NOTES

1. The definition of a "discipline" is itself a matter of dispute. In our view, at any one time it is possible to define a set of related pieces of information and concepts, which have been accumulated by using particular kinds of intellectual and practical techniques, and in which students can be trained so that they can in turn understand and build on existing knowledge. That corpus of information and the skills which are necessary to understand, sustain, and expand it constitute the basis of a discipline. The basis will change, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly. Nevertheless, at any given moment it is possible to approach a particular aspect of man's knowledge about himself and his world from within the boundaries of a particular discipline. The organisation of knowledge in disciplines is useful because our minds cannot encompass the complete range of man's understanding. We need to fix, around particular areas of knowledge, boundaries within which we can conduct research, teaching and learning.


Peter C Byers,
Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor; and
David E Caro,
Vice-Chancellor
University of Tasmania

THE RATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TASMANIA

In February 1980 the State Government accepted an offer from the University of Tasmania to assume responsibility for the College of Advanced Education in Southern Tasmania. The University stated that if it were given such an opportunity, it would become a broadly-based dual-purpose institution. The University recognised the need for flexibility in a small state and stated:

The University indeed welcomes the opportunity to evolve into a comprehensive regional University new to Australia which could be a model for small universities in other parts of the Commonwealth. Under this scheme the University would conduct traditional scholarly activities but also offer a broad range of courses and services more usually offered by colleges of advanced education in other states.

To understand the problems behind the rationalisation of higher education it is necessary to realise that Tasmania is not at all like other states. The population and the economy can be clearly identified with three major regions: the South, the North and the North West. The Tasmanian system of parliamentary representation, based on five seven-member electorates, contributes to this regional pattern of interest as does the division and ownership of the media. The total population is only a little over 400,000. Of these about 160,000 live in greater Hobart, 100,000 in Launceston and the rest in towns of less than 20,000 people or in the country.

Like their mainland counterparts, vocal sectional groups in Tasmania seek a wide range of educational opportunities and would like them to be at their doorsteps. However, there are limited resources available and it is not possible for every tertiary sector to be represented in each region in Tasmania. Thus some tension and conflict is almost inevitable but is compounded by an extraordinary jealousy between the North and the South, specifically between Launceston and Hobart. An equally important factor is a sense of deprivation, freely expressed by representatives of the three major towns in the North West.

The sense of deprivation is well founded in fact. Tasmania's participation rates of 7.1% for the University and 6.3% for the College sector do not compare well with the national averages of 9.5% and 10.0% respectively. They are consistent with the low retention rates to year 12 schooling being found in the areas outside Hobart.

In the metropolitan centres of the larger states, universities and colleges can each limit their offerings but collectively provide a very wide range of opportunities in the one city. Many universities have chosen a limited role, emphasising research and scholarship, without being seen by the community as failing in their duty. Over the last three decades there has been a substantial change in the distribution of students between courses at various levels. Postgraduate teaching and research have expanded dramatically and at the same time there has been a decline in sub-graduate teaching. Sub-graduate courses accounted for 27% of all students in 1954 and only 10.4% in 1953. Subsequently many of these courses were phased out or up-graded to full degree courses in the late 1960s following the Martin Committee Report.

It is perhaps ironic that the large institutions which can relatively easily be "comprehensive" now have no need to be, while the smaller ones in more remote communities, are urged to be "comprehensive" but have to wrestle with problems of scale which inhibit such diversity. In the Tasmanian experiment the University will be required to broaden its base and to provide some courses which in other areas may be found in CAEs.

History

To understand the latest moves to rationalise higher education it is necessary to review the history of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (TCAE). Perhaps because the University was not providing the breadth of service needed by the community, a decision was taken in the late sixties to set up a CAE in Tasmania. The potential student population was quite small and so far as the arguments for a college depended on breadth of opportunity rather than on numbers or the associated costs of the institutions involved, it might have been expected that, since more than half Tasmania's population lives outside Hobart, the College would have been established in Launceston, the second city. However, the argument that no capital city could be without a CAE prevailed and in 1968 the TCAE opened its doors on a site at Mt Nelson which is almost contiguous with the University grounds. Subsequently the College took steps to develop a second campus at New Town. The new College incorporated a previously existing School of Art, a Conservatorium of Music, and a
Teachers College. It proceeded with new developments in Librarianship, Medical Technology and Applied Sciences, Pharmacy, Social Work, and Environmental Design. In addition, it developed a number of other courses, notably in Engineering, Accounting, Administration, Commercial Law and some Arts and Science subjects, which overlapped those offered by the University. This resulted in some tension between the two institutions.

