DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION - SOME PROBLEMS 
RELATING TO THE GENESIS 
AND IMPLEMENTATION 
OF THE MARTIN REPORT

Discussions of diversity in Australian higher education are dominated by the vexed question of the relationship between universities and colleges of advanced education. More recently, the developing and expanding role of technical and further education has raised the additional question of how this sector relates to the colleges now, and how the relationship will develop in the future. For some years Australian post-secondary education has experienced changes in the relationship between colleges and universities, the two major and at present dominant types of institutions. Any analysis of these changes, which seeks to illuminate the dynamics of Australian education, must be made in the light of their historical and political context.

When Menzies became Prime Minister in 1949, the universities found him a generous benefactor. Menzies saw the universities as serving 'the crucial role of fostering a healthy and intelligent citizenry and a leadership of men educated in the sciences and technologies, and that modern industrial economies will require a substantial expansion of university education, it is interesting to note the anticipation of some of these recommendations in a paper presented by Professor Partridge of the Australian National University in 1957. Menzies appointed a Committee of the Australian University Council under Leslie Martin, to examine the problems of tertiary education. The Martin Report was presented to Parliament. In that paper, Partridge anticipated that the Martin Committee would propose a 'substantial reconstruction of our institutional system of tertiary education'. These changes were to be inspired by several recent events. Although attempting to produce a university different in character from the University of Melbourne, Matheson noted that he soon found himself 'vice-chancellor of a University that is disappointingly like the University of Melbourne', due no doubt in large part to the influence of that college in the Monash University Act 'to the effect that the standard of the degree or qualification that prevailing in the University of Melbourne'. Clearly the long-term prospects of diversification coming from recommendations of the Martin Report were not encouraging.

The Martin Report recommended that further development of higher education was to occur within a tripartite (or tripod) system composed of universities, Bond or Tertiary Colleges (including teachers' colleges) and institutes of higher education. The three parts of the proposed tripartite system bore varying degrees of resemblance to existing high education in Australia, and to make recommendations to the Commission on the future development of tertiary education. Although a committee of the Universities Commission, the Martin Committee reported in large part on tertiary education outside the universities. The emphasis appears to have been expected, for, in Menzies' words, the committee was to examine the broad problems of tertiary education, and in particular the possibility of steering some structure which would provide a better and more flexible pattern, offering the prospect of advanced education to many students who had no desire (or opportunity) to take a university course.

This expansion and diversification was to make higher education more accessible according to their inclination and capacity and, significantly, to serve the needs of the community in promoting dynamic economic development'. Such changes were required to take higher education beyond the development of the universities that had followed from the Murray Report. Before considering the Committee's recommendations on the forms of expansion in tertiary education, it is interesting to note the anticipation of some of these recommendations in a paper presented by Professor Partridge of the Australian National University in 1957.

High intellectual ability is in short supply and no country can afford to waste it; every boy or girl with the necessary brainpower must in the national interest be encouraged to come forward for University education, and there must be a suitable place in a good university for everyone who does so choose.

Pressured by Menzies some years earlier when the Martin Committee was established as to whether 'you go on just increasing the number of universities on the stock there ought to be a greater variety of instruments of tertiary education'. Partridge anticipated that diversity would derive not just from the creation of new institutions, but also from the universities, which would evolve 'giving different degrees of emphasis to different functions'. An interesting insight into the fate of some of the Martin Committee's recommendations, still to be made public at that time, is contained in Partridge's commentary on the Martin Report. We may be able to keep all our institutions of university rank roughly equal in size and quality, provided we do not mind their being equally bad in quality and uniform in size. If we think of universities as being the focus of social ideology at that time, viz., 'that everyone who can profit by tertiary education should be given the opportunity to have it, and that it is an obligation of governments to ensure that the facilities are available'. Further, that modern industrial economies will increasingly require a rapidly-growing body of men educated in the sciences and technology, to produce a constantly-expanding output of research; and they will also require a more highly educated population generally, since only a well-educated people can adapt themselves to the transformation that is occurring in the University of Melbourne'. Clearly the long-term prospects of diversification coming from recommendations of the Martin Report were not encouraging.

