The Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), continues to conduct reviews of significant aspects of the higher education sector. The broad direction of these reviews is an increasing emphasis on competitive funding. Details of some of the current projects are provided below.

It is clear that the sector will move towards a greater prevalence of “tied” grants based on competitive applications and a decreasing proportion of Government funding. The Federal Labor opposition has previously indicated that it would consider rolling back many of the Nelson reforms. However, Ms Jenny Macklin, Labor education spokeswoman, recently indicated that “The Labor Party recognises that the fee-help loans scheme is important for eligible private higher education providers, and Labor would maintain their access to the scheme in government.” (Australian Financial Review, 19 September 2005) This demonstrates a change in policy and provides an indication that the embedding of sectoral reform is unlikely to be reversed with a change in Federal Government.

**Research Quality Framework**

The Research Quality Framework (RQF) stemmed from the recognition that there is no consistent approach to the measurement of the quality and the impact of publicly funded research and thus no assurance that public funds are being invested in high quality research providing public benefit.

DEST has released the details of its Preferred Model for assessing research quality and impact within a Research Quality Framework (RQF). This has been developed by an expert group chaired by Professor Gareth Roberts from England and the subject of extensive consultation.

The model adopts the ‘Frascati definition’ of research and proposes that knowledge diffusion and transfer is not included, but could benefit from a separate ‘Third Stream’ of funding. Features of the Preferred Model include:

- Funding will go to universities and publicly funded research agencies on the same basis, but in two different ‘pools’;
- Assessments of research will be related to both quality and impact;
- Institutions can select those researchers to be assessed under the RQF and provide ‘evidence portfolios’ for each of them; and
- Research groupings will be assessed and may include cross-disciplinary teams.

Twelve assessment panels (with approximately 50% international members) will look at subject groups and develop ways of assessing cross-disciplinary research in that area.

The RQF would adopt rating scales “which are sensitive to discipline differences”. A five point scale is proposed for quality and a three point scale for impact. All funding would go to institutions in a block grant, allowing institutions to determine internal allocation.
Following completion of the consultation phase in 2005, the model will be refined in 2006 with the aim of introducing the RQF in 2007 and publishing the results in 2008.

Third Mission Funding

Universities encompass three fundamental missions - teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The so called "Third Mission" of community engagement is defined as "the generation, use, application and exploitation of knowledge and other university capabilities outside academic environments" (Science and Technology Policy Research Unit, 2005). The Third Mission is focused on community and public engagement with the transfer of knowledge including both commercial and non-commercial components.

Societal expectations of Universities have changed significantly in recent years and this is reflected in the range activities being considered within Third Mission discussions. These include:

- Demand for University knowledge services,
- Increased economic growth through innovation,
- Opportunities for life-long learning (short courses, extension),
- Cultural activities,
- Community outreach by academic staff (lectures, presentations),
- Information services, and
- Community-based research (grants, projects, publications).

Universities are currently funded for teaching and research but there is no direct funding under the current regime for the third mission of community engagement. Given the scope of engagement with and service provision for the community indicated above, there is growing support for the introduction of Third Stream funding in Australia. Such funding already exists in the UK and provides reward to universities engaged in knowledge exchange with communities that better enables Universities to maintain these activities in the face of economic restraint.

Areas under consideration for third mission funding may include but not be limited to technology commercialization; entrepreneurial activities; commercialization and use of university facilities; flow of academic staff, scientists and technicians; non-academic collaboration in academic research; and non-academic dissemination. Such funding may be based on performance measures, in a similar manner to the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund, or provided as a competitive pool of funds.

I presented on Third Mission Funding to the AVCC meeting on 28th August 2005 and have been appointed to the AVCC Working Party on Engagement to develop a position paper on this topic.

Workplace Relations - Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements

Murdoch University is still pursuing the implications of the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements (HEWRRs) on policies, practices and procedures to ensure compliance with all requirements by 30 November 2005. A key activity is to offer Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) to all new staff that have joined the University since 29th April 2005.

Murdoch is of the view that there is not a significant amount of change anticipated in policy. Predominantly change that occurs will be about custom and practice for example the University engaging staff directly in consultation rather than through the union. Recommendations have also been made in changing the practices of union specific membership on committees.
Murdoch continues to monitor all media and guidelines coming from the Federal Government to assist in building our position of compliance.