In 1975 a Committee on Post-Secondary Education, with Professor J. C. Maguire as Chairman, was appointed jointly by the Australian and Tasmanian Ministers for Education to report on the promotion, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State, having regard to its future needs. Following an extensive investigation, its recommendations proposed a major restructuring of tertiary education in Tasmania.

The Karmel Committee’s recommendations were made in the context of demand forecasts which predicted that both the University and the TCAE would continue to grow slowly and would have difficulty in attracting substantially increased enrolments. The Committee said:

'The projected total tertiary enrolment of 60,000 students in 1984 at Australian standards, be accommodated in a medium-size single college of advanced education, or by a smaller university and a single college of advanced education.'

The Committee foresaw that: "...the estimates of future tertiary growth thus raised under the Model should continue to support three main centres of tertiary education of which are located in Hobart side by side.

Subsequent events show that the basic recommencements of the Committee were made in the context of forecasts which were unrealistic. Projected total student numbers for 1981 were 6,800 students but it is now known that participation rates are not growing and more realistic estimate would be 6,200 students.

The Karmel recommendation was for a total rationalisation:

\[(1)\] A basic restructuring of university and advanced education in Tasmania should be undertaken in order to rationalise the programs of the University of Tasmania and the M. Nelson Campus.

\[(a)\] To achieve these objectives, the existing programs of the M. Nelson campus of the TCAE should be transferred to the University or to a fully autonomous college of advanced education in Hobart.

\[(b)\] The scope of the TCAE should be developed on new legislation establishing a fully autonomous college of advanced education in Hobart.
have satisfied the requirements for appointment. A similar procedure had been used when Pharmacy and Surveying were transferred to the University following the Karamel Report.

Following discussions within its staff, the Professional Board and Council, the University offered to bring the courses in Art, Music, and Librarianship into the University structure and to appoint all members of the present staff of those units wishing to transfer. It was also agreed to move two staff from the Division of Teacher Education since the number of students was decreasing. However, the University offered to advertise the present staff of those units wishing to transfer, the University structure and to appoint all members of the Professorial Board and those of those units merging.

Some difficulties arose. Professorial Board meetings were given employment with the Department.

The Minister for Education set up a committee under the chairmanship of John Smith to consider matters relating to the University through the press and Cabinet meetings. The University undertook, whenever possible, to bear on the University on those cases where selection was necessary.

The University set up a new superannuation scheme for those transferring from the college's scheme. This provides benefits similar to those of the proposed Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities. Past service in the College is recognised for those bringing transfer benefits from the college's scheme.

The University has taken over most of the activities at Mt Nelson of Educational Provision throughout the State, but it does not assume full responsibility thereafter.

The University has provided staff and facilities for the Centre for Teacher Education at the Mt Nelson campus of the University prior to 1 January 1981, while the University has a responsibility thereafter.

The University has taken over most of the activities at Mt Nelson of Educational Provision throughout the State, but it does not assume full responsibility thereafter.

The University has provided staff and facilities for the Centre for Teacher Education at the Mt Nelson campus of the University prior to 1 January 1981, while the University has a responsibility thereafter.

The University has taken over most of the activities at Mt Nelson of Educational Provision throughout the State, but it does not assume full responsibility thereafter.

Government policy for post-secondary education

The Government has accepted the University's offer to plan the redevelopment of sections of an old and interesting jam factory located on the waterfront in Hobart. The intention is for the University to take over the site and, as part of an urban renewal programme, to develop it partly as an academic home for its own Schools and partly as a place available to other educational institutions and to the public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.

There will also be a restaurant which will be available both for students and for the general public. It is envisaged that the Centre for the Arts will also be the home for the TCAE Hobart branch of the School of Environmental Design, and some TAFE activities in Art. It may house an FM radio station at present situated at Mt Nelson. It is planned to include some artists' studios for craftsmen in residence.
It is inherent in the rationalisation decisions that the University may need to offer other CAE-type courses from time to time and this raises questions of accreditation and funding. Normally universities approve their own courses and this in principle can happen with diplomas as well as with degrees. It has been argued (see, for example, Professor Sir Bruce Williams) that the basic binary approach to higher education would be weakened if funding were determined in accordance with the usual Universities Council procedures.

At the opposite extreme, the "comprehensive" university could have diploma courses accredited and funded as if it were a college of advanced education. This too has disadvantages. First, there would be multiple paymasters. Second, it is difficult, and perhaps undesirable, to separate diploma and degree students in programmes which may well have the first few years in common. Third, there may be an implication that the university would have two different categories of academic staff. This idea is unacceptable to the staff of the University of Tasmania.

