi-representative sample, the field of interest being the operation of the Departments Statute at the University of Melbourne, 1973/74 to date.

Stated objective (within one department)
(i) improvement in the standard of administrations;
(ii) improvement in relations between academic staff;
(iii) increased participation in departmental policy formation and execution
— by academic staff;
— by non-academic staff;
(iv) permit Professor(s) to concentrate on giving academic leadership.

All except two of those responding expressed outright support for the new system of elected chairmen (i.e. substantially no change from the attitude they held at the time of the Statute's introduction). Two chairmen however, because of perceived weaknesses such as it "acts against change in a steady-state university" and it "needs to be made to work better," expressed toleration rather than outright support.

There was a general consensus that the new system of elected chairmen is a substantial improvement over the former system of appointed heads of department and that it is functioning adequately throughout the university as a whole. "An enormous advantage" was the way one well-informed academic described it, though he then went on to add that there are some areas where it hasn't worked.

The chairman hazarded the view that their departmental colleagues generally speaking favour the new arrangements, some enthusiastically so. However, in many departments the staff or elements of the staff continue to be apathetic towards the Statute.

Performance Against Objectives
The various factors which motivated the several parties who operated in some of the introduction of a Departments Statute in the University of Melbourne have already been referred to in the section outlining the historical background to its introduction. Doubtless the priority ranking which individuals would have assigned to the various objectives would have varied depending on their experience and responsibilities during the era of appointed heads of department, their status, political and philosophical views and associations etc.

Responding chairmen were asked questions in relation to the degree of achievement within their departments under the Statute as against four specific objectives. These objectives and the chairmen's replies are given below in summary form.

Degree of achievement
Scoring improvement
Significant improvement
Substantial improvement
Minimal improvement
Minimal improvement

The Career-Prospects of the Non-professorial Chairman
A question was asked about the likely effects on the career prospects of a non-professorial chairman of a period of service as chairman of department.

Three of the men interviewed had been appointed to chair subsequent to their taking up the position of chairman of department. One Senior Lecturer had been promoted to Reader during his term of office as chairman. Such a record suggests that some departments at least are choosing their chairman from amongst their best people and that, whilst "the right way (i.e. as an episode rather than a continuing activity), a term in office as chairman can be regarded as contributing materially to an individual's development," but that, realistically, can be a plus factor in favour of his advancement, notwithstanding a contrary concern which was expressed in one or two instances. Another aspect of the problem was brought out by one senior lecturer, who, in answering the question as to the likely effect on his promotion prospects of his term as chairman by denying he had any prospects to be damaged

The Chairmen and Research
A typical view would be that it is "damn' hard work" being chairman and that a 3 year stint is the optimum and the maximum time that a person could afford to be away from active personal research. Despite the pressures in office, chairman with a deep and serious commitment to research for the most part maintained some output or found a satisfying new outlet as a catalyst in encouraging group research within their departments. Chairman for the most part maintained their desire to escape from the administrative burden in due course to return to research or work again.

The Chairman's Management Style
One of the outstanding conclusions from the series of interviews was the discovery of the depth of enthusiasm and commitment, often at considerable personal cost, with which a number of the chairmen interviewed had undertaken their tasks. Given the talents that such chairmen have, the outcome has been the emergence of a quite distinctive and effective management style, based on a hard-won philosophy as to how things ought to be done as between professionals in an academic environment. Doubtless one factor which enabled these chairmen to maintain their zest was the fact that they had taken on only a limited term in office. (Contrast this with the appointed Professor's task of trying to maintain momentum year in, year out with no prospect of relief while health and life last!) A consequence for the department and university has indeed been, as one chairman put it, "good, cheap administration!"

The management style, while varying in important particulars to reflect personality and goal differences, has as a number of important common characteristics:

(a) a conscious decision by the chairman to sacrifice his personal short term interests for the interests of his colleagues and the department;
(b) a willingness to invest very considerable amounts of time in counselling, talking with, counselling, stimulating and encouraging fellow members of staff;
(c) a willingness to be realistic and acceptance of the responsibility for running the department irrespective of whether the wording in the relevant Statute is that for the department, its committees etc. to "determine" or "advise on" the formulation of departmental policy. This leads to desirable practices such as:—

(i) the preparation of well thought through agendas which come before department committee meetings;
(ii) firm chairing of meetings to eliminate discussion of trivia and to reach a conclusion;

(ii) development of effective procedures to facilitate this end eg. submissions were required from those with ideas on specific items prior to the meeting. At the meeting authors had no right of speaking (they could only answer questions) resulting in considerable savings in discussion time and the emergence of a new pattern in the chairmen's duties.