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The close parallel with the stance of the Martin Committee is immediately apparent, so it is not surprising that the Committee then turned to a consideration of the future institutionalisation of higher education. He noted that the Australian system is composed of the dual institutions of the universities and the TAFE sector. The parallel with the stance of the Martin Committee was to be substantially changed. For example, teachers' colleges would be removed from Education Department and gradually develop autonomy from the Board of Teacher Education. Technical colleges were to be changed in several major respects with
Thus, the work at universities was unable to address the needs of 'less academic students and late developers'. Hence new institutions were required, which were to differ from universities. The Government rejected the proposal that the colleges would develop to the point where they would provide post-diploma courses leading to degrees. Other disagreements, some quite major ones, were present, especially with regard to one of the legs of the tripod system of institutional types and the coordination of the entire tertiary education system. The Government rejected responsibility for teacher education and funding for teachers' colleges. The Committee's proposals included some provisions in the report of the Minister for the establishment of three colleges of new universities.

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The government student population 'on the average will be of a somewhat lower academic capacity but diversifying in that they would not be at the top of the universities courses'. They will be subject to less rigorous entrance requirements and thus will include some 'less academic students and late developers'. However, the Committee emphasized that these students should enjoy 'education' rather than merely 'training', i.e. developing the student's 'critical, imaginative and creative abilities' as he develops in understanding 'the human and social relations' of his work. In the Committee's view, student transfers between sectors, e.g. universities and colleges, need to be facilitated, thus reinforcing diversity in the then 'simple and rather inflexible' pattern of higher education.

In considering the future of the colleges, the government was aware of the temptation for the colleges to adapt to follow the university model. While the Committee is anxious that the government should encourage the establishment of new types of colleges... We, for our part, accept the broad concept that we see these colleges as designed primarily for teaching diploma courses. We do not make our support available for the development of these colleges of new universities.

The Minister’s Report’s distinction between colleges and universities was that at all types of education was criticized by H. Williams, Principal of the Western Australian Institute of Technology and a member of the CAAE, who saw the diversity between universities and colleges as one of emphasis. Colleges contributed to diversity in specific ways by emphasizing that the main focus of tertiary education is to meet the needs of... society and by an emphasis on education and student needs. Williams rejected the idea that the relationship between degree level and diploma level ‘as if these were separate in meaning and mutually exclusive’. College degree courses, being different from the university ones, did not present a threat to diversity in tertiary education, as was implied in Menzies’ speech cited earlier.

The developing nature of the colleges’ role was more evident in the second report of the CAAE, issued in 1969. As Bain summarizes the report, the Committee emphasized that it was dealing with ‘an evolving concept not susceptible to close definition’. It defined technology all-inclusively as ‘the application of human knowledge to satisfy human needs—excluding only courses offered for their own sake. It extended the role of the colleges well beyond their technical beginnings.

The question of research in colleges has been a vexed one since the beginning. With this second report of the CAAE, research was seen to be acceptable, although it was to be oriented to the applied field. 

While academic research is not encouraged, college staff are expected to take the initiative in the application of knowledge, and the opinion is expressed that the application of knowledge to specific problems and the quality of mind, is no less exacting than fundamental research.

The view that research is a peculiar university function is expressed by the AUC in several reports, for example, ‘the commitment of University staff to research arises from the different higher degrees by research work should be the prime differentiation between universities and colleges’. In commenting on the encouragement of research in the colleges, Bain observes that the CAAE removed one of the foundations of Martin and Gorton’s thinking on the differences between colleges and universities.

