IMPACT OF CHANGE

ON

UNIVERSITY

ACADEMICS

by

CAROLYN BROADBENT
TPTC, Dip Tchg, B.Ed, M.Ed.

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Government initiatives in Australia in the late 1980s led to unprecedented change within the higher education sector, resulting in numerous college mergers and amalgamations as necessary prerequisites for entry into the post-binary Unified National System. Consequently, the Australian Catholic University was formed in 1991 through the amalgamation of four colleges or institutes of education that spanned three states and a territory. Concurrently, pressures to increase economic efficiency in higher education resulted in the modification of the role of universities, extensive cultural reorientation, and changes to academics' work that impacted on their health, well-being and level of satisfaction. This thesis investigates the nature and impact of change on sixty-nine academics situated across the campuses of the new University during this period of significant restructuring and throughout its first five years of operation.

The research is positioned within an interpretive theoretical framework that draws on the traditions of symbolic interactionism in understanding human action. Predominantly qualitative methods of inquiry and data collection are utilised to investigate academics' perceptions of: the broad changes within higher education; the organisational changes created by the formation of the new University; the changing nature of their work; and, the approaches they adopted to cope with the changes. Some simple quantitative measures are used to strengthen and extend the analysis. Theoretical considerations relevant to the research are drawn from the authoritative literatures of organisational change and management, higher education and stress and coping.

The results of this study support the view that the organisational changes brought about by a radical restructuring of the higher education sector in Australia did impact dramatically on the personal and professional lives of academics at that time, with those academics situated towards the lower levels of the new University more adversely affected. Virtually all academics interviewed had modified their work behaviour significantly from their former role; academics strongly oriented towards research more readily welcomed the changes, while those with a strong preference for teaching felt less valued and under pressure to

develop a research profile, upgrade qualifications and publish. There were noticeable differences between academics' level of understanding of the changes. It was also notable that: (1) the personal impact was felt strongly in a negative way by 62% of academics; (2) only 39% of academics interviewed expressed positive feelings towards the changes overall; (3) 72% expressed the view that they were now working harder than ever before, when they had already been overworked. Three broad groupings of coping strategies were discernible from the analysis: Proactive, Reactive and Counter-active.

Findings from the research support the importance of personal beliefs and values as contributing factors in determining academics' level of acceptance of the changes, and preferences regarding perceptions of the nature and future direction of the University. While a strong commitment to the formation of the new University was evident across all academic levels, considerable differences existed regarding its nature, role and future direction. This thesis argues that the complexity of organisational change necessitates an understanding of the paradoxical tensions or contradictions that are inherent in any change process and these need to be considered in relation to the differing perspectives held by organisational members. Eight contradictory tensions emerged from the analysis: pragmatism vs independent vision; centralised control vs local autonomy; academic freedom vs Catholic conservatism; teaching and learning vs research and scholarship; equality of women vs patriarchal control; consolidation vs diversity; autocratic managerialism vs democratic collegiality; and academic workloads vs maintenance of quality.

It is therefore argued that in the implementation of organisational change there exists a need to properly address the tensions and ambiguities that arise between the personal goals and expectations of individuals as professionals, and those held by management. Greater opportunities for academics across all levels within the organisation to participate in the decision-making process and play a proactive role in shaping the direction of the developing institution would have facilitated more effective organisational change within this newly created University.

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CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION

1.1   THE CHALLENGE OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Organisations today have an indispensable role in facilitating human accomplishment and achievement (Hesselbein et al., 1997). Some time back Dexter Dunphy (1972) highlighted the importance and dominance of organisations in the lives of individuals and was moved to ponder not only 'how it all works'...but 'for whom does it serve' (p.43). These questions still hold relevance today and while our answers will be contextualised within the prevailing social, economic and political forces of our time, the need to understand the complexity of organisations and to unravel the enigmatic forces that impact on individuals within them is still a major concern.

Successful organisations are never static (Bartol et al., 1998: 751) and to ignore the need for change is to do so at one's own peril (Paton & McCalman, 2000:7). Change is with us to stay, and will remain that way into the foreseeable future (Wood et al., 1998). Ongoing sensitivity to internal and environmental pressures is essential in the fight for survival and prosperity, as is the willingness of organisations to engage in strategies that reflect the ability 'to manage multiple future scenarios' (Paton & McCalman, 2000:7). The speed and constancy of change requires new ways of thinking about change and an acceptance that paradoxes abound (Senge, 1990; Fullan, 1994; Handy, 1996; Martin, 1999). Organisational change is not simply about change itself; it is a complex process that cannot be achieved successfully without due consideration of the individual perspectives, values and aspirations held by all organisational members. Change is about 'living the future today' (Jackson, 2000).

Ongoing change presents a considerable challenge for those vested with the responsibility of managing organisations and ensuring they remain dynamic and profitable, while still retaining the commitment and motivation of individuals working within them. It is therefore imperative that high priority be given to the importance of understanding the processes of organisational change. Yet while numerous explanations exist for the phenomenon of organisational change, its impact is still often miscalculated. At best, the processes of organisational

change can lead to positive effects providing increased opportunities for learning and growth, while poor implementation will most likely result in negative consequences and possible organisational decline.

1.2   CHANGE WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

The constant pressure to adapt to ongoing change has led to considerable upheaval to organisational life in Australia in recent years, as evidenced by unsteady economic growth, and large-scale acquisitions and downsizing programs. The higher education sector has not been immune from these forces and as a result of Government initiatives from the late 1980s has become immersed in a period of turbulent and unprecedented change. The effects of such initiatives have generated considerable debate regarding the wisdom of and rationale for such change (Wheeley, 1991; Miller, 1995; Smyth, 1995; Luke, 1997; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). The pressure to increase economic efficiency has resulted in institutes of higher education undergoing fundamental transformation through amalgamations, mergers, extensive restructuring, and cultural reorientation (see Lewis, 1994; Broadbent, 1997; Trowler, 1998; Martin 1999). Although institutional amalgamations in higher education had occurred previously, it was the pace of change initiated by the Australian Government in the late 1980s that was unprecedented.

