



**Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association Inc.  
Adelaide University Overseas Students' Association**

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To: Higher Education Review Secretariat

From: Anthony Long

Subject: Submission regarding *Varieties of Excellence: Diversity, Specialisation and Regional Engagement*

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This submission has been produced by Anthony Long, Research Officer/Office Coordinator of the Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) and Overseas Students' Association (OSA). It is authorised by Helen Kavanagh, President of the PGSA, and Victor Otieno Asoyo, President of the OSA. It is the official submission from the PGSA and the OSA to the Ministerial Discussion Paper *Varieties of Excellence: Diversity, Specialisation and Regional Engagement* that was published in June 2002.

This submission is not confidential, and may be placed on the DEST web site.

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## Executive Summary

The PGSA and the OSA both support the theory of university diversification, but note that such proposals have been on Governmental agendas since the mid-1980s, and have brought little positive change.

Both organisations express concerns about the following issues:

- The creation of one or two ‘world class’ institutions (p.4). Such a strategy threatens not only the quality and reputation of other institutions not included in such a proposal, but there is also no guarantee that such a strategy will even be successful. A far better prospect would be to encourage universities to engage in collaborative research and teaching – both in similar areas as well as in interdisciplinary efforts;
- Any move to encourage discipline specialisation at individual universities (p.5). This proposal risks limiting diversity, rather than encouraging it, as defining research priorities encourages specialisation in a narrow range of fields, rather than promoting diversification. Similarly, institutional specialisation in function, whether undergraduate or research-intensive, threatens not only to limit study options, it also endangers the defined purpose of a university;
- The rationalisation of courses that are offered by most Australian universities (p.7). Rather than being simple duplication, the proliferation of popular courses demonstrates student demand for them, and they should therefore be encouraged, rather than be rationalised if enrolments can be sustained;
- Research and scholarship that has no commercial value (‘basic’ research) must not be marginalised (p.7). Australia leads the world in fields that have no commercial value and have not been designated priority areas; such disciplines must be protected in an increasingly competitive environment;
- Involvement of industry and research in the Australian higher education system (p.8). Whilst the idea in principle is commendable, the implementation of any such proposal must be monitored carefully. There exists considerable danger that the academic integrity and independence of universities will be damaged by the exchange of sponsorship money for proprietary knowledge and teaching. There are many relevant examples available; the one included in the current report (p.9) involves one industry partner whose influence and predatory business practices have already hurt academic integrity at one university. In addition, fields that have no commercial interest will fall further behind, as they will not be able to attract external funding.

The PGSA and OSA offer their support for the following issues:

- The establishment of liberal arts components for all bachelor degrees (p.6). This proposal should be introduced using existing university mechanisms, rather than through the establishment of undergraduate-only universities;
- Encouraging diversity through collaboration, rather than competition (p.6). Rather than remodelling the Australian higher education system on institutional specialisation principles, current academic and teaching units should be encouraged to collaborate with one another, rather than to compete for limited funding;

## Introduction

The Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) and the Adelaide University Overseas Students' Association (OSA) welcome the opportunity to discuss the many suggested changes to the Australian Higher Education sector. The PGSA is the peak body at the University of Adelaide that represents over 3000 postgraduate students, and the OSA is the peak body that represents over 1800 international students at the University of Adelaide. Both students groups are increasing in size and in complexity: it is not possible to categorise either postgraduate or international students using a basic demographic analysis. Therefore, any single change to the Higher Education Sector will affect elements of both international and postgraduate student populations; a comprehensive review and remodelling of the Higher Education Sector will affect ALL students, whether local or international, undergraduate or postgraduate.

Dr Nelson's foreword expresses the clear desire to follow the path of institutional specialisation, both for teaching and for research. Both the PGSA and OSA disagree strongly with this proposal, as it not only limits the course options for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, but it also will impact negatively on the research areas for research postgraduate students at particular universities. However, we do agree that it is not the job of the Government to dictate the role each individual university is to play in the future. Rather, the government must provide a framework that not only do the universities themselves agree is suitable to any future changes, but also must serve to improve the conditions in which academics, students and support staff work and study.