College research has always been seen as an activity that must not dominate the college environment. The college emphasis was to remain on
undergraduate teaching, with research forming only a small component of college activities, and, if possible, the research was to be related to the teaching function. College administrations were allowed to provide "a small measure of time, space and funds for these (research) activities." Pressures to extend this research activity can be expected to continue, whittling away further this distinction between the two types of institutions. For example, an editorial in the journal of FSAACE observed that the commission on advanced education was under the influence of the Australian Research Grants Commission, which would extend this research activity.

The reports of the Australian Research Grants Commission provide specific instances of research undertaken in colleges that can compete for funds with comparable university projects. As one instance, in N.S.W. in 1977 the colleges accounted for 5 new universities of about $40,000, which is only about 1% of the total funds available for research in N.S.W. These grants amount to 2.5% of total projects, but 4% of new projects.

Even the relative costs between universities and colleges which provided a strong economic incentive to expand the tertiary sector as Martin suggested also seem to be diminishing, and costs per student are comparable. Bath has summarized the two types of institutions, colleges and universities:

Research is increasingly being conducted in the colleges, the colleges are offering higher numbers and quality of courses. On the other hand, costs per students are converging, universities are establishing closer relations with industry and are being paid in research grants. The two types of institutions are indeed converging, with the differences between them becoming one of emphasis.

More recently the AUC, in its report on the proposed amalgamation of the University in Victoria, listed typical characteristics which reflect differences in definition and purpose of colleges compared with universities. The AUC concluded that the "AUC and the CACAE have not endorsed the recommendation of equal salaries for equal performance. They have argued that the duties and responsibilities of college academic staff are comparable to those of university academic staff, and that the AUC has recommended equal salary for equal performance. Recent trends in the industry are moving away from the traditional system of college staff being paid less than university staff. In recent years, the colleges have been able to attract staff with qualifications and experience in teaching and research. Many of these staff have been from universities who have been unable to provide adequate teaching and research facilities. The colleges have also been able to offer competitive salaries, which have been attractive to many academic staff. This trend is expected to continue, as the colleges are able to offer higher salaries than universities.

Since colleges could award degrees, it could be presumed that at least some college staff were equal to university staff and deserved equal salaries and conditions of appointment. This parity was supported by the Commonwealth on the recommendation of Justice Sweeney that the duties and responsibilities of college academic staff were comparable to those of university academic staff, and that the AUC should recommend equal salary for equal performance. Recently, the AUC in its Sixth report reaffirmed its position that students, staff and courses at the colleges' colleges would be acceptable to the university sector. The AUC concluded that the "AUC has recommended equal salary for equal performance. Recent trends in the industry are moving away from the traditional system of college staff being paid less than university staff. In recent years, the colleges have been able to attract staff with qualifications and experience in teaching and research. Many of these staff have been from universities who have been unable to provide adequate teaching and research facilities. The colleges have also been able to offer competitive salaries, which have been attractive to many academic staff. This trend is expected to continue, as the colleges are able to offer higher salaries than universities.

The Martin Committee's recommendation to establish a single commission responsible for tertiary education was rejected by the Government. This decision has been commended as ensuring the autonomy of tertiary education, for the recommendation has been accepted - the colleges would have been doomed at that time to play second fiddle. The need for co-ordination and planning would appear to be self-evident, but many efforts have been at best sporadic and incomplete. Consultation between the AUC and the CACAE eventually became regular, but was viewed by the participants in different ways. In their Fourth Report, the CAE (Commission on Advanced Education) described the "close working relationship" with the AUC, involving regular consultations to secure co-operation and rationalization of awards. The corresponding report of the AUC is less euphoric and major open disagreements, for example, on eligibility of senior members in the 1976-1977 period, suggest that the consultation was at best incomplete.