Changing perceptions of the role of universities has impacted significantly on the workplace practices of academics and on the level of satisfaction experienced while working. Academics have been challenged to deal with larger class sizes, a diverse range of students, new technologies, new partnerships with industry, new regulatory requirements regarding their own behaviour, budgetary constraints, and burgeoning administrative duties. Ineffective organisational change is expensive, both in terms of the financial costs incurred by the organisation and as a result of the psychological impact on individuals (Johansen, 1991; Turner & Crawford, 1998; Wood et al., 1998). Organisational changes within universities have, consequently, had a deleterious effect on the health and well-being of academics. As a result of the range and increasing demands made on academics, especially commercial imperatives, the lack of time and the shortages of available funds, the

stress levels of academics have increased. As academics encounter increasingly competitive and turbulent environments they are constantly challenged to respond to change through the adoption of new strategies often requiring the reassessment of personal goals. The pressure to remain adaptive to ongoing changes within the workplace requires considerable energy and stamina, and even more so when the nature of change within academia, and workplace expectations, are non-aligned with personal beliefs and aspirations, thereby leading to higher levels of dissonance and stress within the individual.

If the effects of substantial change are to be advantageous rather than deleterious, it is imperative that understanding organisational change remains a high priority for modern management. Yet increasingly, major change programs remain rife with inner contradictions that, when left unattended, soon become destructive forces (Rodger, 1998). The imposition of 'top-down' change can have adverse effects in the higher education sector, especially when management assume they can 'manage the values of their organisations' (Easterby-Smith, 1997:51). As Easterby-Smith rightly points out, when the managerial approach to organisational change simply attacks existing values there is the risk that the individual's sense of purpose will be destroyed thereby creating both a highly demoralised organisation and a formidable barrier to change and innovation. Improved understanding of the management of organisational change within institutes of higher education, including its impact on academics, may assist in reducing organisational and psychological impacts.

1.3 NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Impact of change on academics

This thesis is a case study of a new university formed as a result of the changes in the higher education sector in Australia, commonly referred to as the Dawkinisation of higher education, towards the end of the 1980s. The research is significant in that it examines academics' perceptions and impact of organisational change within the new University, namely the Australian Catholic University, from the moment of its 'birth' into the higher education sector in 1991 and throughout the first five years of its operation.

1.3.2 Restructuring Catholic tertiary education

The decision to undertake a massive restructuring of tertiary Catholic education institutions in Australia was made in direct response to pressure from the Australian Government to meet specific criteria for funding, including that of size, i.e., student enrolment numbers. Unlike mergers of other institutions within the one state, which occurred at this time, the formation of the Australian Catholic University brought together four, more or less autonomous, Catholic colleges, comprising eight campuses located in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory, into one integrated academic and administrative structure.

On November 5, 1990 the Australian Catholic University (ACU) was incorporated as a limited company and commenced operation in January 1991 with administrative functions centralised at the Vice Chancellery in Sydney. The company, formed under the National Companies Code, transcends State boundaries and acts as trustee for the Catholic Church (ACU Chronicle, 1992). The University presents itself as an autonomous institution, distinct from the Church, and is governed by its Senate, which draws its membership from the general staff, academics, students and the community (ACU Faculty Ed. Handbook, 1999). It is a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Unified National System of Higher Education.

The origins of the University date back to the mid-1800s when religious orders and institutes began preparing teachers, and later nurses, for work in Catholic institutions. Amalgamations, relocations, transfers of responsibilities and diocesan initiatives led to the formation of some twenty historical entities which became the various colleges of more recent times and ultimately the Australian Catholic University (ACU Faculty Education Handbook, 1999). The predecessor colleges were generally considered to be successful and highly regarded operations, owing much to 'the devoted and selfless service of members of the various religious institutes associated with them' (Little, 1992:2).

The unique problems facing the new University in seeking its elevated status, and public funding, were formidable and, as noted by O'Hearn (2001), these included:

- legislative difficulties between states. Thus within Victoria the campuses had amalgamated previously to form the Institute of Catholic Education in order to become integrated within the government College of Advanced Education system; within NSW the campuses had previously amalgamated to form a single Catholic College of Education but remained separated from the government system; within Queensland there was one independent campus or College, as was also the case in the ACT.

- previously, the students were substantially trained for service only within Catholic schools and hospitals thus narrowing their sphere of interest and claims to university degree status.

- ownership of the eight campuses was by a diverse mix of religious orders and Catholic dioceses who therefore wished for some of their own members to be assigned to academic and administrative positions.

With the formation of the Australian Catholic University each college contributed its own unique set of historical and cultural understandings to the establishment of the new University and its national identity.

As noted by O'Hearn (2001:463), the formation of a Catholic university had been mooted for decades although opinions were greatly divided prior to the necessary actions precipitated by governmental decree. Concerns regarding the lack of consultation, the enormity of the task, and incredulity that CAEs could 'become a university with the stroke of a pen' did not assist in building confidence in the arguments for a university. Finally, as O'Hearn (ibid., p.463) sums up:

> 'Australian Catholic University was born into uncertainty – indecisiveness that has bedevilled the Church's attitude to higher education in Australia from the start'.

Against the backdrop of a unique period in the history of higher education in Australia, this thesis contributes to and extends understanding of the nature of these changes and their impact on academics' personal and professional lives. It further provides insights regarding the approaches utilised by academics to cope with the ongoing changes experienced within the workplace.

1.3.3 Why study academics?

Although academics contribute considerable time and effort in assisting others to understand the natural and social world, there has been little published research into the world of academics themselves, as highlighted by Smyth (1995), Potts, (1997) and Trowler (1998). Earlier, Altbach and Kelly (1985) note that the analysis of the academic profession appears limited to the United States, Britain, and the German Federal Republic, and important elements of the profession, such as the nature of academic work, have not been scrutinised sufficiently in most countries. Smyth (1995:1) bemoans the fact that, given the extent of change within the higher education sector, much of what is happening is not being rigorously examined. Further, he comments:

> 'What is most surprising, given the nature of the 'animal', is that there are so few attempts to document systematically what is happening to it, or to explain it theoretically. This is curious given the predisposition of academics towards working on and explaining other people's lives and worlds' (Smyth, 1995:1).

