Report

Review of Department of Marketing and Management

12-14 March 2012
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1. Introduction

1.1. Review Terms of Reference

1. Governance, Leadership and Management
Review the effectiveness of Department of Marketing & Management planning, leadership and management structure, processes and resources in responding to Faculty and University strategic planning directions.

2. Academic Program
Review the appropriateness of the degrees, programs, and units offered by Department of Marketing & Management relative to Faculty and University priorities, employer and professional community demands.

3. Research
Review current research outputs, activity, and capability relative to Faculty and University objectives including opportunities for developing research and knowledge leadership.

4. Research Training
Review the HDR program, including admission standards, methodology and skills training, completion times and drop-out rates, supervision and reporting standards.

5. Staff and Student Profile
Review the alignment of academic, professional, and student profile relative to current and future objectives and plans.

6. Community Engagement
Review the scale, scope, and quality of community/industry engagement, including external/professional contribution to and referencing of, curriculum and research development.

7. Future Directions
Recommend future development opportunities for Department of Marketing & Management in terms of its resources, research, teaching and community/industry engagement activity.

1.2. Membership of Review Panel

- Professor Glenda Strachan (HR and Employment Relations, Griffith University - the Committee Chair)
- Professor Mike Ewing (Head, Department of Marketing, Monash)
- Professor Sid Gray (International Business and Co-Director of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Research Group, Sydney University)
- Associate Professor Mark Evans (Head of Department of Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies, Macquarie)
# 1.3. Schedule for Review (12-14 March 2012)

## Monday 12 March (Room 712 Building E4A, Macquarie University, North Ryde)

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>11:11:15</td>
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<td>Interview with Head of Department and Deputy Head of Department</td>
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<td>Interview with Head of Department <em>continued</em></td>
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<td>15:45</td>
<td>Interview with Marketing staff: Chris Bauman (Level C: disciplinary</td>
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<td>co-ordinator to end 2011), Steve D’Alessandro (Level C and Marketing</td>
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<td>Accreditation co-ordinator), Scott Koslow (Level E and incoming</td>
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<td>disciplinary co-ordinator), Jana Bowden (Level B),</td>
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<td>Stephanie Huang (Level B)</td>
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## Tuesday 13 March (Room 723 Building E4A, Macquarie University, North Ryde)

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<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Interview with Rob Jack (Level B, International Business co-ordinator)</td>
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<td>Interview with Nick Parr (Level D and DEM co-ordinator to end 2011)</td>
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<td>10:00</td>
<td>Interview with professional staff members: Irene Ng (Department</td>
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<td>Administrator) and Alper Yuceozsoy (Teaching Assistant)</td>
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<td>10:50</td>
<td>Blaine Charleton (undergraduate IB student and Indigenous cadet) and</td>
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<td>Lauren Gellatly (previously undergraduate and honours student,</td>
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<td>currently PhD student and representative on External Advisory Board)</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
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<td>13:00</td>
<td>Executive Dean, Professor Mark Gabbott</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Leanne Carter (Level B Marketing and previously Department</td>
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<td>Internship co-ordinator now Level C PACE co-ordinator)</td>
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<td>14:30</td>
<td>Fei Guo (Level C, demography, HDR co-ordinator and Peter McGraw (Level</td>
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<td>D, HR, currently P/G coursework co-ordinator)</td>
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<td>Lawrence Ang (Level D, marketing, previously L &amp; T Co-ordinator to</td>
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<td>HR Cluster - Alison Barnes (Level C, disciplinary co-ordinator, Troy</td>
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<td>Sarina (Level B, Hons co-ordinator), Nikki Balnave (Level C, Public</td>
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<td>sector management major co-ordinator)</td>
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<td>10:20</td>
<td>Professor Ray Markey, Director, Centre for Workforce Futures</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
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<td>13:00</td>
<td>External Advisory Board representative Christine Broad, Hudson</td>
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<td>13:45</td>
<td>Committee time and debrief to HoD</td>
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2. Executive Summary