Peter Karmel points out that the desire to encourage diversity at Australian Higher Education Institutions has existed at least since the Dawkins reforms of 1987-8, and was furthered promoted by the Minister for Education in 1991.<sup>1</sup> However, as the current review attests, whilst the desire may have existed since this period, there has been little concrete evidence that any such diversity has resulted. Karmel also points that "diversity should be seen as a means of making higher education more effective, not simply as differentiation for its own sake. Its pursuit should involve engineering the education system and its programs so that a better fit of outcomes to objectives is produced".<sup>2</sup> **Any proposed reforms to the Higher Education Sector, whether in terms of diversity or other areas, must produce real benefits to the sector.**

## Diversity and Specialisation: Mutually Exclusive or Compatible?

The Higher Education Review has a worthy principle that it will pursue, namely the desire to allow for diversity in purpose, goals and organisational structure that allows for variety in course offerings, partnerships, student population and collaboration. The PGSA and OSA do express concerns about the diverse funding options that may be available to academic institutions, given the potential loss of academic freedom and exchange of ideas that may be a negative consequence of any such funding diversity. However, any changes that do not jeopardise these attributes of the Higher Education Sector must be considered.

There are two primary forms of specialisation that have been posited: firstly, a system that seeks to raise the standing of one or two Australian universities, so that they are ranked in the top 100 in the world; secondly, a system that encourages universities to specialise in a few specific areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Karmel, "Funding Mechanisms, Institutional Autonomy and Diversity," in V. Lynn Meek and Fiona Q. Wood (eds.), *Managing Higher Education Diversity in a Climate of Public Sector Reform*: 45.

<sup>2</sup> Karmel, "Funding Mechanisms, Institutional Autonomy and Diversity," 47.

## World leading universities and second class institutions?

The first system, whilst in itself an admirable idea, contains a number of areas of concern. Firstly, there is the issue of the effect such a strategy will have on the higher education institutions, which form the majority, that are not part of the effort to establish one or two world class universities. The Minister expresses clearly in his foreword to the discussion paper *Setting Firm Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education* that “[a] return to the days of full public funding of Australian universities will not occur”.<sup>3</sup> Given that such a strategy will require a limited number of institutions to receive a far greater level of funding – whether from public or private sources – other institutions will potentially face more serious funding issues than they already do currently. There is also the additional concern that all other universities will automatically become ‘second division’ institutions, with the one or two in the so-called ‘premier division’ attracting the best of all areas – including students, academics, and external funding. The majority of Australian universities face the risk of not ever being able to raise the quality of the teaching, research and graduates they produce, simply because they have been deemed to not be of the same standard of the leading couple of institutions – regardless of whether this is indeed the case or not.

A second area of concern is the proposal raised in the Ministerial Discussion Paper for adopting the principle of selective excellence. Whilst this proposal, in theory, may have much to offer, the PGSA and the OSA feel that caution must be exercised in its implementation. Any proposal to encourage only one or two universities to improve their standards substantially, so that they can be considered to be amongst the world’s top 100 universities is just one example of the application of this principle at the highest level – at the university-wide level. In the opinion of the PGSA and the OSA, this practice should not happen.

A third area concern is the method by which universities are ranked. The PGSA and OSA agree strongly with the view contained in Peter Karmel’s submission to the initial overview paper for the current review. He writes:

The notion of Australia’s having one or two of its universities in the top 100 universities in the world rests on the hazy and dubious concept of a “league table” of universities. What criteria are to be used for ordering the table? Will it be resources per staff member or per student? The distinction of its professors or its alumni? The quality of research results or publications? The number of patents or publications? Or will it be some broad concept of reputation? If so, who will judge?

The fact is that the reputations of places like Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard and Princeton have been built over long periods, are based on considerable wealth and depend on strengths in most disciplines. A number of Australian institutions have strengths and international reputations in particular areas and a few have significant reputations in a range of disciplines. The Australian National University, which has had special research funding since its inception, certainly has considerable strength in many areas. The Institute for Scientific Information provides data on international research impact based on citation rates for journal articles. Twenty-one fields of research are identified and the ANU ranks among the top 100 universities for total citations in the past ten years in ten of these fields. A handful of other Australian universities rank in one to nine fields.<sup>4</sup>

The PGSA and OSA are of the opinion that rather than favouring only a small number of institutions, the best strategy to pursue is encouraging collaboration between universities, relying on both the existing academic structures that exist, in addition to implementing others that are designed to further collaborative work. Any such collaboration strategies should be designed to address cooperation between both similar

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<sup>3</sup> Brandan Nelson, foreword to *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, July 2002), v.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Karmel, “Higher Education at the Crossroads – Submission 14,” June 11, 2002: 16.

bodies at different institutions, as well as interdisciplinary efforts. Rather than seeking to establish one or two institutions as being the leading Australian universities, the strategy should seek to further Australia's standing in the aspect that most matters, namely research and teaching itself.