(iv) clear ground rules laid down for notice of meeting, quorum, voting rights etc.;
(v) meetings held irregularly — but unnecessary meetings cancelled;
(vi) adequate time spent considering important longer term issues;
(vii) clear indication to meetings of the consequences of alternative choices open to the department to encourage responsible decision-making;
(viii) presentation of points to colleagues on work-related issues;
(ix) a mature attitude to crisis. "They occur every week", "the staff member's crisis is your event";
(x) not being afraid to make a decision i.e. to exercise executive power and bear the consequences. ("Your colleagues will let you know if they don't agree!");
(xi) the non-professorial chairman not being inhibited from competing for a chair appointment. For some chairmen such a consideration if such action seemed appropriate.

Each of these points answers a possible criticism which could be made in relation to the performance of inexperienced, elected (non-professorial) chairmen in general — and a number of such criticisms were indeed made! There is one obvious solution open to departments where such criticisms are substantiated:

Notwithstanding their very considerable differences in age, background and interest, nearly half of the chairmen interviewed had developed an effective management style along the lines indicated.

One professorial chairman expressed the fear that the Departments Statute places a premium on the preservation of the status quo in a steady-state university situation and says that the management style described above together with the heightened sense of responsibility in the individual academic which accompanies it, are adequate to deal with the intractable problem of change under no-growth conditions.

Regarding wider aspects of the chairman's task, some chairmen considered involvement in university and departmental committee was a necessary broadening experience for every departmental chairman. Others
were content to operate effectively at the department and faculty levels, in some instances involving the wider community as a integral part of those activities.

Academic Leadership and the Professor's Role

Possibly the most important issue to emerge clearly, following the introduction of the Departments Statute, has been the question regarding academic leadership and the role of the Professor. What is meant by academic leadership? What is the role of the professor? What is the role of the chairman? And finally, what is the role of the ordinary academic?

The earlier emergence of multi-chair departments and the appointment of non-professorial academics as head of department in those departments in which no chair had been established had already drawn some attention to the issue. However, with 55 Departments and 610 departments not currently departmental chairman, the issue is now being seriously debated.

This discussion can perhaps best be approached by considering firstly what needs to be done in the typical academic department.

Each academic has his own quite specific teaching responsibilities and research interests which have to be met and developed. The academic may also wish to respond to community demands on him as a person to contribute in various ways arising out of his expertise. More widely, there are group needs to be met in the department in connection with teaching and research, complementarities of talents and interests. The resultant growth in the staff's sense of responsibility, in its creativity and willingness to participate in departmental affairs was reported to be quite outstanding. Another chairman reported "a major development has been a greater identification by staff with the whole decision-making process staff now see that their role counts" in the "freer atmosphere in which they now work": they have "a much more flexible attitude and an acceptance of the need for change".

Reference has already been made to the existence of a number of chairs who were considered to be most effective in the performance of their duties.

The views of responding chairmen varied considerably on these issues. Two chairman held it was not possible to conceive of a Professor's role apart from his possession of executive authority. This view led to the fear that Professors who were not able to be chairman of department would tend to become lazy.

A much more commonly expressed view was that retirement (even under protest) from the position of head of department had freed the Professor to make a really effective (on occasions a markedly improved) contribution through his personal efforts and/or through encouraging and assisting others in the department. Some appreciative comments were made about the quality of the contribution of incoming Professors who, not having been elected chairman, were able to concentrate on their academic pursuits.

There were several reports of improvements in the performance of non-professorial (non-chairman) staff. In one institution which had had problems in the past the chairman devoted much of his time in seeking to draw out his colleagues, in interpreting personalities in the department one to the other, in interpreting departmental issues to the personalities etc. The resultant growth in the staff's sense of responsibility, in its creativity and willingness to participate in departmental affairs was reported to be quite outstanding. Another chairman reported "a major development has been a greater identification by staff with the whole decision-making process staff now see that their role counts" in the "freer atmosphere in which they now work": they have "a much more flexible attitude and an acceptance of the need for change".

Reference has already been made to the existence of a number of chairs who were considered to be most effective in the performance of their duties.

Proposal

- loading to continue to be paid to chairman;
- professional salary to be paid to non-professorial chairman;
- research assistant(s) to be provided;
- lightened teaching load;
- administrative assistant;
- accelerated study leave for retiring chairman;
- rehabilitation leave for retiring chairman.

It was evident from the comments of several of these chairmen that their departments had been operating as highly effective academic units for some time. Two other chairmen in the sub-group indicated that serious problems in their departments were now starting to be overcome. The Departments Statute has undoubtedly been a factor in contributing to such improvements in staff morale.

Opinion on balance favoured the suggestions of (i) voluntary (some preferred compulsory) attendance at an induction course for incoming chairmen to teach them the ropes; (ii) published guidelines for chairmen; and (iii) the chairmen—elected to study his predecessor for three months prior to taking office. However few wished to see a department close out its options by bestowing on the deputy chairman an automatic right of succession.

While one or two chairmen had misgivings about the availability of a suitable successor in the immediate future due to temporary difficulties (such as forthcoming study leave arrangements etc) few, if any, had any real concern about the quality of the next wave of chairmen.