The Review panel for the Department of Management and Marketing met with staff in March 2012. The Department has undergone a great deal of change in the past three years as the Faculty has restructured its departments and refined its direction. The Department and its leadership have done a remarkable job embracing change and fostering a positive culture and improving performance. The Department is currently made up of several disciplinary clusters and has a wide range of responsibility for undergraduate programs including some large units. In the past three years it has been given responsibility for coursework Master’s programs in its disciplinary areas. Both AHRI and AMI accreditation have been achieved for Departmental programs. The staff profile in some of the clusters is not balanced with the teaching offerings and there is a very high student: staff ratio. Numerous units, including many postgraduate units, are taught by sessional staff. There has been greater emphasis on research performance by staff, including the production of high quality publications, and staff are now focusing on this. These, and other changes, mean that the past three years have been a period of substantial change in the actual work and focus of the Department. It is a great achievement that this has been accomplished and at the same time the Department operates in a collegial fashion. However, issues remain to be addressed, and these include governance structures within the Department and the reduction in workload of the HoD; staffing issues related to the number and variety of units and programs offered; the maintenance of the new stronger research culture and its strategic development and support from the Faculty; and the development of a strategic direction which focuses on what is to be achieved.
3. List of Affirmations (A), Commendations (C) and Recommendations (R)

1. Governance, Leadership and Management

C1 For the collegial interaction taking place in the Department, largely driven by the HoD, which has created a positive and creative work environment.

C2 For the establishment of the roles of Deputy Head of Department, Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator, Research Co-ordinator, HDR Co-ordinator and the Teaching Allocation Committee, which perform important functions in the Department and are well-regarded by staff.

R1 That the span of control (workload) of the HoD should be reduced.

R2 That a review of the administrative functions and structure in the Department be undertaken (relative to the Faculty and other Departments).

R3 That the University catering policy of not serving refreshments at meetings with only Macquarie University staff present should be reviewed.

R4 That the HoD should be allocated an amount in the Departmental budget for discretionary use and this should be targeted at strategic developments.

R5 That the Department should develop a detailed Strategic Plan for the 2013 to 2018 period.

2. Academic Program

C2 The accreditation of the Marketing programs with AMI and the HR programs with AHRI is a positive achievement.

C3 Internships and the study tour to Asia are effective ways of expanding learning beyond the classroom and the Department has shown leadership in this.

C4 The Bachelor of Marketing and Media degree, which commenced in 2012, is a good cross-Faculty initiative which needs to maintain its position as a niche program with a cap on student numbers and emphasis on high quality.

C5 The HR major is a tight set of units, appropriate to the staffing, and provides a good model of a major.

R6 Increase the number of postgraduate units being taught by full-time staff in the Department by either hiring more on-going staff, particularly between levels A and C, or by reducing the number of units offered.

R7 Consider the mix of teaching, research and service in staff profiles as the Department seeks to be less reliant on teaching from sessional staff, which may include increasing the recognition of a teaching-focused career path.

R8 Promote the PACE program which pursues a range of alternative participation arrangements. Promote the Department’s internship initiatives while accepting that it is unrealistic for all students to undertake an internship.
R9 Increase the number of professional staff to administer the PACE program and internship program.

R10 Consider the composition of the groups within the Department. The Marketing and HR groups are well established but the remaining groups of Demography and IB have few staff and a range of issues in regard to teaching loads. This could be resolved in a number of ways, one of which would be to establish a Management cluster, which would constitute a third large grouping of staff (along with Marketing and HR) and include IB and Demography, as well as management academics. This would also resolve the issue of a Department of Marketing and Management which does not have staff concerned specifically with some major issues of management.

R11 Highly recommend that consideration is given to the capacity of the Department to handle increased numbers of students given its current resources. Capacity needs to be aligned with the staff resources to deliver programs.

R12 Review the Public Sector Management major as the major requires a minimum of 3-4 specialist public sector management units in order to ensure it is a distinctive offering.

R13 Consider the addition of one or two electives in the HR major of the Bachelor of Commerce.

3. Research and Research Training

C6 The recent increase in both the quantity and quality of research produced in the Department is commended.