## **Discipline specialisation – or discipline exclusivity?**

The second system is espoused currently by the Government's push for establishing a limited number of research priorities and the principle of selective excellence. The issues paper *Developing National Research Priorities*, which was released to further discussion in the setting of specific research priorities, highlights a number of areas that are factors that drive the need for setting priorities. These include:

- the growing pace of change and complexity in social and environmental areas;
- rapid technological change in established areas such as information and communications and technology (ICT) and biotechnology;
- the emergence of new technologies such as nanotechnology and novel materials;
- rapidly escalating costs of research facilities and programmes;
- global competition for research staff;
- the increasingly multidisciplinary nature of research programmes.<sup>5</sup>

In January 2002, the Minister for Education issued a press release in which he outlined the Government's decision to focus the Australian Research Council's (ARC) 2003 National Competitive Grants Programme on four specific areas, namely nano and bio-materials, genome/phenome Research, complex/intelligent systems and photon Science and technology.<sup>6</sup> 33% of the 2003 round of ARC grants is to be used for research in these areas, over a five-year period and at a total cost of up to \$170 million. By setting such specific goals, a clear message is being given to Universities to specialise in areas that will attract such lucrative funding grants. In other words, whilst Universities are being encouraged to specialise, they are being encouraged to specialise in only a limited number of fields.

Professors Joan Beaumont and Geoffrey Stokes of the Faculty of Arts at Deakin University confirm this view. In their submission regarding the framework for defining national research priorities, they wrote that:

The separation between the setting of research priorities for Science, Technology and Engineering, in 2002, and for Humanities and Social Sciences in 2003, is artificial and inimical to the achieving the high quality desired research outcomes. It has the potential to perpetuate an artificial division and to entrench the "two cultures". The capacity of the Humanities and Social Sciences to contribute to SET research priorities should be an integral part of the setting of priorities in mid 2002. The experience of the United States in the genome project confirms that this division is inappropriate.

[..]

As already stated, it is recognised in countries such as the United States that SET research priorities should not be set in such a way that they exclude or marginalise considerations of the social, political and ethical consequences of such research.<sup>7</sup>

The principle of selective excellence that the Ministerial Discussion Paper describes opens up the possibility that this scenario may indeed occur – either intentionally or unintentionally. Given the strong evidence present in the current series of Ministerial Discussion Papers that suggests that universities must

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<sup>5</sup> *Developing National Research Priorities. An Issues Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, May 2002)

<sup>6</sup> Brendan Nelson, "Backing Australia's Ability: Funding for Research Priorities Announced," media release, 29 January 2002, <[http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/nelson/jan02/n06\\_290102.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/nelson/jan02/n06_290102.htm)>.

<sup>7</sup> Joan Beaumont and Geoffrey Stokes, "National Research Priorities – Submission 21", June 21, 2002, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/priorities/sub/pdf21.pdf>>.

seek alternative forms of income to fund their endeavours, those areas that cannot attract such funding risk being marginalised. In the pursuit of increasingly important private funding, universities will inevitably specialise in those disciplines that have the best possibility in attracting such incomes.

These concerns relate to other forms of institutional specialisation. The Ministerial Discussion Paper also describes the concept of higher education institutions diversifying in the intrinsic nature of their existence. The proposal is made that Australian universities ought to be encouraged to specialise in specific education target groups. These would include undergraduate-only institutes, undergraduate and specialised postgraduate institutions, research-intensive institutes, specialised institutes and those that create a specialised international presence. In the opinion of the OSA and the PGSA, the establishment of undergraduate institutions is not a positive step. Whilst the suggestion is made in the current discussion paper that such institutions would not become ‘teaching-only’, but would also have educators who engage in research,<sup>8</sup> the current proposal does not make clear how this would work. If academics at such institutions are to be encouraged to excel in teaching, there exists the possibility that such universities would be frequently in direct competition for students with the nation’s institutes of technical and further education (TAFEs). Whilst there exists a need for teaching-only institutes, the PGSA and OSA do not believe that universities should be these institutions. Universities should retain their emphasis on encouraging research excellence, as the submission of Deakin University supports.<sup>9</sup>

The current discussion paper also suggests that there is the need for the segmentation of bachelor degree into liberal arts and specialised segments.<sup>10</sup> The PGSA and OSA offer their total support to this suggestion, and hopes that the Government will pursue its implementation. However, any such policy must be implemented within the current university structures, rather than through the establishment of undergraduate-only universities.