Rewards of Office

Views in this area, in response to the proposals raised, may be summarised as follows:

Proposal

- (i) loading to continue to be paid to chairman;
- (ii) professional salary to be paid to non-professorial chairman;
- (iii) research assistant(s) to be provided;
- (iv) lightened teaching load;
- (v) administrative assistant;
- (vi) accelerated study leave for retiring chairman;
- (vii) rehabilitation leave for retiring chairman.

Reaction

- Generally favoured
- Generally not favoured
- Opinion divided. Guernes were raised about whether to use effectively. Ok if graduate assistant etc.
- Overwhelming majority supported
- Supported — if can be paid for
- Marginally supported
- Marginally supported.
Underlying Philosophy and Conclusions

Philosophy Underlying Participation

The philosophy regarding participation which underlies this paper can be summed up in three statements:-

(i) Democracy dies in the heart of the democracy before it is crushed in the hand of the dictator.17
(ii) "Nobody can deny me the right to be responsible."18
(iii) "It is in laying down our lives for great and unselfish aims that our own talents develop to the fullest and we are stretched towards the ultimate limits of our capacity."19

These basic ideas are developed further in the context of the university for the academic and for academic staff associations and federations in the paper "The Roles in University Government of the Academic and of Academic Staff Associations."20

Conclusions

The achievement of quite radical reform at the level of the department in the University of Melbourne resulted from the coming together of several unrelated circumstances and the presence in the profession and in the staff and academic staff association of a number of personalities who provided a high order of mature political and professional leadership. In the final event the reform took nearly four years to achieve.

For several reasons it seems appropriate to initiate the process of reform in a tertiary institution at the level of the department. The reader acceptance by academics in the humanities of the principles of participation in university government, may also point to those areas in other institutions from which early support may be forthcoming.

In less than four years the benefits achieved have been very considerable. The release of some members of the professoriate from "chores" and from the aura that surrounded the professorate ("a cause of resentment in the past") has led to what one chairman in a large faculty described as "a notable release of energy" amongst the professorate, evidencing itself in a significant increase in their academic contributions.

Refereences have already been made earlier in this paper to the impressive performances (not only in administration) of a number of the elected chairman and to the improved atmosphere in some departments as non-professorial staff have responded to their opportunity under the Statute to vote in the selection of chairman and in departmental decision-making.

The energy releases spoken of may have occurred more readily in multi-chaired departments with a tradition of essentially democratic government behind them. Yet even in departments which have been dogged persistently by problems, there are signs of progress towards their resolution in the changed atmosphere created (at least in part) by the Statute.

Obviously there have been costs. Yet as one Professor observed: "These costs are transient compared with the potential benefits. The whole structure is evolving, enabling academics to be free in the best sense i.e. each person has the opportunity to contribute."

One has the sense of deep tides flowing in the University of Melbourne, of the whole institution — individuals, chairman, professors, departments and faculties — being in a learning situation. Each departmental situation is probably unique. Some departments are in an advanced state of development; in others the individuals are feeling their way forward in first steps towards reconciliation and growth. Developments to date, not least the high standards and energy evidenced in administration by the best of the departmental chairmen (amongst whom non-professorial elected chairman are generously represented), presage well for the renewal of the intellectual and emotional life of the academic staff, with consequences for themselves and their disciplines, the institution, its students and the community, which must be significant.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In every instance to date, to the best of my knowledge, the nomination has been confirmed by appointment in due course.
2. George, D.M. Report to the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations on Academic Staff Structure and University Government in Australian Universities, August 1972, p. 3.
3. Ibid p. 4.

6. Policy Committee of the Professional Board of the University of Melbourne. Report of the Sub-Committee on Departmental Structure and Administration, 4 November 1971, para 1.
9. Minutes of Professional Board of University of Melbourne Meeting No 9, 13 November 1973, para 5.
12. Derived from (a) Schedule of Chairman of Departments etc. as at 11 July 1977, produced by Staff Officer, University of Melbourne; (ii) University of Melbourne Standing Resolutions of Council Chapter Six (updated), (iii) The University of Melbourne Calendar 1977 Part 1.
13. Faculty groupings are Humanities — Arts, Economics and Commerce, Education, Law, Music, Social Studies (Board). Technologies — Architecture etc, Engineering Sciences — Agriculture and Forestry, Dental Sciences, Medicine, Science, Veterinary Science.
17. Untraceable at date of typing.
20. This paper was originally written for Melbourne University Staff Association by the author in 1975 and, after minor amendments by the executive committee of the day, was tabled at the FAUSA Annual General Meeting in 1976 as a background paper relating to a number of agenda items. It was re-presented to the FAUSA Annual General Meeting in 1976 by FAUSA Executive as a background paper relevant to the Federation's ongoing consideration of the University government issue at that meeting.