C7 The collaborative and collegial research environment in the Department is to be commended.

A1 The creation of the Centre for Workforce Futures (CFWF) as a focus for research is affirmed.

A2 The concept of the China Business Research Network is affirmed.

A3 The Research Incentive Scheme, overall, is working well, and driving some positive change in culture and behaviour.

R14 Develop a detailed Research Strategy for the next five years (see R5). Decide what research areas/programs/topics that the Department wants to be renowned and famous for.

R15 Issue lucid communication to staff clarifying the timeframe within which to use Research Incentive Scheme funds (to overcome current confusion).

R16 Include a strategy to increase number of national competitive research grants in five year Department Research Plan (see R5, R14).

R17 Establish the research strengths, strategies and goals of the Department as a significant part of the criteria for appointment of future staff.
R18 Develop business model structures for the Centre for Workforce Futures (CFWF) and the China Business Research Network.

R19 Establish KPIs for the Centre for Workforce Futures (CFWF) and support the Centre with an appropriate administrative structure and long-term commitment from the Faculty.

R20 Consider developing marketing cluster applications for ARC grants (see R16).

R21 Review the admissions process for Higher Degree Research students, with final approval on the admission of students transferred to the Department (see R2).

R22 Undertake a review of Higher Degree Research completions to determine completion inhibitors and develop appropriate strategies to rectify.

R23 The Department should maintain the system of a minimum of two supervisors per HDR student, at least one of whom is not an Early Career Researcher.

R24 Review the appropriateness of the PhD by publication model. Are graduates of this format competitive in the domestic/international academic employment market?

R25 Review the role, responsibilities and reporting lines of the Department’s Higher Degree Research Coordinator.

4. Staff and Student Profile

C8 The fact that all but two full-time academic staff in the Department have PhD’s, from a good cross-section of quality Australian and international universities, is commended.

C9 The appointment of 3 professorial staff to the Department since 2010 is commended.

C10 The appointment of 2 teaching assistants to assist with the administration of several large courses is commended.

C11 The workload model and process for teaching allocation is commended.

C12 The indigenous cadetship program, with one cadet in the Department, has worked well for this staff member.

R26 Increase the number of level B and C on-going academic staff in order to reduce the student-staff ratio, ensure more students are taught by more permanent staff, and provide more time to adequately supervise PhD theses.

R27 Investigate the appointment of two further teaching assistants.

R28 Create the role of Senior Tutor for units with large number of students and tutors in order to assist with the management and administration of students and the other tutors.

R29 Transfer more administrative tasks from academic staff to professional staff.

R30 Develop strategies to grow research and other capabilities among the cluster of HR staff.
R31 Implement strategies to enhance research collaboration and integration of the demography staff with the wider Department.

R32 The role and fit of international business within the Department needs to be considered and a strategic direction developed, which is given appropriate staffing and support.

R33 Given the very high number of adjunct/sessional/casual teaching staff in the Department there needs to be a provision of adequate desk and computer space in order to perform work and meet with students.

R34 In order to be ready for the AACSB accreditation visit in 2015, it is recommended that a review of the level of permanent staffing be undertaken immediately and a recruitment plan for additional academic staff be created.

5. Community Engagement

C13 The Department is commended for the great deal of good community engagement it is undertaking.

R35 The Department and the WFC should continue the community outreach and look to industries in the local area in particular.

6. Future Directions

C14 The Department is commended for successfully undergoing a large change process and developing a stronger research emphasis.

C15 The Department is commended for implementing a range of systems to assist its operations.

C16 The Department is commended for a cohesive and positive organisational culture.

R36 Take time to consolidate the large amount of recent change and plan for future developments (beware of change fatigue).

R37 Develop strategic priorities which will direct future decisions.

R38 Benchmark the Department against other departments in order to assist with longer term planning and positioning.

R39 Consider areas in which the Department plans to develop a global reputation.