Clearly, an alternative method to establish actual diversity is required. However, this is not to say that areas of excellence should not be encouraged; rather, areas that are not necessarily “recognised by all Australians as areas of endeavour that will deliver the kind of future we want”<sup>11</sup> must also not be ignored. Australia is fortunate to have academics in fields that are amongst the best in their particular fields in the world, yet are not active in any of the suggested research priorities areas. Consequently, *any discussion of enhancing academic diversity must be linked closely with discussions about funding of the Higher Education Sector.*

## **Encouraging diversity – cooperation, not competition**

Karmel indicates that whilst there exists a significant level of duplication between higher education institutions, this need not be the case. Whilst acknowledging that such duplication may indeed be a problem with the fundamental structure of the Australian Higher Education Sector, Karmel points to the reduced emphasis in coordination of major academic developments as a contributing factor. He also hints at another possible solution, that being coordination between institutions:

There is another factor that can work against differentiation in spite of autonomy. It is the tendency for institutions to copy other (especially neighbouring) institutions. There is a number of examples of duplication of specialist programs unrelated to the demand for their products on the principle of ‘anything you can do, I can do better’. This tendency is exacerbated where there is keen competition among institutions, particularly for students. It is a force against diversity. The recent spread of law schools, MBA and PhD programs

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<sup>8</sup> *Varieties of Excellence*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Deakin University, submission 95, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Varieties of Excellence*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Peter McGauran, foreword to *Developing National Research Priorities. An Issues Paper*, 4.

illustrates this, as well as the multiplication of specifically named centres for research activities. In this situation some degree of central regulation may, perhaps surprisingly, be the best means of preserving a degree of diversity. Certainly, the consequences of the reduced emphasis on the coordination of major academic developments since 1987 tend to confirm this conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

It is this path that both the PGSA and the OSA see as being the most promising to encourage diversity in the Australian Higher Education Sector. Rather than recommending that higher education institutions should adopt markedly different focuses, the Federal Government should instead encourage collaboration between disciplines that share a similar research and teaching focus at different institutions. Indeed, universities should be encouraged to cooperate, rather than to compete – as the current funding structures inevitably cause. It is true that to date many disciplines have a poor record in encouraging academics to collaborate with their peers at other institutions, and that collaboration often occurs only as a consequence of personal effort. In this regard, the PGSA and the OSA support the suggestion to create national networks that would facilitate the collaboration of researchers across a number of institutions, rather than the need to encourage institutional specialisation. Evidence of such a strategy is offered by the teaching of languages at the University of Adelaide and the Flinders University of South Australia. Students are able to study languages offered at either institution as part of their degrees, and are also able to take classes at their home institutions, rather than having to travel to other institution.

## **Demand for courses – student or institution influenced?**

A proposition that has been repeated frequently during the current review is that demand should be an important deciding factor in what courses are offered at Australian universities. The Overview Paper *Higher Education at the Crossroads* highlights what the Government perceives as being an important challenge facing the Australian Higher Education Sector, that being the imbalance between popular courses with high enrolments and those that do not attract as many students. The suggestion is made that universities need to take such concerns into consideration when offering courses, and that unpopular courses should perhaps no longer be offered.<sup>13</sup> However, the discussion paper that is the focus of this submission highlights the necessity for small course enrolments in certain disciplines, particularly in the Humanities.<sup>14</sup> Yet at the same time, the current discussion paper provides evidence that on the one hand is meant to suggest that there is a high number of similar courses at most Australian universities, yet on the other hand, the statistics demonstrate that there is also equal demand for such courses. The question must therefore be asked: why should such alleged duplication be undesirable if the courses are popular with Australian students?

In addition, it is imperative that scholarship that is classified as ‘basic research’, that is research with no commercial or practical application, not be marginalised. These three issues are of particular concern in any discussion of proposals for institutional specialisation, particularly in light of any push for alternative sources of funding. A balance must be found to protect courses that due to the specialist nature of the subject material taught or the lack of a career focus are not able to attract the high enrolments of so-called ‘popular’ courses. In addition, mechanisms must exist to ensure that research capacity in such fields is not reduced, particularly in light of Australia’s excellent record in non-commercially orientated research. For instance, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources Science and Technology Policy Branch’s 2000 report *Australian Science and Technology at a Glance 2000* highlights the excellent performance of the Arts and Humanities, in terms of the impact Australian research has in a particular discipline. Papers written by Australian researchers in these fields are cited at a rate more than 40% higher than world

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<sup>12</sup> Karmel, “Funding Mechanisms, Institutional Autonomy and Diversity,” 50.