A number of studies, predominantly of a survey nature, were conducted on Australian academics during the 1980s, as summarised by Neumann (1993). These generally focussed on issues such as employment conditions and career opportunities, although some did investigate academics' preferences for teaching or research. While other studies have detailed the nature of the changes within the sector (Adams, 1998) and have noted the increasing levels of stress experienced by academics (Hort & Oxley, 1992; Perry, 1998; Martin, 1999; Rhoades, 2000), there is still much to be learned, especially from the perspectives held by academics; their perceptions and evaluations of the changes within higher education, the impact of those changes on academics themselves and, more specifically the differing strategies academics adopt to adapt and cope with ongoing change in the workplace. This study should assist in filling some of these spaces on the research landscape.

While previous studies of universities and academics within Australia have focused predominantly on the collection of data through the use of surveys and tightly structured questionnaires, this study utilises semi-structured interviews for

the collection of data that provide in-depth descriptions of the nature and intensity of the organisational change processes as interpreted by academics. This is a predominantly qualitative research project that utilises some simple quantitative methods to extend and better illustrate the findings.

1.4 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH

This qualitative research study is located within an interpretivist theoretical framework that draws upon the traditions of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Plummer, 1991) to bring meaning to the analysis of the data. Rather than focusing purely on an individual's characteristics or on the effects of the social structure on individual behaviour, symbolic interactionism emphasises the 'nature of interaction; the dynamic social activities taking place between persons' (Charon, 1979:23). Through this process individuals continually undergo change through their interaction with others; as a consequence, society also changes through that interaction. Three basic assumptions underpin the symbolic interactionist approach: firstly, 'that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these have for them'; secondly, 'that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows'; and finally, 'that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things s/he encounters' (Blumer, 1969:2). Individuals elicit, emphasise and integrate certain aspects of a situation through their own perspectives, or conceptual framework, and as a consequence make various judgments and assumptions about that situation (Charon, 2001).

Through an interpretive frame, organisations take on the form of social constructs, created as a result of the interpretations of organisational members that 'are mediated through social interaction' (Johansen, 1991:8). In this way, organisational members

> 'create and come to share a common understanding about the nature
> of the organisation. This common understanding, the dominant
> reality of the group, becomes the basis for individuals to make sense
> of their personal interpretations' (Johansen, 1991:8).

Individuals should not, however, be regarded as passive, but rather as active agents involved in the creation of the reality they inhabit (Gioia & Poole, 1986). In doing so, they 'socially and symbolically construct and sustain their own organisational realities' (Gioia & Pitre, 1990:588) and constantly engage in 'acting in relation to each other, taking each other into account, acting, perceiving, interpreting, acting again' (Charon, 1979:23). Throughout an organisation individuals will interpret events in individualistic ways and thereby come to hold differing perspectives regarding the significance and impact of any event or situation, and this is especially so when experiencing the turbulence brought about during periods of organisational change. In the construction of ideal models of organisation, individuals will draw upon numerous images or metaphors of organisation (Morgan, 1997a) and their preferred models will influence the type of approach and response adopted towards any organisational changes. Understanding the differing perspectives organisational members hold is especially important, both for those charged with the implementation of the organisational change process, and other organisational members, as the level of congruence between these perspectives will inevitably play a significant role in the approach adopted by management throughout the change process, and the level of resistance encountered from organisational members.

A final assumption underlying this thesis is that organisations are primarily human enterprises, in and through which the human spirit should be cherished and nurtured. Ideally, argues Drucker (1997), organisations should be about making 'the strengths of people effective and their weaknesses irrelevant' in the quest for organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

Throughout the conduct of this research project, the researcher sought to provide evidence to address the research focus and related questions, as outlined in Chapter 6, by drawing upon existing theoretical models found in the authoritative literatures of organisational change theory and management research, social-psychology, higher education studies, and the stress and coping research; interrogating the data gathered throughout the interview process; and through reference to numerous documents that were relevant to the specific histories of the member institutes of the University or related to furthering an understanding

of the organisational change processes. In endeavouring to 'define what is significant and predict what might be happening and why' (Wiseman, 1993), the literature search and analysis of data assumed a serendipitous relationship throughout the research process. As a consequence, the researcher revisited and revised theoretical considerations in concert with the analysis of the empirical data throughout the conduct of this research project.

1.5 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The impetus to commence this research project emerged from the researcher's direct personal involvement in the organisational changes that resulted from the formation of the new University. At this time, the researcher was employed at one of the colleges of education that joined with other Catholic institutions to form the new University. Consequently, the researcher experienced the impact of those workplace changes and challenges that affected the personal and professional lives of other academics located at the various campuses of the new University. This positions the researcher for this study as a knowledgeable participant and observer of the group under investigation; as such, the researcher is integral to and immersed in the experiences of the researched. The researcher is privileged to have been able to observe and participate in many aspects of organisational life at both the predecessor college and the new University.

With the implementation of the organisational changes at the University, some academics soon became considerably disillusioned and negative in their attitude towards the workplace changes. Questions emerged regarding the rationale for and nature of the changes and the effect of these on the work of academics. The level of intensity experienced from the impact of the changes varied among academics, as did their responses to the changing workplace environment. Accompanying the changes was a growing sense of loss for many academics and increased uncertainty regarding the future direction of the institution. These concerns encouraged the researcher to seek explanations for these differences and ponder the contributing factors that might impinge on the resiliency of some individuals to remain relatively unscathed by the turbulence of workplace change, while others appear more dramatically affected and struggle to cope with ongoing

change. Although there is an abundance of literature describing theoretical models and strategies for successful organisational change, and an illusion of simplicity prevails, the reality is somewhat more complicated. A focus of this thesis is to explore and provide explanations for these inconsistencies.