R40 Prioritise publishing in high quality (ABDC) journals within established management, marketing and HR disciplines linked to relevant ERA codes.
4. Background

The Department of Business was established in 1998 and was renamed the Department of Marketing and Management in 2010 following a Faculty realignment process. The current Head of Department (HOD) commenced in late August 2009 and has overseen a large amount of change since then. The realignment process which took place in 2010 resulted in several objectives which have contributed to these changes. These objectives were:

- Focusing our resources in areas where we had reputational advantage
- Balancing the faculty operations across four departments with sufficient scale to support an administrative structure
- Protecting our Actuarial capability from declining student numbers and enhancing their opportunities for research development
- Providing opportunity for all departments to assess their current and future development and to enhance their presentation to external communities.

The realignment resulted in the closure of the Department of Business Law, with the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) now structured around four discipline-based departments: Accounting and Corporate Governance, Applied Finance and Actuarial Studies, Economics, and Marketing and Management.

The Department’s staff contribute to the Bachelor of Business Administration and the Bachelor of Commerce majors in Demography, Human Resource Management, International Business, Marketing and a new Public Sector Management major which commenced in 2011. In 2012 the new Bachelor of Marketing and Media commenced which is delivered by both the Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies, and the Department of Marketing and Management. At postgraduate level Department staff also contribute to the Master of International Business and the Master of Commerce specialisations in Business Management and Organisation, Human Resource Management, and Marketing. Prior to 2009, all postgraduate coursework was managed centrally in the Faculty with no input from the Department of Marketing and Management, and all postgraduate units were taught by adjuncts engaged on a sessional basis. In late 2009 postgraduate coursework administration in the Faculty was reorganised and since 2010, the Department has responsibility for delivering and staffing Master’s level courses. This change has widened the coverage of the Department to include post-graduate education along with the undergraduate and added additional course responsibilities. A result of this has been employment of new continuing staff in the Department which has enabled a decreased reliance on staff employed on a sessional (full unit delivery) and casual (hourly) basis.

The Department’s vision is underpinned by core values, strategic aims and operational goals that were developed at various Department strategic retreats in 2009 and 2010 and Learning and Teaching and Research Retreats in 2010 and 2011. Core values include the recognition and support for individual and collective achievements of staff and students, respect for diversity, and promotion of collaboration and connectedness.
within and across the Department’s disciplinary groupings to facilitate problem focused research, inspirational and relevant learning opportunities and outcomes for students as well as with industry and the community.

The strategic aims adopted by the Department following its Strategic Planning Retreat in 2010 are as follows:

1. **RELEVANCE** - Deliver an inspired and relevant learning experience;
2. **APPEAL AND REPUTATION** - Enhance our reputation as the institution of choice for academics, students and business;
3. **IMPACT AND INFLUENCE** - Engage in high impact research;
4. **INCLUSIVE AND CHALLENGING WORK CULTURE** - Build a supportive and enabling work environment.

These aims have informed the 2010 and updated 2011 Department Strategic Aims and Operational Plans. The Plan was scheduled for review at the Strategic Planning Retreat to be held following receipt of the Report from the External Department Review in 2012 and updated in order to ensure alignment with FBE’s updated Mission Statement and Strategic framework.

The Department is composed of 37 academic staff from a number of different disciplines. In 2012 the Marketing cluster consists of 18 staff members, two of whom are on .5 appointments (at Level E and Level A) and one of who has been seconded as PACE Co-ordinator. The HR/Organisation studies cluster consists of 9 staff (including the HOD but excluding one staff member who commenced as Associate Dean (Research) in 2012). Following staff turnover, the International Business and Management Strategy cluster consists of 2 staff members and one Level D position has been recruited. The Demography cluster has 3 staff.

Overall, the past three years have been characterised by a significant reorganisation of the Faculty with consequent changes at the Department level; incorporation of Master’s level courses into the responsibility of the Department; a major change of focus to emphasise research outputs of staff; changed leadership of the Department.
5. Body of the report

5.1. Governance, Leadership and Management

The Department, largely as a result of its leadership and management, has been able to foster collegial interaction that is contributing to a positive and creative work environment. The Department is governed through monthly Departmental meetings chaired by the HoD. An External Advisory Board, instituted in 2009, provides advice on Departmental programs and activities.