**Workplace Relations - Workplace Productivity Programme**
The growth in revenue from new places gained in 2005 through to 2007 has provided Murdoch with a financial buffer which has lessened the short term impact of the tightening of funding across the higher education sector. Murdoch management continue to develop strategies to improve efficiencies and productivity in the administration, academic and research areas of the university.

As part of the federal government reform programme *Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future* the Australian Government has announced the introduction of a new Workplace Productivity Programme (WPP) to commence in 2006. The aim of WPP is to encourage higher education institutions to further progress workplace reform. The total funding available for the WPP is $83 million from 2006 to 2008. This programme is separate to the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements (HEWRRs).

The WPP recognises that the key to Australia’s economic prosperity is in creating efficient, flexible and innovative enterprises which are able to compete effectively. Funds allocated under the programme need to be spent on initiatives which foster workplace reforms, funding priorities for the programme could include:

- Review or reform of management, financial and human resource practices and delivery of disciplines to improve productivity and performance;
- Management development to improve productivity and performance through strengthened management, leadership and governance capability, and to assist the implementation of flexible working relationships;
- Financial development to assist governance capability;
- Professional development to improve productivity and performance through strengthened management, leadership and governance capability; or
- Systems development to enhance and improve flexible working relationships, direct relationships with employees, and productivity and performance.

Management are developing appropriate strategies for efficiencies and productivity gains that fall within guidelines that can be prioritised in the reform program. These strategies are being considered regardless of the status of merger discussions and may include joint submission with Curtin University of Technology on some of these processes. It is important to note that these process improvements will need to go ahead whether we are successful in gaining funding or not. There will be a significant impact on the way the University has operated, with strategic improvements be needed to achieve efficiencies.

**HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT**

The *Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No.4) Bill 2005* was introduced to the House of Representatives on 14th September 2005 by the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training. This is a Bill for an Act to amend the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* and for related purposes.

The amendments in the Bill will enable high quality foreign universities and education providers to be listed as higher education providers, these providers will be the Australian branches of foreign universities

Potential providers under this Bill will have to apply to establish an Australian branch and operate as a university under Protocol 2 of the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval*
Processes. This is approved by an authorised accreditation authority as listed in the Australian Qualifications Framework Register.

The amendments will also extend Australian Government assistance under the loan schemes such that eligible students of such providers will be able to obtain assistance through the FEE-HELP and OS-HELP loan programs, although they will not be eligible for HECS-HELP.

These providers will not have access to direct Government funding such as the Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS), research funding and other grants unless they specifically receive an allocation of national priority places.

The Bill lists Carnegie Mellon University as the first such provider proposing to establish a branch in Adelaide. They will have the first intake of students in March 2006. They will be offering postgraduate courses in public policy/management and information technology, estimations are that they will attract 50 domestic students in the first year and up to 200 domestic students by 2009.

SENATE PRIORITIES 2005

At its meeting on 24th May 2005, Senate resolved to adopt four priorities for 2005. A report on each is provided below.

(i) Maximising the University’s return on its assets, e.g. land, intellectual property by establishing an appropriate endowment/investment policy (Responsibility: Resources Committee and PVC (Corporate)).

The University has been undertaking a review and investigation on all its relationships and financial agreements with external parties that operate on the campus using premises, facilities or intellectual property. This has revealed many and varied inconsistent (and uncommercial) arrangements across the campus. Control of this activity has now been vested with Corporate Services and Legal and Governance who now vet arrangements both for commercial and legal purposes. As an example the recent agreement with Sandalink Pty Ltd (a research group into cloning hard wood trees) has been converted form a giveaway of use of University land on the promise of future research prospects to a commercial arrangement still with the prospects of future research. Further work to convert other arrangements to a more sound commercial footing is progressing.

Development of overriding investment criteria and investment policy is still to be resolved. We are currently considering the appropriateness and affordability of quarantining the net proceeds from St Ives Stages 1 – 5 ($10 million) as an endowment investment. This requires further consideration.

(ii) Engagement with external parties and the community, i.e. the extent to which members of Senate can support and promote the University through their external contacts and networks (Responsibility: Director of Development and Director Corporate & Public Relations)

Murdoch University Senators can provide valuable introductions and links to key corporates that support the work of the Murdoch University Foundation, the Office of Development and the Office of Corporate Communication and Public Relations (CCPR).

To date this has included:
  • Senator Terry Budge being appointed a Trustee of the Murdoch University Foundation to assist with governance and corporate programs.
• Individual Senate members assisting in identifying, inviting and hosting key corporate contacts at internal and external events including the Murdoch sponsored Leadership Matters series and launches of fundraising programs including the International Theologian Campaign.