1.6   THESIS ORGANISATION

This thesis is organised into the following sections: Chapter 1: Introduction; the theoretical Chapters 2-5; the design and methodological approach is presented in Chapter 6; the interview analysis in Chapters 7-12; and Chapter 13 provides the conclusion to the thesis. In more detail, Chapter 2 provides the contextual background to the research project with specific reference to the changing nature of universities in Australia from the late 1980s. Discussion centres on the broad political, social, and economic forces impacting on the higher education sector at that time, while the second half of the chapter focuses on the amalgamation process that brought together eight Catholic education institutes to form the specific case study for this research project, namely the Australian Catholic University. Chapter 3 provides a critical review of research relating to the major theoretical models used in the study of organisations, and discusses contemporary issues impacting on organisational stability and effectiveness. Chapter 4 builds upon the literature of the previous chapter while focusing more specifically on the study of organisational change and its management. Chapter 5 critically reviews research relevant to the study of the impact of change on individuals, including the relationship between stress and coping, differing approaches to the measurement of coping, and factors impacting on the selection of individual strategies to manage and cope with changing workplace environments. Chapter 6 outlines the theoretical assumptions underpinning the research design and describes the methodological approach adopted for the research project. Chapter 7 provides an outline of the results of the analysis of academics' perceptions and understanding of the changes within the higher education sector in Australia and presents their views regarding the benefits and losses brought about by the changes. Chapter 8 provides an analysis of academics' perceptions of the processes of organisational change within the newly formed University and provides an outline of academics' differing perspectives regarding the role and

future direction of the University. Chapter 9 extends the discussion to include an analysis of the various forces impacting on the processes of organisational change within the University and concludes with the identification of eight paradoxical tensions that have emerged as a result of the changes. Chapter 10 discusses the changing nature of academics' work that occurred after the amalgamation, especially in regard to the change in organisational culture from a predominantly teaching orientation, prevalent in the teachers' college model, to one where research endeavours, characteristic of the university model, became more highly valued and rewarded.

Chapter 11 utilises the metaphor of the bus journey to illustrate and bring meaning to academics' differing approaches to coping with change, while Chapter 12 presents the results of further quantitative analysis of academics' perceptions and level of acceptance of the changes according to academic level within the University. Chapter 13 summarises and discusses the conclusions drawn from the results of the research project, and identifies some challenges for the future.

CHAPTER 2:   CONTEXT TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This research study is of a single institution formed during the period of radical change commonly referred to as the Dawkinisation of higher education in Australia. Organisational change does not occur in isolation and it is assumed that the changes within the higher education sector formed part of a broader political and socio-economic framework set within an historical context. This chapter creates the contextual framework for the study through consideration of those broad political and socio-economic forces, both national and international, that impacted on the higher education sector, including academics, in Australia towards the late 1980s.

2.1   TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION

> 'Universities over the centuries have shown themselves to be extremely durable institutions, capable of adapting to changing circumstances while maintaining their traditional ideals'
>
> (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998:1).

This observation captures the essence of the difficulties now facing Australian universities. Traditional ideals that have endured in the past now sit uneasily with government demands for universities to operate strategically, particularly in the face of international competitive pressure. The pressure from government for universities to be more efficient has changed managerial priorities to favour entrepreneurial, short-term, commercial programs linked to the community, industry or profession at the expense of traditional values (Moses, 1992). Further, the emergence of numerous trends and issues such as globalism, multiculturalism, virtualisation and politicisation, have the potential to transform universities so profoundly that future universities may be all but unrecognisable to those in the 20th century (Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000:6). These are the driving forces shaping universities today that impact on the university at different levels including: 'the university as a corporation (which globalism embraces); the university as a site of academic leadership (the model of knowledge as philosophy); the university as the ideological arm of the nation-state

(politicisation); polyversities, multiversities and diversities − the creation of a range of alternative universities, all based on the idea of difference, of finding knowledge niches (multiculturalism); the emerging global electronic university; and the community-based university, whose main function is public service, using the university to help the community thrive' (adapted Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000:6).

There is little doubt that these forces or drivers are dismantling the traditional university worldwide and while universities may still cling to their traditional roots, this does not guarantee they will remain stable. The political and economic pressure exerted by governments on universities has necessitated the implementation of strategies that reduce reliance on government funding through external consultancy, increase the relevance of research, improve the delivery and quality of teaching, and extend service to the community through the establishment of mutually beneficial professional partnerships. Although some, including university leaders, might argue these represent positive developments, 'the reality facing universities is not entirely comforting' (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998:1). In his book, Future of Capitalism, Thurow (1996) argues that as human resources remain essential to national prosperity and competitiveness, education should therefore be regarded as indispensable. Unfortunately, this is occurring at a time when the resurgence of ideology of laissez faire capitalism and the demise of the welfare state are working in concert 'to erode the public commitment to education at a time when it is more important than ever' (Porter, 1997:81)

Whereas earlier studies of change in educational institutions focused mainly on administrative behaviour, present concerns relate to the impact of economic models on traditional practices (Johnson, 1994; Currie & Woock, 1995; Marginson, 1995; Luke, 1997). A number of present-day influences on education policy and structures of policy production and practice as identified by Taylor et al. (1997) include the role of markets in education, devolution, corporate managerialism, increased federal intervention and the development of human capital theory:

'Educational policy and institutional practice are being pushed along a continuum towards reduced government expenditure, and increased marketisation and privatisation of remaining state-supported operations. How and to what end universities, departments and faculties continue to exist depends almost exclusively now on rationalised and quantified performativity in an increasingly less regulated educational market' (Luke, 1997:1).

Ramsden (1998:347) argues that universities face an almost certain future of relentless variation in a more austere climate. Changes in the political and economic environment as evidenced in mass higher education, knowledge growth, reduced public funding, increased emphasis on employment skills, and continuing pressure for more accountability have been reflected in fundamental internal changes. Further, research and teaching standards have been scrutinised, and competition between universities is more vigorous than ever before.

As Australian institutions face continuing transformations brought about by globalisation and the impact of information technology, even greater is the need for flexibility and adaptability of institutions and academics to changing environmental pressures. Although notions of stability and tradition may have strengths, universities must remain cognisant of the expectations of society. This is particularly so as they take action to reduce their dependency on government spending and continue to move from an elite to mass view of student entry. These conditions may even present new opportunities, as Coaldrake and Stedman (1998:6) highlight:

'Universities, if they are able to deliver what is required, respond quickly to changing needs in the workforce, and offer their services in a flexible manner and a reasonable price, have an invaluable opportunity to cement their role and their importance in the life of the community'.