The growth in the Department and its increased responsibilities for courses and other activities over the past three years has increased the complexity of Departmental governance. There have been recent initiatives which have made improvements to the governance of the Department. The Deputy Head of Department, Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator, Research Co-ordinator, HDR Co-ordinator and the Teaching Allocation Committee perform vital roles. Further such developments will aid in the smooth functioning of the Department.

There are, however, governance issues which are creating undue work loads for staff managing the Department, in particular the HoD. Currently, all the administrative staff report to the HoD and this, along with all academic staff reporting to the HOD, is too many direct reports for the HoD. The Faculty should consider a system where all administrative staff report to a senior administrator in the Department and this senior administrator and the personal assistant to the HoD then report to the HoD. The structure of administration in the Department needs to be streamlined and the structure of the administration staff be reviewed, with a department manager or lead administration position to be created. The role ambiguity between what is handled at Faculty level and what is handled at Department level, particularly in relation to student administration, needs clarification through a review of administrative roles and tasks. The number of academic staff who report directly to the HoD should be reduced and academic staff should report to the professorial staff in their disciplinary clusters for performance management. In addition, the HoD needs to delegate more routine tasks to administrative staff and other senior staff as appropriate. There appears to be little discretionary money allocated directly into the Department budget for strategic developments at the Department level and the HoD has to make a case to the Faculty for funding of specific strategic initiatives. An easily accessible amount in the Department budget for discretionary use in the Department would assist in effective operation of the Department. This amount should be targeted at strategic developments which could assist in building a positive Departmental culture. Other areas of concern raised by staff include the prohibition on catering at any meetings where Macquarie University staff only are present.

While strategic plans have existed, the documentation provided to the Review Panel emphasised inputs not outputs. A detailed Strategic Plan for the period 2013 to
2018 which includes the targets for outputs will assist with the management of the Department and position it to build on its recent period of successful change.

5.2. Academic Program

Since the initial offering of the marketing and demography majors in the Bachelor of Commerce in 1998, the Department’s involvement in the delivery of academic programs in the Faculty has expanded. In 2012 the Department was deeply involved in two degrees (Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Marketing and Media) as well as five majors in the Bachelor of Commerce, four double degrees and four masters coursework degrees. In 2012, the Department is also responsible for delivering 48 undergraduate units (increased from 25 in 2000) and 35 postgraduate units. The challenges for the Department include teaching across this number of degrees.

Industry accreditation has been achieved with the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) for the HR major in the Bachelor of Business Administration was achieved in 2010. Accreditation has just been achieved with the Australian Marketing Institute (AMI) for Bachelor of Commerce Marketing major and graduates are eligible for professional membership of AMI. These accreditations are very important as they represent the culmination of discussion with these industry bodies and industry oversight of the programs. They increase the benefits of the programs both to students and the industry. The AHRI accreditation means that Macquarie University joins many other universities whose courses have this accreditation. In the case of the AMI accreditation, Macquarie University is the first university to achieve this.

Curriculum mapping has resulted in the restructuring of several majors and several units have changed while a small number have been discontinued. The number of undergraduate units the Department has offered has increased from 27 in semester 1 2009 to 41 in semester 2 2011. Postgraduate units have remained fairly stable, decreasing from 36 to 34 over this period. In addition to the large number of units, there are five units with more than 400 students.

Teaching quality in the Department is supported by the improved results in the Course Experience Questionnaire and the teaching awards which several staff have obtained both from the University and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Teaching processes are overseen by the Department Teaching and Learning Committee.

The Department is deeply involved in assisting students to gain international, community and work-related experiences during their studies. The University’s Participation and Community Engagement (PACE) program includes a variety of opportunities in local, regional and international contexts and connections to partner organisations provide students with a link to the professional workplace. The program includes but is not limited to internships, mentoring and research projects. In addition, the Department developed an internship program to support the introduction of the PACE initiative in 2009. There has been an increase in the number of internships undertaken by students in the Department. While the aim of all students completing an internship is unrealistic,
the expected growth of these internships will necessitate an increase in the number of professional staff employed to administer this program and partnerships, with the academic director of the internships program to then focus on the academic component of the program.