• Individual Senate members have assisted with grant applications and advised on corporate sponsorship proposals and high level contacts.

• Individual senators have identified prospects and assisted in securing new prizes and scholarships as part of the 2005 30 Prizes and Scholarships Campaign.

• All Senate members are sent formal invitations to attend all official University events, both internal and external to the University, including our regional campuses. An extension of this initiative has seen various Senate members and their respective partners invited and asked to participate in the actual event

• Senate Members have been asked to identify appropriate public relations and sponsorships opportunity that their companies are undertaking that could involve the University.

• Copies of the University’s three official publications – On Campus, Synergy and In Touch – are now sent to all Senate members as they are published. Some Senate members have requested several copies of these publications to be sent to their respective companies.

• CCPR have collaborated with various Senate members whose company initiatives have linked to that of the CCPR Office Plan and the University Strategic Plan for the purposes of Public Relations activity. For example in May 2005, The Law Society of W.A., Murdoch University and UWA held the inaugural Indigenous Law Mentoring Programme network event for the students and staff involved in this initiative. Support was both operational and financial.

• CCPR have developed lines of communication to various Senate members with regard to communicating relevant articles and stories for use in their respective company publications.

The Office of Development has purchased and is implementing a new fundraising and relationship management database and over the next 12 months will focus on collecting information on the University’s connections with individuals and corporates including existing and prospective donors, sponsors and partners. Senators will be asked to assist with this process by responding to a list of target individuals and corporates and identifying any links they have that may strengthen or initiate the relationships. Senators will then be asked to assist in hosting and attending a series of events throughout 2006 involving the identified individuals and corporates.

CCPR, the Office of Development and Mr Don Smart are working in collaboration to establish the ‘Banksia Association’. Senators will also be asked to assist with the establishment of the ‘Banksia Association’ which will consist of past lay Senate members, honorary Degree holders and Emeritus Professors. The ‘Banksia Association’ will drive a yearly events calendar for these people. This group of some 200 individuals includes some very high profile people that the University wishes to maintain and strengthen links with on a long term basis.

(iii) Identification of long-term goals for the University, including understanding the changing nature of higher education policy (Responsibility: PVC (Corporate) and PVC (Strategy)).

Management has undertaken a 10 year operating surplus/deficit and cash forecast that recognises the changing nature of Higher Education policies and the implications on the University financial performance. This activity has been incorporated into the Merger Feasibility Study Joint Working Group with a variety of analysis and changing trends factored
into the forecast. Analysis will be coming out as part of the proposed merger feasibility process. If the proposed merger does not proceed then strategies to deal with changes in policies will be developed further on a stand alone basis in the coming months.

(iv) Maintain the University’s compliance with the National Governance Protocols
(Responsibility: Governance & Nominations Committee and General Counsel & University Secretary).

On 31/08/2005 the General Counsel & University Secretary sent a draft compliance certificate and supporting documentation to DEST for review and comment. On 06/09/2005 DEST confirmed that (on the basis of the draft) the University will be fully compliant with the National Governance Protocols. On 05/10/2005 the Chancellor signed the final version of the certification statement. It will be despatched to DEST well in advance of the 14/10/2005 deadline.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Elizabeth Hamilton, a member of the Law School’s Foundation LLB class, was formally welcomed as a Magistrate at a ceremony at the Magistrates Court in Perth on 12th August 2005. I understand that she is the Murdoch Law graduate to have been appointed to judicial office. Ms Hamilton was a mature age student who graduated with an LLB from Murdoch in 1993. She has worked as a lawyer with the Aboriginal Legal Service and the Legal Aid Commission, most recently in Kalgoorlie. Later this year she will become the resident magistrate in Albany.

- Associate Professor David Macey, the Director of the Prospective Students’ & Admissions Centre, has been nominated as the AVCC representative on the National Credit Transfer and Articulation Data Working Group to be established by the Joint Committee on Higher Education, operating under MCEETYA, to assist in a national study of credit transfer and articulation arrangements. The study will look at current strengths and weaknesses in the system and barriers to further improvements, taking account of variations in current models of credit transfer. The Working Group will be established to improve existing data sets and definitions of articulation and credit transfer.

- The Australian Computer Society (ACS) has accredited a range of undergraduate courses and graduate diplomas in information technology through to the end of 2009. The Accreditation Board Panel commended the University on implementation of graduate attribute mapping at the unit level and expressed its appreciation of the preparatory work undertaken in the University’s application and the hospitality shown to Panels members on their visits to the University.