The importance of the ability to increase the national capacity to produce and use knowledge cannot be underestimated in securing Australia's economic and social future. While historically, universities have assumed a central role in the provision of, access to and creation of knowledge, as well as promoting student learning, they are no longer the only type of institution capable of carrying out these functions. Nor can the size and complexity of the challenges facing

universities today be handled by simply adopting a 'scaled-up' approach from the past (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). The problem stems from the time when universities operated in a culture in which they and individual academics enjoyed rights and privileges such as tenure, autonomy and academic freedom. This policy was based on an ideal that universities were unique and important and the traditional providers of the institutional form of knowledge for its own sake, both in education and research; an ideal which provided the basis for acceptance that universities alone should be able to determine the nature of their operations (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). Such conceptions now no longer seem relevant to overriding issues as universities struggle to adjust to new realities, having been encouraged to:

> 'increase significantly their numbers of students, to make better use of their budgets, and to raise money from industry and the professions'... and also forced ...'to comply with new regulatory requirements, and exhorted to apply to their own activities the principles and language of business and industry' (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998:2).

Changes in national and international economies and the emergence of new forms of capitalism, have led to the commodification of knowledge and research; education and educational research are now expected to contribute to economic development and a high value is placed on the 'image' of production (Blackmore, Gough & Green, 1994). As they more fully explain:

> 'It is not so much that a decisive articulation is generated between educational work in its various spheres and the realm of production and accumulation, as it is that things seem and are seen to get done along these lines. Appearance is all; as long as there is movement in the system – of money, personnel, records, information – then at least something is being done' (Blackmore, Gough & Green, 1994:iv).

Rooney & Hearn (2000) argue for the adoption of a different model:

> 'markets and technology have privileged a certain ideological view of higher education that is rooted in neoclassical economics and assumptions more suited to the industrial era. A post-industrial economy requires a new view of economics, which places great emphasis on the intellectual capital input into creating value' (p.92).

Reference to more sophisticated and relevant organisational models of production, particularly for the production of knowledge, is needed, and an effective challenge mounted regarding the inappropriateness of crude market-forces models in higher education. Unfortunately, the recent transformation of higher education in Australia has been based on economic models that assume 'the old economies of industrial production (manufacturing) apply to the university' (Rooney & Hearn, 2000:92). Further, Rooney and Hearn (2000) argue that:

> 'because of a predominant emphasis on economic orthodoxy in contemporary policy discussions, the university is destined to be poorly understood and mismanaged. This situation arises because of the blindness of orthodox (industrial) economics to knowledge in general and, in particular, to tacit knowledge – wisdom, judgment, beliefs and the ability to meaningfully process information' (p.92).

2.1.1 Some concerns about modern universities

In 1992, Osborne (Inauguration Speech for the Australian Catholic University) identified three inter-related key issues that raise concerns over the essentially utilitarian and practical attitudes being adopted towards universities at that time. Osborne draws on Cardinal Newman's classical work, The Idea of a University, published some 120 years earlier at a time when Newman also 'felt constrained to defend the attributes of a university in the face of a clamour for a more practical and more relevant approach' (Osborne, 1992:6).

Osborne's first concern is with the importance of retaining strong research-based universities in Australia. While this assertion may seem self-evident in a modern world where so many countries are promoting strong universities, unfortunately this is not the case in Australia, Osborne argues, where universities are bracing themselves from attacks that label them as 'anachronistic, elitist and unresponsive to the needs of society' (p.6). As he aptly puts it:

> 'In specific terms, claims have been made that the interest of universities in high standards and quality is self-serving and designed only to preserve the ivory towers in which they are located; more disturbingly, demands are being made that universities should concentrate on training and thus adopt a competency based approach to their programs (just as in the TAFE sector)' (p.6).

Osborne argues that the encroachment of training into the university sector and the ultimate outcome of assimilating the universities to the TAFE institutions will result in a 'Uniform National System of Higher Education totally lacking in diversity, narrow in its range, pitched at the level of the lowest common denominator, and unique in its impoverishment' (p.6). This is, he believes, a recipe for intellectual disaster, and while critics of the new orthodoxy are damned as paranoid elitists or worse, proponents 'feel bound to indulge in the denigration of different systems on the grounds that they lack relevance or are not conducive to social justice' (p.6). Osborne (1992) posits:

> 'Universities grow famous over the centuries for their achievements; they can perish in a twinkling...It would be fatal to allow fantasises of relevance and egalitarianism to be the source of destruction of the well-established and internationally respected university system in Australia' (p.6).

Osborne believes it prudent to question the rationale behind the need to convert tertiary education essentially to training, at a time when other countries, such as Germany, are able to prosper under a differentiated system of Higher Education that comprises both a strong traditional university sector and training sector. The fact that many students might profit more from undertaking vocational training at a TAFE college rather than participating in relatively unstructured learning in Arts and Sciences at traditional universities does not provide a rationale for changing the essential nature of the traditional university; rather it is 'to demand a proper representation of TAFE as a genuine alternative to the university'.

> 'We need universities just as much as we need good quality training facilities and the challenge for government is to develop the latter without destroying the former, and to make both intrinsically attractive and respectable' (op. cit., p.6).

Osborne's second concern is that the suggestion by government and other related bodies, that university operations overseas are directed primarily at winning export dollars is short-sighted and patronising, and 'sits unhappily with current protestations to the effect that Australia sees itself as an integral part of the Asia-Pacific region' (1992:6). Above all, he argues:

'there is the great delusion that the potential customers cannot discern quality, and such egalitarian pronouncements made overseas that all Australian institutions offer courses of equal value and quality because they are government supported, are desperately lacking in plausibility, and in many Asian countries, where education is held in high esteem, they simply excite well informed derision ... and ultimately they can only diminish our reputation internationally' (p.6).

Finally, Osborne's third concern is the need to retain respect for professional values in what might now be regarded as a highly regulated industry.

'Higher Education is now an industry. Work practices are substantially determined in the Industrial Relations Commission. Thus higher education is no longer strictly a profession. In such circumstances there is a danger that professional considerations may come to be outweighed by industrial regulations' (p.6).

The polarisation of employer and employee, seen as an inevitable result of operating as an industry, has thrown doubt upon the appropriate limits of collegial behaviour. Again, there is concern that the typically flexible work practices of some academic staff may be challenged in the highly regulated industrial context.