There are a large number of postgraduate units being taught by sessional staff and the Department and cluster leaders should examine the ways in which the teaching in the postgraduate programs can be integrated into the Department in order to reduce the reliance on adjunct and sessional staff. The Department and Faculty should investigate ways in which to grow the number of students in the postgraduate programs, with particular attention paid to increasing the number of Australian students so that courses include both international and Australian students. Furthermore, the current practice of employing large numbers of adjunct and sessional staff to teach is unsustainable and only a short-term solution to an on-going problem of increasing class sizes. The Department should consider some combination of the following: hiring more on-going staff, particularly between levels A and C; considering the mix of teaching, research and service in staff profiles, as well as elevating the recognition of a teaching-focused career path (i.e. workforce specialisation); and reviewing the number of units offered, especially marketing units at postgraduate level. There are a large number of courses at the postgraduate level which do not appear to be warranted given the current student numbers and these should be reduced. Condensing these offerings around a specialist Master of Marketing could be more beneficial.

The future maintenance of the clusters of Demography and International Business (IB) needs to be considered. To make them viable clusters they need, in the case of Demography, to attract adequate student numbers and, in the case of IB, need additional staff. Furthermore, the Panel was surprised that the Department of Marketing and Management did not have specialist management staff. An option is to introduce a third cluster into the Department, comprising Demography, IB and Management (would need to recruit specialist Management academics) which would ensure the cluster is of sufficient size. The Department needs to make decisions about whether to address these issues as soon as possible.

The Department has seen a large increase in student numbers in undergraduate courses with some huge class sizes. This has resulted in large student-to-staff ratios which the Department needs to address. Serious consideration should be given to the capacity the Department has to handle further increases in student numbers, with the possibility of capping undergraduate student numbers.

There are a large number of double badged degrees. There is also scope to simplify program offerings especially at postgraduate level. Double badged degrees should be reduced where possible and not expanded.

The Department introduced a new Public Sector Management major to the Bachelor of Commerce in 2012. The units which make up the Public Sector Management major are not distinctive or unique to the major. The major, therefore, should be reviewed and 3-4
new specialist public sector management units added if the major is to be continued. The Panel felt the HR major in the Bachelor of Commerce was a balanced offering but would benefit from the addition of one or two electives, would provide students with greater choice in their studies.

5.3. Research

There has been a significant and quite phenomenal transformation in the research culture of the Department over a relatively short period of time. This move to quality, not quantity, and the emphasis on academic journals and research grants is to be commended. This new research culture is to be applauded and supported. The increase in research output has been accompanied by the development of a research environment, which is both collaborative and collegial. These developments in the research culture of the Department are highly commendable. The Research Incentive Scheme (RIS) has helped drive this change and has been welcomed by some staff. However, the issue of the timeframe within which the funds received under the RIS have to be used should be investigated and communicated to staff, with consideration given to the realities of research, which often require funds to be built up so that they can be used strategically for research development.

The creation of the Centre for Workforce Futures as a focus for research has the potential to further assist the promotion of a research culture in the Department. The Centre for Workforce Futures is a potentially exciting initiative, albeit in its early days. To be effective and successful, the WFC needs to be well supported. It needs to develop and clarify its objectives and goals with specified KPIs and this needs to be supported by an appropriate business model. Appropriate and sufficient administrative support must be provided. The relationship with the Department needs to be clarified. Finally, an initial investment in a research centre needs to have a guaranteed long-term commitment from the Faculty in order to reach its goals.

The China Business Research Network is a positive and interesting collaborative initiative from staff in the Department which brings together researchers from different clusters who undertake research on China. Its loose, collaborative structure is appropriate at this stage, but it is recommended that the staff and Department consider its structure and develop a business model structure, including goals and reporting KPIs.