<sup>13</sup> *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, 26-7.

<sup>14</sup> *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, v.

average for such papers.<sup>15</sup> However, it is clear that such fields are not in a position to attract high levels of external funding and are not necessarily in areas with clear career paths. They are therefore at risk of losing both students, research output and funding if this is not addressed by any review of the Higher Education Sector that wishes to address the issue of diversity.

The discussion paper describes Australian universities as being “large, research-intensive, campus-based institution[s] offering a comprehensive suite of undergraduate and postgraduate courses”.<sup>16</sup> The Paper also offers evidence from a range of sources that suggests that not only is this the case, but that this is something that not to be considered positive. Of particular interest to the PGSA is the idea that “all Australian universities maintain a focus on research and postgraduate research students”. The suggestion is also posited that “[i]f research is perceived to be the function that attracts the highest status as an institution, it should be no surprise that all Australian institutions strive for such status”.<sup>17</sup> The PGSA is of the opinion that the focus that all Australian universities have a focus on research and postgraduate research students must not change. As outlined earlier in this submission, any such move towards undergraduate-only institutions that do not have a primary focus of research devalues the intrinsic significance of a university and thereby devalues any teaching that occurs therein. Furthermore, any so-called ‘rationalisation’ of the number of Australian higher education institutions that offer postgraduate courses will impact directly on the research output of the country as a whole. Not only will the quantity and amount of research that postgraduate students conduct suffer, but the residual effect will also be felt by the sector for decades hereafter.

## **Partnerships with business – proprietary knowledge and students?**

A much-touted proposal is the establishment of partnerships between the business and industrial sectors and the higher education sector. The current discussion paper contains strong support for this proposal, stating that “[p]roductive partnerships between higher education institutions and industry and business bring benefits to all partners and are vital to the effectiveness of the national innovation system”.<sup>18</sup> A number of submissions that endorse such collaboration, as are examples of projects that have been created and implemented successfully.

Whilst sentiments may be correct in principle, there needs to be a rigorous system of safeguards to protect academics and students from the abuse of any collaboration with business and industry. The PGSA and OSA see a number of area of concerns that *must* be addressed before any broad implementation of such proposals can happen.

Firstly, mechanisms must be implemented that protect disciplines that do not have an obvious commercial application from being marginalised through a severe lack of funds. Whilst many disciplines in the sciences and engineering fields are obvious candidates for industry and business funding, a similarly large number in other areas, particularly in the humanities and pure sciences, are not obvious candidates. Such disciplines must be assisted, both financially and administratively, to ensure that they can not only survive economically but are also able to teach courses and conduct research that will attract students and keep them at the forefront of their respective fields. Industry and business must be encouraged to donate money to higher education institutions **not only for commercial gain, but also to further the pursuit of academic excellence and the advancement of human knowledge.**

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Industry, Science and Resources Science and Technology Policy Branch, *Australian Science and Technology at a Glance 2000* (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 2000), 58.

<sup>16</sup> *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, 62.

A second related area of concern is the risk of discouraging academic diversity. There exists the danger that Australian universities will endeavour to specialise in those fields and disciplines that are most likely to attract funding from business and industry. Rather than corporations funding only the areas that will produce tangible benefits for themselves, universities may be encouraged to specialise in the areas that have the most likelihood of attracting external funding. In a similar fashion to the first area of concern outlined, the agriculture, health sciences and engineering fields are the ones most likely to benefit from any such moves, whereas the humanities in particular are the ones most likely to suffer. Indeed, evidence of such a practice is visible at the University of Adelaide: on August 23 the Prime Minister opened the new Santos-sponsored School of Petroleum Engineering and Management, which is the result of a \$25 million donation from the company.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, 2002 has seen the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in the process of shedding 25% of its academic staff.