The answer to changes in perceptions and expectations, argues Conner (1998), is that higher education institutions should develop a vision that transcends, but does not ignore, the immediate political, economic and logistic circumstances on the one hand and social responsibilities on the other. Institutions should exist for reasons that supersede historical moments in time, and through a process of continual physical and philosophical renewal, develop flexible processes for dealing with emerging opportunities and challenges (Conner, 1998, preface, p.xiii). As Cooper (1989) highlights:

'Higher education institutions have moved from a period of slow, periodic, evolutionary change to a period of continual, explosive change. Not only is the magnitude of change confronting these institutions possibly greater than at any time in their history, but now the change is constant and overlapping – no longer is there the luxury of reacting to singular events in the hope of deflecting their consequences' (Cooper in Hughes, Marwick, & Conner, 1989:16).

The challenge facing higher education is not a local phenomenon and it is important this is acknowledged (Taylor, 1999). The commonality is reflected in 'the globalisation of economic activities and communication technologies', argues Taylor 'and the extension of the concept of mass education from the compulsory to the post-compulsory sectors' (p.3). He further argues, that it is therefore:

> 'a truism to suggest that universities in most OECD countries are facing a number of challenges that are quantitatively if not qualitatively different from those they have faced in their more recent histories' (p.3).

In a survey of recent trends in universities in Australia, the UK and Singapore Ramsden (1998a:6-7; 1998b:348-350) notes the commonality in moves toward:

- mass higher education and lower standards;
- greater conflict with government (largely on funding issues);
- connecting funding (from government) with performance;
- pressure for more research in knowledge-based industries;
- expectations by government that research will contribute to economic objectives;
- demands for accountability through performance appraisal; and
- dilution of academic traditions of collegiality (shared decision-making).

The report of the Committee of Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy (West Committee, 1997:55-6) indicates that quite substantial changes to the nature of higher education can be expected and identifies six challenges for the future:

- community expectations of higher education will rise;
- the information and communications revolutions will provide many opportunities for higher education administration, teaching and research to be undertaken in better ways;
- competition will intensify, adding to the pressures on providers to deliver their services in the most cost-effective ways possible;
- taken together, the information and communications revolutions and growing competitive pressures will generate pressures for change in the overall structure of the higher education sector;

- international demand for higher education services will grow significantly in the long term; and

- demand for learning in Australia, particularly among the older age groups, is also likely to grow in the long term.

<div align="right">(adapted from Taylor, 1999:4)</div>

Others have sought to identify the key challenges for the future development of higher education (Morrison, 1995; Ehrmann, 1996; Hudson, Maslin-Prothero & Oates, 1997; Marginson, 1997). While each addresses distinct dimensions of higher education there is some support for the belief that the contemporary issues facing higher education have emerged partly as a result of the success of the sector in responding to challenges in previous eras (Taylor, 1999:6). Distinctions between the current crisis and the past lie, according to Taylor, in 'the need to address the discontinuous nature and speed of the current changes' (p.6).

Ramsden (1998:368) challenges universities to inspire its academic members to exercise the qualities of academic excellence and ensure they can 'step confidently into the future'. To be effective, he argues, a university needs:

- Expertise in helping its staff to embrace change enthusiastically;

- A vision that will inspire students and staff to achieve things they never thought they were capable of doing. To do this it must trust its people and show concern for its students;

- An ability to permit freedom while encouraging self-discipline so realising the highest standards of excellence;

- A commitment to encouraging life-learning for academics by appropriate rewards for performance;

- The ability to manage both resources and people firmly, fairly, and equitably;

- To deliver high quality products and services on time and on budget to its customers;

- To balance imagination with information, independence with discipline, theory with application;

- An acceptance of the need to live with paradox and to nurture tolerance; and

- The courage to admit its inevitable mistakes.

More recently, Chubb (2001) talking to the public on his role as new VC of the Australian National University, states:

> 'As a sector we've responded perhaps a bit too slowly to the changed environment, assuming that the good times will come back if we wait long enough. And it's perfectly clear that the good times as we once knew them won't come back. We're making our own future now' (Chubb, 2001:1).

Undoubtedly, some universities now benefit from economies of scale, and as a result of various amalgamations, operate more strategically than ever before. They attract overseas students to bolster enrolments and increase funding, respect students as clients, and more easily form links between graduate study and employability. However, there are others struggling to cope with contemporary realities, and the struggle is occurring at all levels (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998:2). Although the focus on global economic pressures and opportunities is not unique to higher education policy in Australia, the 'suddenness, the scope, the degree of reversal of previous policy and vigour which characterise the revolutionary reform process' commenced by Dawkins in 1987 is unprecedented, argues DeAngelis (1998). As McKinnon forecast in 1986:

> 'With the binary system in a state of terminal decay and the federal/state planning arrangements in considerable disarray, it would be a bold observer who would attempt to predict with any certainty the future course of evolution of the tertiary system. All that can be said with assurance is that there is a roller coaster ride ahead for those of us who are part of it' (McKinnon, 1986:14).

2.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.2.1 Previous change initiatives introduced in Australia

Until the 1980s, the higher education sector in Australia operated in a relatively privileged way, largely free of government interference. DeAngelis (1998) describes the prevailing conditions, and the trauma produced by the changes, in these terms:

> 'It (higher education) was based on a regulated, cooperative, binary, collegial, arms-length from politics, internationally privileged, high quality, generous, free and publicly-funded education ideal. Thus, the scope, pace and method of reforms which overturned this ideal

constituted a real shock for most in higher education, especially staff
and students accustomed to a more benign environment' (DeAngelis,
1998:101).

Since the late 1980s, governmental initiatives have led to large-scale change
within the higher education sector in Australia, resulting in considerable debate
regarding the wisdom of and rationale for such change (Meek & Goedegebuure,
1989; Wheeley, 1991; Miller, 1995; Smyth, 1995; Luke, 1997; Marginson, 1997;
Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). Pressure from the Australian Government to
increase economic efficiency resulted in institutes of higher education undergoing
fundamental transformation through amalgamations, mergers, extensive
restructuring, and cultural reorientation (see Lewis, 1994; Trowler, 1998).
Clearly this is not a new phenomenon and early institutional amalgamations in
higher education have been reviewed elsewhere (refer Harman, et al., 1985;
Harman & Meek, 1988).