The changes in research culture in the past two years have established a base from which to further develop the research culture and to focus on future strategies with an emphasis on quality outputs. The Department should develop a detailed Research Strategy for the next five years, which emphasises outputs including KPIs and embeds the steps needed to achieve this. It will need to include support for these research objectives from the Faculty. Strategies for ‘growing’ staff from internal to external and national competitive grants should be embedded in a five year Department Research Plan with the professorial staff playing a major role in these processes.
Future staff appointments need to consider the research strengths, strategies and goals of the Department as part of the criteria for appointment. The measurement of staff research outputs, and their capacity to engage in research and develop towards larger research projects, needs to take into consideration their overall workload, especially the amount of teaching and administration undertaken.

The Panel commends the Marketing cluster’s publications in A-ranked journals (for example *EJM, IMM, IMR, JMM, P&M*). The Panel recommends that the cluster continue on this current promising path, taking particular notice of journal rankings and aim to publish the majority of their articles in A-ranked marketing journals.

The Panel acknowledges how difficult it is to get a marketing ARC grant. In addition to ARC, category 3 grants have huge potential (industry grants), and it is recommended that the cluster consider applications for these as well as ARC grants.

There is a lack of clarity about the admission criteria for PhD students and the process for admission, including the role of the Department. This process should be reviewed and clarified and the Department should be given the final say on who is admitted, taking into consideration the capacity of staff to supervise and the disciplinary areas of expertise. Consideration needs to be given to the maximum numbers of students which the Department staff can supervise. The recent growth in numbers is good, but future planning around Department goals and staff capacity is needed. HDR completions are low and a detailed investigation of this needs to be undertaken so that the particular issues responsible for non-completion can be uncovered and then strategies to address these put in place.

There were a small number of examples of Early Career Researchers (ECR) acting as principal supervisors and responsible for three or more students. The Department should maintain its system of a minimum of two supervisors per HDR student, with senior staff (i.e. those with successful completions) mentoring ECR staff in the art of supervision.

The Panel notes that the Faculty has a preferred PhD thesis model of PhD by publication and that this model involves a number of risks for the Department and Faculty. The majority (or possibly all) of the staff in the Department have traditional PhDs by dissertation and therefore are not trained in the publication model and how to guide a student through this process, and some are very concerned about this. The Panel is also concerned about the risk to reputation and the risks in terms of future academic employment for its PhD graduates. It is recommended that the Department and Faculty review the place and appropriateness of the PhD by publication model. The role of HDR Coordinator lacks clarity and the Department should review the role, responsibilities and reporting lines of this position.
5.4. Staff and Student Profile

It is highly commended that all but two staff have PhDs. This is a marked turn-around from several years ago and is another remarkable achievement. Appointment of staff with PhDs has added to the research focus, culture and profile of the Department. Staff have obtained PhDs from a good cross-section of quality Australian and international universities, providing the Department with solid and diverse “intellectual capital”. The appointment of three professorial staff to the Department since 2010 is to be commended as these staff provide leadership in the disciplines, teaching, scholarship and research. Staff are very enthusiastic and passionate about teaching, with evidence that they are doing a good job, even in the difficult circumstances of large class sizes and too much bureaucracy. Given the extremely large class sizes and the number of repeat lectures that have to be held in quite a number of undergraduate courses, the appointment of two teaching assistants who deal with the administration of several large courses, is a great initiative. Further, the workload model and process for teaching allocation has been well received by staff. The Department, however, is still seriously understaffed in terms of full-time academics and an unacceptable student-staff ratio at 65:1 plus, which is not commensurate with similar universities. A number of steps need to be taken to address this, including an increase in the number of on-going staff in order to reduce the student-staff ratio and to provide more permanent staff in front of the students and to supervise theses. These staff need to cover a range of levels but more at level B and C are needed to expand the department and cover teaching.