- Murdoch’s Politics and International Studies was reported to outperform the majority of politics departments in Australia and New Zealand in an article published in the Australian Journal of Political Science (Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 425-434) in September 2005. The authors of the article, Tony Dale of Canterbury University and Shaun Goldfinch of Otago University, surveyed 27 Political Science departments in Australasia for the period 1995-2002 and concluded that UWA and Murdoch ‘are consistently good performers on citations per article, citations per staff member and article productivity’ (p. 431). For Citations per article and citations per staff member Murdoch was ranked fourth, for articles per staff member Murdoch was ranked third.

- Murdoch has negotiated with Blake Dawson Waldron to allow use of the compliance training guide/booklet ‘What you need to know about anti-competitive conduct and unfair
practices’ developed and published by the Office of Legal and Governance. This will assist in their development of an online training course to address Trade Practices compliance in the university environment. In return for the intellectual property Murdoch University will be granted a two year licence for a 100 users to use the online training system. John Pease is to be congratulated for his efforts in developing the booklet.

- The Mandurah City Council recently approved three university scholarships a year for residents (as reported in the Mandurah Costal Times on 28th September 2005). These will assist students completing either a Bachelor of Commerce or a Bachelor of Science at the Peel Campus. This serves to further strengthen the links between Mandurah and Murdoch University.

- Alcoa World Alumina Australia has agreed to establish a suite of new undergraduate scholarships in Professional Accounting, with three of these for the Peel Campus to encourage local students to attend the new campus. These scholarships will be offered in 2006 and be available to first, second and third year students. They will have a value of $1,000 per student per annum for the balance of their degree, subject to progress. In addition, Alcoa will establish eight new scholarships of $15,000 each for the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Experience (PEP) in 2006, four for each semester intake.

  Alcoa will also make available vacation work placement opportunities for scholarship holders, potentially leading to careers in Alcoa.

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**NOTABLE EVENTS**

- The Division of Science and Engineering held a public lecture on 17th August 2005 for National Science Week 2005 on the topic of *CSI: Salvaging and Identifying Coin Treasure from Shipwrecks*. Professor Walter Bloom, Program Chair in Mathematics and Statistics and Numismatist (coin expert) at the Western Australian Museum delivered the lecture.

- Mr Ian Callahan, Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Services), Professor Kateryna Longley, Pro Vice Chancellor (Regional Development), Mr Craig Spence, Director, Commercial Services, and I met with The Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLA, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on 24th August 2005. We discussed the current proposal for a Chair in Local Governance and the MasterPlan for the South Street Campus.

- The former Captain of the Australian Swim Team and Olympic gold medallist, Mr Todd Pearson, opened the Chiropractic Clinic in a ceremony held on 2nd September 2005. The Clinic is open six days per week and is fully equipped with consulting rooms, rehabilitation equipment and WA’s first digital X-ray machine for Chiropractic assessment. It will provide comprehensive chiropractic care for the local community while giving students clinical experience in chiropractic evaluations and assessments, treatments and teaching rehabilitation to patients, all under the direct supervision of Government registered chiropractors.

- The Hon John Kobelke, MLA, Minister assisting the Minister for Water Resources launched the new publication ‘Water Auditing and Water Conservation’ written by Dr Jeff Sturman, Professor Goen Ho and Dr Kuruvilla Mathew. The launch was held at the Environmental Technology Centre at Murdoch University on 7th September 2005. The book will be made available around the world by the London-based publishers, it is a collection of the staff’s lectures, as well as other supporting material, from their classes in water auditing. Water auditing is a way to quantify water flows and quality with the aim of reducing water usage & saving money on otherwise unnecessary water use. Improving water use efficiency in all water-use sectors is one of the main objectives of the State Water Strategy that the Gallop Government launched two and a half years ago.
• Murdoch University hosted a Labor Business Roundtable Members Forum on 8th September 2005. The Hon Kim Chance MLC, Minister for Agriculture attended, I hosted the lunch with Professor Andris Stelbovics, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), Mr Timothy Morrison, Director Research and Development, Professor Nick Costa, Chair in Sustainable Agriculture and Mr Ian Callahan, Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Services) also in attendance.