The paradigm shift for Australian universities began about twenty years ago,
when governments started to intrude in university affairs and to seek
accountability for the spending of public money (Williams, 1984; Coaldrake,
1995; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). As a consequence, variations occurred in the
boundaries between state and higher education (Neave, 1982). Concern for the
national economy, and the Australian Government's conviction at the time that
'direct intervention was essential', provided the driving force for significant
administrative reform aimed at harnessing economic growth, improving national
productivity, restraining public spending and reducing the size of the government
sector (Wheeley, 1991).

> 'There is an urgent need to reverse the long term trend for the public
> sector to meet an ever increasing share of total financial
> responsibility...Governments alone should not and cannot carry the
> full financial burden' (Dawkins, 1987(a):13, 19).

The significant restructure of public sector organisations, it was argued, would
make them more efficient, cost effective and more publicly accountable in the use
of public funds.

> 'The politicians, for their part, have generally gained the impression
> (rightly or wrongly) that much administration in tertiary institutions

had become ineffectual in addressing the demands before the organisation (as, indeed was their perception of other public sector bodies) and that, in the face of public opposition to increased taxes and impressions of inefficiency, there was a need to redress former practices. The strategic choices open to government – reduction of the number of issues besetting it and the cost burden of delivering the various products – were clear, their selection inevitable' (Wheeley, 1991:13).

A major problem stems from the differing perspectives held by individuals regarding the role of organisations in general and universities in particular. Some argue strongly that organisations, including universities, should be regarded as more than just responsive to the market forces driven by the economy (Johnson, 1994; Currie & Woock, 1995; Marginson, 1995; Luke, 1997). For example, organisations comprise individuals who bring with them individual beliefs, attitudes and values about all manner of things relating to the ongoing life and continuing development of the organisation.

Smyth (1995:3) argues that the origins of the recent radical restructure of higher education in Western countries can be linked to the proclamations of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) with its espoused view that the rightful role of education is in the contribution it can make 'to international economic reconstruction and competitiveness' (p.3). From this decidedly 'human capital' perspective of higher education, the private sector should be encouraged to participate more fully in higher education, especially in research, while the higher education sector should be more competitive, as in the private market, and produce 'more flexible and responsive forms of labour' (p.3).

The tensions created by changing the boundaries between the state and higher education were closely linked to the need to maintain a balance:

'on the one hand, the necessary independence from bureaucratic intervention that constitutes the sine qua non of scholarship, and on the other, the requirement that the state have some measure of control over those professions ...termed 'value allocating bodies in society' – in effect, law, theology and medicine' (Neave, 1982:231 in Smyth, 1995:4).

From the late 70s, numerous substantial reviews have been conducted on the operations of higher education and colleges of advanced education in Australia

(Williams, 1979; Hudson, 1986; Everett & Entrekin, 1987; Wran, 1988; Ramsey, 1989; Aulich, 1990; Moses & Ramsden, 1992; Sheehan & Welch, 1996). From the late 1980s education became increasingly politicised and, as Bourke (1994) highlights, the changes in education policy were 'political responses to economic and social concerns that relate to Australia's perceived problems and not to education per se' (p.16). As Dawkins explains:

> 'In the present and likely future budgetary climate, constraints on public funding for the higher educational sector are expected to continue. It will be difficult for the Commonwealth alone to provide for a significant expansion in higher education enrolments, despite the benefits – economic and otherwise – that will result. Additional sources of funding will need to be investigated' (Dawkins, 1987(b):75).

Commenting on changes to funding arrangements in higher education, Bourke (1994) notes that:

> 'pressure on and within universities has resulted in an effective decrease in funding and staff time for research. Universities' discretionary funds have decreased and more potential researchers are competing for internal and national research funds. Additions to student numbers have not been funded at full cost, resulting in higher teaching loads for many staff' (Bourke, 1994:11).

This climate led to the creation of new obstacles to engagement in research by academics, namely: 'the allocation of funds for research, devolution of administrative responsibilities, increased class sizes, and, most importantly, time available for research' (Bourke, 1994:11). Of interest, though, is the extensive review on Australian research productivity (Ramsden, 1994), released about the same time, which suggests the average output by academics is not very high anyway; academics tend not to be prolific publishers and the majority of the work is produced by a small proportion of academics. While there has been an exponential growth in research output in the last thirty years, the average output is not particularly high and is extremely variable or skewed across institutions and individual academics.

2.2.2 The Dawkins restructuring model

By far the most significant impact came from the implementation measures introduced by the Federal Government between 1987-88. Under the direction of John Dawkins, the Federal Minister for Education at the time, major restructuring took place with the purpose of strengthening ties between education and economic productivity; this process was later to become commonly referred to as the 'Dawkinisation' of higher education; a period characterised by massive restructuring and an unprecedented acceleration of change across Australian institutes of higher education (Wheeley, 1991).

With the release of the Green Paper on Higher Education in December 1987, the Australian Government foreshadowed large scale restructuring; a move welcomed by those who saw opportunities in the directives of the Green Paper for growth and innovation. Optimists welcomed a more liberal system of credit transfer (between the tertiary institutions) that would enhance student mobility, provide greater opportunities for staff development and see the relaxation of restrictions on entrepreneurial activities. Institutions, it seemed, should take more responsibility for charting their future (Harman & Meek, 1988) through a changed emphasis whereby the higher education sector moves from 'a tightly controlled and highly regulated centralised bureaucratic system' towards one of greater self-regulation (Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989:7). In keeping with the Government's objective of achieving excellence in higher education, Dawkins (1988b:10) argues: 'measures will be implemented to encourage institutions to be efficient, flexible and responsive to changing national needs'. The benefits of a unified national system, the Government argued, would see institutions gain improved flexibility and opportunities for the determination of courses and research direction; strengthened control of resources including enhanced revenue-raising options; less government intervention in internal funding and management decisions; and modifications to the existing higher education funding base, including a shift away from an arbitrary system of institutional classification for funding to one based on agreed institutional priorities, with performance rated against those priorities (Dawkins, 1988b:27). As Dawkins states:

'No longer will (institutions) have to run to Canberra to get permission to do things which are essentially their own business. The 'dependent client' mentality which has tended to build up in the relationship between institutions and government must be eliminated' (Dawkins in Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989:7).