The phenomenon of convergence, or "academic drift," is not unique to Australia. In the United States, for example, the term "academic drift" has been used to describe the growing practice of top executives moving from universities to corporations, particularly in the technology industry. This trend has been facilitated by the increasing prominence of technology and the need for specialized skills, particularly in the areas of computer science and engineering. The trend has been further accelerated by the increasing competitiveness of the global market, which has led to greater emphasis on innovation and the development of new products. As a result, there has been a "brain drain" from universities to corporations, with top executives and other highly skilled professionals moving to companies in search of greater opportunities for advancement and financial reward.

Within the Australian context, universities and colleges are also prone to homogenization. This problem can be seen in the declining number of students in non-metropolitan areas. This decline is due to a number of factors, including the increasing number of students from metropolitan areas, the declining number of students from rural areas, and the increasing number of students from overseas. This decline has been exacerbated by the increasing number of students from the lower and middle classes, who are less likely to attend universities. This trend has been further exacerbated by the increasing number of students from the lower and middle classes, who are less likely to attend universities.

An important and, said to say, solitary contribution to our understanding of what goes on in at least some tertiary education institutions has been the Report of the Regional Colleges Project, a major multidisciplinary study of non-metropolitan college systems. The organization and administration, staff, students, courses, their rela-
tionship to their local communities and their actual possible roles within the college system and within the areas where they are located.24

The Report provides an arresting comment that applies to much of the discussion about Australian education, and, as well, many of the comments cited in this paper. The term 'college of advanced education' can hardly be used accurately to describe the wide range of institutions in the college sector. This term contributes to a diverse range of institutions, and much of the commentary about 'academic drift' is more appropriately applied to the larger than the smaller colleges.

There are marked differences between individual colleges and between groups of colleges. For example, colleges vary substantially in size, structure, location and history. Diversity is a dominating characteristic in Australia, but its present extent is not always recognized, even by those concerned with post-secondary education and can make generalization difficult. Comitee any precise definition of colleges as attributes, and render ambiguous attempts to determine how fully they meet them.25

The Report is an invaluable contribution to a more intelligent appreciation of the nature of diversity in Australian institutions, although it is restricted to one part of the CAE sector. Further data on the processes of education within courses and institutions promised in the Report of the Williams Committee, have not been included in that Report.26

Comparisons among institutions are likely to include an aggregated judgment about quality, reputation and standards. Submissions to the Williams Committee on the means of evaluating the quality and efficiency of a system illustrate the vitality of this debate. Quality is an elusive concept and broad comparisons between institutions as a whole are susceptible to subjective bias. Commenting about Australian institutions, Selby Smith has cautioned that comparisons should be confined to comparable departments or even courses provided in different institutions.27 The rate of change of institutional quality in Australia may not be as fast as that in the U.S.A., but Reisman's analogy, quoted by Watts, is still pertinent:

...the very process of talking, so to speak, on their body shells, which speak as loudly as print or TV commercials, colleges can change their shells with hardly anyone's noting.28

A common factor in these studies of institutions and their processes is the call for a change of focus, away from 'quality' to 'effectiveness' as a yardstick of comparison. It is important that attention be given to what actually occurs in the institutional environment, for, to state the obvious, it is only by looking at the results of studies like those described here that knowledge will enable us to determine what the institution, be it college or university, is doing, rather than what it professes to be doing.

In retrospect, it can be seen that a significant omission from the Martin Report was a form of preamble that would have explicitly the philosophical and educational framework appropriate to thinking about the role and functions of the universities, colleges and teachers. This omission contributed to the confusion, conflict, and at times contradictory pressures that followed the publication of the Report.29 It was to be hoped that the Williams Committee, whose chairman was well aware of the 'marked similarity' between the terms of reference of his committee and those of the Martin Committee, did not commit the same sin of omission.30

Detailed critiques of this most recent Report and its impact on post-secondary education will undoubtedly continue in the context of this paper, several points can be noted already. In particular, the influence of the Martin Report is very evident. Indeed, the Report is peppered with references to the Martin and Murray Reports, which have served as basic resource documents for the Committee.

