Dissolving the Boundaries: Building a Sustainable RMIT

Program Advisory Chairs
Adjunct Professoriat

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Outline

- The guiding vision
- The value propositions
- The drivers to change
- A sense of urgency
- The agenda – Teaching & Learning; R&D
- Alliances and partnerships
- Priorities for 2002
- The role of Program Advisory Committees, Industry Councils
- The role of the Adjunct Professoriate
The guiding vision

RMIT

➢ Public institution committed to:
  – Innovation: the generation of new ideas and their take-up by people
    • engaged
    • connected
    • partnered
    • creative
  – Sustainable development
    • accountable financially, socially, environmentally, culturally
The guiding vision

- A university of technology combining expertise
  - Technology
  - People
  - Interface between people and technology

- RMIT applies this expertise to assist:
  - Individuals into productive careers and lives
  - Enterprises to increase innovation, performance
  - Communities to adapt to change
Proud of our history

➢ Founded to serve working people, enterprises
  – Vocational, professional education
    • skilled hands, cultured mind
  – Applied research, consultancy

➢ Internationalised

➢ Valuing financial independence but recognising our interdependence
Adding value through relevant, quality education & training services

➢ To individuals:
  – Productive careers, citizenship, lives
    • preparing for an uncertain future (continuous change)

➢ To enterprises:
  – Innovation and organisational performance

➢ By:
  – Work integrated education
  – Tailored support for learners, alumni
  – Flexible access: mode, pathways
  – Learning management for successful achievement
  – Communities of practice
The results

- Satisfied, completed employed/self-employed life-long learner/citizen
  - Indicators (preliminary):
    - completion rates
    - employment rates (esp. focus on areas of skill shortage)
    - enterprise formation (#s)
    - student satisfaction
    - cost/graduate

- Enterprises with improved performance
  - Indicators (preliminary)
    - client satisfaction (surveyed; repeat business)
    - ROI
    - $ earned
Creating and adding value through selected excellence – Research & Development

➢ For enterprises
  – Outcomes - focussed research and development:
    • useful, novel, cost-effective
    • jointly planned and managed
    • collaborative
    • multi-faceted solutions to multi-faceted problems

➢ For communities
  – Regionally, nationally, internationally
The results

➢ Innovation for enterprises
  – Indicators (preliminary):
    • client satisfaction, ROI
    • ongoing partnership
    • research income earned

➢ Innovation to communities
  – Indicators (preliminary):
    • no. spin-offs, patents, licenses
    • $ generated pa
    • exhibitions, design impact
    • ecological impact

➢ Collaborator of choice
  – Indicators (preliminary):
    • no. of partnerships, consortia membership
The drivers to change: Changes to knowledge sector

- Increasing demand
  - Constrained $; pressure for productivity
  - Diverse: culture, geography, age, career/life stage, socio-economic

- Supply affected by:
  - Globalisation
    - deregulation, GATTs, capital markets
  - Technology: ICT
  - New providers:
    - public/ private
    - blurred boundaries: partners
  - Changing definitions of knowledge
Governments’ agenda: knowledge economy

➢ Teaching
  – Increased productivity in teaching
  – Skills for knowledge economy
    • technical
    • generic, ‘soft’ skills

➢ Research
  – Commercialisation of research
  – Selectivity of research focus
  – Teaching universities?

➢ Community building
The three imperatives

- Economies of scale and responsiveness for teaching
- Critical mass for research impact
- Specialisation and focus for both
Like other professional services sectors:

- Increasingly globally-based competition where scale, quality, cost matter
- Middle-sized, middle ranking organisations disappear
- Organisational performance on the basis of specialisation
- Simultaneous demand for depth of expertise and breadth
  - Challenge:
    - how to link internally to deliver a new value proposition for research clients and students
    - how to link externally with others to provide solutions
A sense of urgency

- The changes are here now
  - See the changes in other sectors over the past decade

- Impatience with perceived lack of change
  - Graduate attributes, skills
  - Cost structures, unit costs
  - Rigid, inflexible program structures
    - Lack of recognition of informal experiential knowledge
    - Professional bodies?
  - Workplace reform
  - Commercialisation of research

- Government policy changes this year
RMIT readiness

- **Strengths**
  - International reach and experience
  - Committed staff
  - Partial investments in new systems, platforms
  - Reputation: employable grads, practical research
  - Some great innovations

- **Weaknesses**
  - Poor research image in trad. terms
  - Declining student satisfaction: 1 star
  - Capability patchy:
    - systems, skills, processes
    - horizontal linking; teamwork, systemic thinking; project management
    - declining financials
The agenda

➢ Teaching & Learning
   – Relevance of programs
     • change in portfolio: new roles, sectors
     • change in content:
       – knowledge
       – attributes: new workplaces, uncertainty, cont. change, self-management in a global context
   – Structure of programs
     • pathways
     • recognition of prior or work-based learning
     • modes – Mass, Niche, Reflective Practice
The agenda, cont.

➢ Teaching and learning
  – Scale and specialisation
    • mass and niche
  – Improved teaching quality
    • discipline expertise
    • strengthened and new pedagogies
    • sessional staff
    • redesign of learning experiences
    • workloads: numbers of programs, subjects, admin.
    • quality assurance and continuous feedback
The agenda, cont.

➢ **Teaching and learning**
  – Flexible modes
    • multiple modes
    • new models: Vietnam, GUA
  – Tailored learning support: diversity of student body
  – Streamlined administrative processes
  – Cost-effectiveness:
    • no. of subjects duplicated
    • re-usable learning objects
The agenda, cont.

➢ **Research**
  - Established research disciplines:
    • increase focus and scale
      – depth
      – linkages
    • increase research-productive staff
    • improve support to research-productive staff
  
  – Emerging research disciplines: Practice-Based Research
    • encourage through Boyer model: students, staff
    • communities of practice
    • action research/learning
  
  – Commercialisation
    • project management
    • commercial skills, linkages
Alliances and partnerships

- Alliances and partnerships to build:
  - Critical mass for research
  - Scale and market share for teaching in mass programs
    - shared courseware
    - access to broader range of specialisations
      - example: Engineering
    - supporting student mobility
  - Economies of scale in shared services

- Existing partners:
  - Australian Technology Network: 5 unis, one vision
  - Global University Alliance
  - Open Learning Agency
  - CSIRO, other unis, enterprises, TAFE colleges, private providers
The role of Program Advisory Committees, Industry Councils

- Advise on nature of workplaces and knowledge, attributes required:
  - Now
  - 10 years out (lags are up to 5 years)

- How is your sector, profession changing?
  - Emerging career structures, paths
  - Roles
  - Sectors
  - Structure of programs
The role of Program Advisory Committees, Industry Councils

- Is the composition of the group right?

- Should you be linking to other PACs to form advice on more holistic pathways?

- Balance the agenda on the knowledge and attributes:
  - Leave the specific design to others
  - Assess the Output
The Adjunct Professoriate

- Continue to help blending the experiential and the theoretical for students and academic staff
  - Providing real-world examples and case studies
  - Providing network linkages to allow for work placements, projects for students
  - Linking enterprises to the university to assist with their problems
Finally

- Your joint contributions help to keep us anchored

THANK YOU!