• The annual Sir Walter Murdoch Lecture was held on 8th September 2005. His Excellency Dr Hans Sondaal, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Australia presented the lecture titled ‘Diplomacy in the 21st Century: dinosaur or vital force?’ exploring the issue of whether diplomacy will survive the challenges of the 21st Century with globalisation, information technology, terrorism and inter-relations between domestic and foreign policy all threatening the way diplomacy is used.

• Her Excellency Pengiran Datin Masrainah Ahmad, High Commissioner for Brunei Darussalam visited Murdoch University on 15th September 2005. Professor Gary Martin, Pro Vice Chancellor (Strategy), Mr Brett Blacker, Director, Murdoch International and I met with Her Excellency. A morning tea was held where we introduced Ms Kate Sherriff-Smith, Associate Director, Murdoch International and Mr Shehan Thampapillai, Development and Promotions Manager from Murdoch International.

• Murdoch University’s Multicultural and Anti-racism Week festival was held from 12th to 18th September 2005. During the week a series of multicultural initiatives were organised by both Murdoch University and the Guild of Students aimed at bringing about cultural change. The week’s celebrations were opened with an Anti-racism public lecture entitled ‘Difficult Dialogues: Let’s Talk About Race’ on 12th September 2005. The keynote speakers were the Hon Tony McRae (MLA), Member for Riverton and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agricultural and Forestry, the Midwest and Wheatbelt, and Ms Colleen Hayward, Manager, Kulunga Research Network.

• Murdoch University co-sponsored the Tertiary Science Educators Forum with the Curriculum Council of Western Australia held on 20th September 2005. I gave the opening address followed by a discussion session chaired by Associate Professor Ken Harrison, School of Engineering Science on the topic of ‘Science Courses of Study’. Guest Speakers included Mr Mark Brown, Director of Curriculum at the Curriculum Council, Mr Robert Loss from Curtin University, Mr John Clarke, Head of Science at Penrhos College, and Associate Professor David Macey, Director of the Prospective Students and Admissions Centre.

• To commemorate the founding of Murdoch University in 1975 the library is creating a series of displays in second semester 2005 which reflect the 30 years of collecting at Murdoch University. Key works for every year of 1975 to 2005 in specific subject areas will be displayed. In September the South Street Campus Library housed a small display to celebrate the life and work of Sir Ronald Wilson.

• To celebrate the anniversary of Sir Walter Murdoch’s birth date and the 30th Anniversary of Murdoch University, a historical journey of Sir Walter Murdoch’s life was displayed in the South Street Campus Library. This included Sir Walter Murdoch’s personal library collection, his medals and some personal items, many of these have been gifted or loaned by his family. This display was launched by the Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton, on 16 September 2005.

• In September the newly refurbished main Art Gallery on level 4 of the South Street Campus Library hosted the 30/30 Vision display established to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Murdoch University Art Collection. A smaller exhibition space has also been established on Level 3 South Wing Foyer of the Library. In September this displayed significant works from our Indigenous Art Collection. This will be the first of a regular series of curated exhibitions to showcase the University’s collection of Artworks.
• The Vice Chancellor’s Recognition of Service Awards was held on the 15th September 2005. A certificate and commemorative lapel pin was presented to 17 recipients with service periods ranging from 10 to 30 years.

• I gave the opening address to the 2005 Tertiary Education Management Conference on 28th September 2005. This was a joint conference of the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) and the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association. It is the first time in eight years the Conference has been held in Perth and was attended by over 500 delegates from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

• Murdoch University hosted the Australian American Fulbright Scholarship interviews on 30th September 2005. Ms Robin McClellan US Consul General to Perth was in attendance. Murdoch University administers the Fulbright scheme in Perth.

• Mr Govindan Nair, lead Economist at the World Bank Institute, presented the 2005 Alexander Education Group Seminar Series titled ‘Global Economics: How are you affected?’ Murdoch University staff and students attended the seminar, strengthening our ties with the Group.

FOR NOTING

EMail Communication Policy
A new policy for the management of e-mail communications as official University records has been developed by the Office of Legal and Governance. A bulletin was send to all staff advising them of their responsibilities.

Occupational Safety and Health – On-line Accident, Incident and Hazard Reporting System
The Office of Human Resources recently launched a new on-line accident, incident and hazard reporting system replacing the paper based system. This enhances the University’s capability to respond to accidents and incidents in the workplace as well as collate statistical data to assess trends and therefore, plan around safety matters. This reporting system can be accessed from any location locally, nationally or internationally. Where someone can not access a computer paper based reports can be submitted.