A third, even more worrying, concern is the issue of academic integrity and independence. Whilst the idea of attracting industry and business funding is attractive, steps must be taken to ensure that academic independence and integrity is not compromised. The current discussion paper includes extensive suggestions to better facilitate any such joint projects between universities and industry and business; however, there is nothing that addresses this extremely important issue. Indeed, the only reference to intellectual property rights hints at the need to address better business and industry concerns about the issue.<sup>20</sup> **The PGSA and the OSA both oppose strongly any policy of industry and business involvement that may jeopardise the academic tradition, integrity and independence of the Australian Higher Education Sector.** These concerns are not academic: there are clear precedents that demonstrate clear abuse of the university system by industry and business partners.

The best recent example occurred at the University of Waterloo in Canada, when a ‘partnership’ with Microsoft Canada was announced on August 14. Microsoft is donating CDN \$10 million over a five-year period to fund what it terms “four comprehensive categories: academic research, education solutions, and curriculum integration and industry outreach”.<sup>21</sup> Whilst the funding arrangement sounds admirable, the reality is different: central to the deal was that the University introduce a compulsory course for all electronic and computer engineering students that teaches a Microsoft proprietary programming language. In addition, other courses that teach rival languages will be modified to teach only the Microsoft offering. Furthermore, the University of Waterloo would be obliged to research and produce handwriting recognition software for Microsoft.<sup>22</sup> Reactions at the university have been extremely critical of the deal: Mark Schaan, a student of the University of Waterloo, wrote:

I am disgusted by the university’s decision to accept this donation and believe that it violates the principles of academic freedom on our campus.

Curriculum development is a product of the faculty and should be preserved as such. Changing curriculum to satisfy corporate desires crosses the line from private-sector funding of university priorities to private sector determination of university priorities. I heard of no desire to make such a curriculum change until news of this donation came about. I believe this fundamentally violates the separation of academic freedom and corporate giving in the university setting, something that was subtly [sic] encroaching on our campus previous but is now out in full view.

In addition, I stand against the university’s decision to offer "special" classes to a select group of students. This is a stunt to try and win the battle for top-quality students and it creates a two-tier system within the

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<sup>19</sup> “\$25 million Santos sponsorship a major boost for industry”, press release, August 13, 1999, <<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/pr/media/releases/1999/santos99.html>>.

<sup>20</sup> *Setting Firms Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, 64.

<sup>21</sup> “Microsfot Canada Co. to fund technology initiatives at Canadian universities,” media release, August 15, 2002, <[http://www.microsoft.com/canada/press/releases/08\\_15\\_2002\\_fund.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/canada/press/releases/08_15_2002_fund.asp)>.

<sup>22</sup> Ryan Chen-Wing, bulletin board post, August 14, 2002, 12:33pm, <<http://uwstudent.org/msstory.html>>.

university system. The university should be caring about quality across the board and should not be subjecting average students to large classes while it rewards a few hand-picked students with a better quality education. If we all pay the same price, we should all have equal access to what the university has to offer.<sup>23</sup>

Academic staff have been similarly displeased with the agreement. Matt Armstrong, Associate Director of Software Engineering at the university wrote:

Over the past couple of days, I have read all of the posts on this topic, and I am just as concerned of this "pay for curriculum" ideology that everyone else seems to have.

As Associate Director of the Software Engineering Program, I am well informed of the relations with Microsoft over the past few months and the partnership that Microsoft has been trying to make with Waterloo in the areas of research and teaching.

[..]

I am not against teaching C# as an introductory course for programming to the software engineering students. I am just against the methods to which the upper administration has approached the issue, by receiving funding to alter the curriculum.

[..]

[Fellow academic] Vic DiCiccio was right in the [Computer Science] curriculum committee minutes that "Microsoft wanted to support the curriculum creation now and if we want to adopt C# in a few years the funding would not be available then". These stranglehold tactics are methods that Microsoft uses on a regular basis with their (prospective) customers and clients.<sup>24</sup>

It is exactly this type of financial arrangement that Australian universities must avoid with industry and business. Any collaboration with such partners *must* be conducted in a manner that ensures that academic integrity and independence of Australian higher education institutions is not compromised by any such arrangements. Whilst it is correct that external funding is desirable, it must not harm the quality and type of teaching and research in which universities engage. **It is therefore essential that any policy implementation that encourages external funding include precautionary measures to protect both academic integrity and independence, as well as to protect subject offerings from corporate misuse.**

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Schaan, bulletin board post, August 14, 2002, 2:00pm, <<http://uwstudent.org/msstory.html>>.

<sup>24</sup> Matt Armstrong, bulletin board post, August 16, 2002, 1:00pm, <<http://uwstudent.org/msstory.html>>.