There appears to be a problem with uneven administrative loads largely because of the disparity in class sizes. One of the issues which arose is getting access through timetabling to the large lecture theatres and lack of access to these means more repeat deliveries, increasing the workload for the Department and staff. The use of two teaching assistants has been successful and the appointment of at least two additional teaching assistants should be investigated in order to assist academic staff with the running of very large classes. An additional staff category of senior or lead tutors is recommended as these staff can tutor in a course and take on more administration and management functions of students and other tutors and a significant amount of student consultation. Senior Tutors with other tutors reporting to them can help in course preparation, and issues related to marking and consultation.

Academics appear to undertake a wide range of administration and consideration should be given to relieving them of administrative tasks that could be better performed by professional administration staff.

The Department has several disciplinary clusters and in some of these there is significant imbalance. In the HR/Organisation studies cluster, one of the senior staff are currently in senior Faculty management roles, which leaves it with a limited leadership capacity in the Department. Some of the staff are ECRs and less experienced staff. The Department therefore needs strategies to grow research and other capabilities among this group. The small group of demography staff are strong on research, but strategies need to be put in place to enhance collaboration and integration among them. In terms
of International Business (IB), consideration needs to be given to the future placement of this speciality. While IB is an important speciality in many business schools, it currently only has two staff members with another due to join the Department in 2012. Given that this is a major in the undergraduate degree and there is a Master of IB, this raises significant concerns. This ‘cluster’ needs to be considered and a strategic direction developed and then provided with staffing as appropriate to the decisions and direction that is taken.

Given the very high number of adjunct/sessional/casual teaching staff, there is a need to provide them with adequate desk/computer space to do their work and meet students. If it is possible to have this space incorporated with on-going staff this promotes integration of staff, and possible development of temporary staff as a potential pool for future staff appointments.

Adjunct/sessional/casual teaching staff are responsible for a large number of courses. This is a concern for quality control and is a danger given that the Faculty is seeking AACSB accreditation with its associated requirements for a large group of on-going staff delivering the teaching. In order to be ready for the AACSB accreditation visit in 2015, it is recommended that a review of the level of permanent staffing be undertaken immediately and a recruitment plan for additional academic staff be created.

5.5. Community Engagement

The Department and its staff are undertaking a great deal of good community engagement. This includes the institution of an External Advisory Board which includes representatives from public, private and not-for-profit sectors. This Board has contributed to discussion and ideas on curriculum development, student work experience and accreditation. It assists the Department in identifying emerging areas in both teaching and research. Internships have enhanced the Department’s outreach into the community with students working in local businesses and organisations. As noted, the Department’s teaching programs have accreditation with AHRI and AMI and several staff are active in these and other professional associations.

Recent initiatives include the City of Ryde Council collaborative work, which has major potential benefits. The Department and the CFWF should continue the community outreach and look to industries in the local area in particular, as Macquarie University has a unique location virtually within a major technology/business hub.

5.6. Future Directions

The Department, under the guidance of the HoD, have made many changes in the past two years to align itself with the goals of the University and the Faculty. The Department has come an extremely long way in two short years from a teaching focus, and has undergone a cultural transformation towards a much stronger research emphasis. These changes have focused on operational activities and the Department is to be commended on the many systems that are now in place. In
addition, the cohesiveness within the Department, despite disciplinary differences, is noteworthy. This is a remarkable achievement in a short time.

Given this amount of change in a short period of time, the Department needs a ‘rest’ from change so that it can consolidate these changes and not become fatigued by change. We recommend that 2012 is a time of consolidation and planning for future developments (to avoid ‘change fatigue’)

The Department now needs to develop strategic priorities which will direct future decisions (courses/staff/resource allocations). It needs to move from an operational focus to a strategic one which includes being outward as well as inward looking.

There is currently a distinct lack of medium to longer-term aspirations and goals. To remedy this there are a number of possible courses of action. One is benchmarking against other departments and it is recommended that this be undertaken. Another is the consideration of the various ranking and rating exercises and the links with these in the achievement of goals. An interdisciplinary focus is good and has a role. Reputation, however, comes from publishing in high quality journals within established disciplines. True interdisciplinary synergy is contingent on strong disciplinary foundations. As part of this process of developing strategic goals, the Department needs to consider in particular in which specific areas they want to develop a global reputation.

END OF REPORT