The structure of post-secondary education, grown out of the requirements of the universities, is undergoing a major change. The Martin Report concurs with the view expressed by the several recent State Reports, that overlap between the three sectors is 'essential to the provision of adequate variety in and opportunities for post-secondary education'31.

The educational ideals espoused by the Williams Report show substantial links to those of the Martin and the Murray Reports. Although Reports vary somewhat in their relative emphasis, all three share these two objectives for education: develop the mental and effective capacities of individuals; educate and train for specific occupations; cultivate personal values; promote social mobility; and advance learning through scholarship and research.

It might have been hoped that these general educational objectives could have been elaborated into a more detailed framework that would serve the community well in the uncertain future. The Report's discussion is however restricted to a description of the status quo. Moreover, it is found, not only the opening statement to this major Report, but only as the penultimate chapter in a document of 815 pages!

References
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The Notion of Educational Accountability

In recent years accountability has become a popular subject in the educational literature, and has been widely accepted as representing a legitimate demand on education. However, it is doubtful whether the notion of accountability can be sensibly applied to Australian tertiary education considered at the national system level. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that in relation to the national system of tertiary education, defined to comprise universities, colleges of advanced education, and institutions of technical and further education, there are fundamental and perhaps insoluble problems associated with achieving accountability. There are problems of a conceptual nature, problems in methodology, and problems in practical application associated with the particular organisational structure and division of powers in Australian tertiary education.

In discussing accountability, it is essential first to define the term since, as with other popular terms, accountability has come to function as a kind of code word pointing to an extremely complex, subtle, and shifting array of phenomena—as well as a discharging mechanism for venting various attitudinal stances and values.

In this paper accountability is taken to mean the application of an evaluation process to an educational institution or set of institutions in order to provide particular types of required information to the public or to some particular client group or audience. The information required generally relates to one or more of four questions:

- Are the goals being pursued legitimate and appropriate?
- Is resource utilisation consistent with the purposes for which the resources were allocated?
- Is the process effective; that is, are the outcomes consistent with the goals?
- Is the process efficient; that is, were the outcomes produced at minimum cost?

Accountability involving questions of this type can not be applied to an education system or institution in any meaningful way unless the system or institution is subject to a rational management process. In other words, planning, implementation, evaluation, and accountability, are related in a sequential and iterative manner; accountability involves the evaluation of these three prior activities in the context of their interrelationships. Each of these management concepts will now be examined in relation to accountability in order to demonstrate the conceptual, methodological and contextual difficulties.

Accountability and Educational Planning

Anderson and Bowman describe educational planning as a process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future. Blaug supports this definition with the view that educational planning necessarily involves making conscious decisions now that have further consequences for action that will have to be taken in the future. A critical part of any planning process is agreement on purposes to be pursued, or in operational terms, the intended outcomes or the goals to be attained. Bowen provides the useful concept of operational goals as being hypotheses about desirable outcomes that can be achieved, or at least approximated in practice. Further, planning involves making rational judgements about the implications of accepting or rejecting a particular policy or set of policies. Such rational decision-making includes proposals for implementation; that is, it will take into account matters of efficiency in the use of resources and courses of action that will allow for the most effective achievement of goals.

Planning in tertiary education, then, is concerned with determining appropriate educational purposes, setting specific attainable goals related to these purposes, and determining by a rational decision-making process the approach by which the goals are to be accomplished.

Accountability in relation to the planning process is essentially accountability in terms of these activities; that is, it concerns the legitimacy and appropriateness of goals, priorities, and the proposed means of accomplishment. There are serious difficulties in applying accountability in this area. For the tertiary or post-secondary education system in Australia there has been no clear statement of an accepted set of purposes for the system, no clear ordering of priorities, and no clear allocation of purposes or priorities in a way which differentiates the three sectors or their constituent institutions. As a consequence, operational goals cannot be derived from purposes nor justified in relation to them. This situation causes problems at the micro level of individual institutions and programmes, but is particularly intractable at the macro level of state and