A possible compromise is for UG3 level diploma courses to be provided by University staff under contract to the University. To do this, the UG3 diploma would have to be provided by the University in the normal way. The ideal arrangement has yet to be achieved.

In Tasmania, to compound the problem, there is no separate Advanced Education Accrediting body. The Council of the TCAE accredits its own courses and has not shown any great inclination to extend its role.

Unless there is an independent accrediting authority, it will be very difficult to establish tertiary courses at the appropriate level and at the same time facilitate their conduct on contract by the appropriate institution in each region. Separate accrediting bodies exist in all other States and with the movement of both the University and Further Education sector into diploma courses, there is a need to implement similar policies. This would leave the Tasmanian Council of Advanced Education with only those powers appropriate to a council of a college of advanced education.

Before the rationalisation decision there was a growing awareness within the University that it had to be more concerned with the perceived needs of the community. In 1980, despite the obvious difficulty of providing evening classes as well as day classes in a small university, an increased number of units was offered at times suited to part-time students. The demand for part-time work was particularly large in any one discipline, and it is likely that courses may have to be provided for part-time students in rotation, the range being limited in any one year.

The educational needs of the people of the North West are particularly important. They are being considered by a new Council for Community Education on which one of the University's Professors sits. The Council has indicated its willingness to co-operate as well as it can short of contemplating branch campuses. It seems likely that the resulting staff from the TCAE and the University may provide a limited number of courses in the North West using Further Education facilities and study centres located in community colleges.

It may well be desirable for visiting staff from the University to give some courses at the TCAE in Launceston. For rationalisation to be a success, it is vital that the College and the University should facilitate the transfer of staff in both directions between the two institutions.

Professor Sir Bruce Williams (loc. cit.) has criticised the use of the term "comprehensive" by the University of Tasmania, stating that it will not be any more comprehensive than some larger universities have been in the past. This is certainly true. The point is that most small universities have been much more restricted in their offerings than the larger universities were before colleges of advanced education came into existence in the larger numbers in the sixties. The Tasmanian experiment requires both the University and the TCAE to become broader and more flexible. This is a necessary for it and not be seen as being destructive of the binary system of universities and colleges which has worked well elsewhere.

The changes in the University are only just beginning but it is already clear that there is a renewed interest within the University in providing a broader and better service to the community. Reviewing the progress during 1980, it seems that innovation within the University is more probable now than even a year ago. As an example, the University introduced four new masters degrees (Humanities, Social Sciences, Financial Studies, Legal Studies in Welfare Law), and two new postgraduate diplomas (Welfare Law, Operations Research) in 1981.

At the same time, there is an insistence that, whatever is done, the standards must be those proper to a university. The University will not dilute its standards in becoming more comprehensive. Rather it intends to apply standards of excellence to wider areas of higher education. Perhaps as a result of this insistence on standards and because of the awakening in the University, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Commonwealth Postgraduate Research and Course Work awards received by the University for 1981. It reflects the high activity in research and postgraduate studies which differentiates a university, "comprehensive" or otherwise, from other institutions.

The Tasmanian experiment will take some years to work out and premature judgment is unwise. Whatever the judgment may finally be, the University will certainly emerge as a different institution. While there may be lessons to be learned from the Tasmanian experience which can be applied in other small centres, it should be remembered that Tasmania is unique, and the solution to a purely Tasmanian problem may not necessarily be as useful in the major metropolitan areas.


division of the University of Tasmania.

A possible compromise is for UG3 level diploma courses to be provided by University staff under contract to the University. To do this, the UG3 diploma would have to be provided by the University in the normal way. The ideal arrangement has yet to be achieved.

In Tasmania, to compound the problem, there is no separate Advanced Education Accrediting body. The Council of the TCAE accredits its own courses and has not shown any great inclination to extend its role.

Unless there is an independent accrediting authority, it will be very difficult to establish tertiary courses at the appropriate level and at the same time facilitate their conduct on contract by the appropriate institution in each region. Separate accrediting bodies exist in all other States and with the movement of both the University and Further Education sector into diploma courses, there is a need to implement similar policies. This would leave the Tasmanian Council of Advanced Education with only those powers appropriate to a council of a college of advanced education.

Before the rationalisation decision there was a growing awareness within the University that it had to be more concerned with the perceived needs of the community. In 1980, despite the obvious difficulty of providing evening classes as well as day classes in a small university, an increased number of units was offered at times suited to part-time students. The demand for part-time work was particularly large in any one discipline, and it is likely that courses may have to be provided for part-time students in rotation, the range being limited in any one year.