Meek and Goedegebuure (1989:7) argued, at that time, that the apparent move by the Government to de-regulate the system appeared motivated by more than the simple desire to increase institutional autonomy, but also by the view that greater competition within a free and open market would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the higher educational system itself, ensuring it is more responsive to industrial needs and economic imperatives, more productive and better managed. In this way, they argued, institutional autonomy and flexibility is juxtaposed with marketplace discipline. In endeavouring to overcome high public debt and economic inertia at that time, the Government hoped to relocate a substantial amount of the economic burden from the public to the private sector. As Meek and Goedegebuure explain:

'In economic terms, the government's deregulation in steering of higher education may be seen as a form of privatisation; in organisational theory terms, it may be seen as a theory of organisational natural selection' (p.7).

The general acceptance that economics and political ideology were among the primary reasons behind the Government's new strategy for higher education led to the 'more or less quiescent acceptance of the strategy by academics and the community in general' (Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989:7). Yet, although institutional leaders (as evidenced in Meek and Goedegebuure's survey responses) accepted the Government's claim that competition and management structures might be strengthened as a result of the changes, they were reluctant to accept the suggestion the changes would 'enhance autonomy and reduce central government control' (ibid., p.13). In order to manage such reforms, the prevailing view argued for larger institutional units that would be better able 'to handle autonomy and be more responsive to changing forces in the marketplace' (ibid., p.17). Mergers of one form or another therefore became prerequisites for some institutions to gain entry into the new Unified National System of higher

education in Australia. Dawkins' sentiments, expressed in the White Paper, again stressed the Government's commitment to this objective (Dawkins, 1988b).

Those less optimistic expressed concerns regarding the difficulties in the creation and management of multi-campus institutions, while other observers alluded to the destabilising effect of constant structural change on Australian higher education in the past. By continually shifting the component parts of the system, it was argued, governments could appear to be actively seeking to promote change, while actually accomplishing very little (Harman & Meek, 1988). Adams (1998:432) has noted the tendency of some academics to 'cry wolf with each new government policy direction'; this was especially prevalent during the period of the Dawkins changes.

In Australia, (as also in the UK) the funding and structure of the system changed between 1988-93, from a binary to a unified one; the release of the Green Paper and subsequent publication of the White Paper on higher education in 1988 effectively ended the binary system that had characterised Australian higher education since the Martin Report in 1964. These changes created an opportunity for the Colleges of Advanced Education in Australia (and polytechnics in the UK) to be upgraded as universities. Over a decade or so, a succession of events signalled the beginning of a distinct change in the Australian higher education sector. As Wheeley (1991) highlights, the range of pressures emanating from the external environment at that time was unprecedented in the history of Australian universities; these included:

- consolidation of smaller institutions into larger ones; the concept appearing in various guises- mergers, rationalisations, amalgamations – a 'bigness is better' syndrome;

- movement toward corporate managerialism, commercialisation and educational enterprising; adoption of (private sector) business terminology; efficiency, effectiveness, competition, and 'user pays' principle;

- harnessing higher education to economic growth and national priorities; the notion that government directives and 'the national interest' take precedence over the traditionally accepted internal missions of institutions; and

- adjustments to facilitate reductions in expenditure – relative funding cutbacks, exploration of alternative funding sources and establishment of funding practices based on assessed performance, competition and merit.

The Australian Government regarded it necessary to increase the annual output of graduates from 88,000 in 1986 to 125,000 by 2001 to support the Australian economy, yet had insufficient resources available to fund the initiative, thereby generating a need for supplementary funding (Miller, 1995:10) and/or cost reduction. The over-commitments made during the Whitlam era and increasing overseas indebtedness (Aitkin, 1988) provided fuel for the reforms and as McKinnon highlights:

> 'The uncertain state of the economy and pressures to rein in government expenditure lead to a conclusion, in light of the Labor Government having made good its election promise of 25,000 additional enrolments by 1986 rather than the target date of 1990, that funding for substantial additional expansion is unlikely to be found easily' (McKinnon, 1986:8).

Accepting that the start and end of any reform movement is difficult to define, Smart (1989:9-10) summarises the significant changes that occurred throughout higher education during the Dawkinisation period:

- The replacement of the university/college of advanced education (CAE) binary system by a 'Unified National System', with a marked reduction in the number of tertiary institutions through the amalgamation of smaller CAEs with each other or with universities. These amalgamations have been encouraged by financial and status incentives and sanctions against institutions, which remain below specified sizes. The crude assumption was that 'bigger is better';
- The concentration of research and postgraduate research training;
- Funding based on individual institutions negotiating directly with the ministry in terms of 'institutional teaching and research profiles'; and
- The reform of institutional management from a collegial to an efficient 'corporate' managerial model.

(Smart, 1989 cited in Miller, 1995:10)

Prior to the changes, pressures from within the system had already been building, especially from those within the Colleges of Advanced Education, thereby further strengthening the degree of receptivity within the system towards the changes. As indicated in the survey responses conducted by Meek and Goedegebuure (1989),

more than two thirds of their respondents welcomed the end of the binary system of higher education in Australia. Yet, as Smyth (1995) points out, although a number of the changes were welcome and even overdue at that time, the breadth of the changes had the potential 'to damage the institution of higher education, and produce degradation and alienation of the workers involved' (p.2).

Acceptance of the rhetoric needs careful scrutiny argues Bourke (1994), given the observation that politicians and senior educational administrators tend to couch changes to education policy and practice in terms of 'reforms', but that use of the word 'reform', used synonymously with 'make better', is often a deliberate ploy to make proposals for change sound more palatable, while their benefits remain questionable (Bourke, 1994:1). As Bourke reflects:

'Universities will survive as they have always done, by changing,
and not always in ways all of us would choose - to what extent this
has to happen is our fear' (Bourke, 1994:5).

Neave (1990:106) conveniently categorises the 1980s changes in higher education into three distinct phases: the first phase, corresponding roughly to the first half of the 1980s, saw a significant reduction in government spending on higher education; the second phase saw a dramatic increase of new mechanisms to facilitate greater central control over institutional costs and performance; and the final phase reinforced these trends, although as Smyth (1995) argues, the interventionist state was quite satisfied to be presented as the evaluative state. Highly critical of the changes, Bourke (1994) argues strongly:

'Creation of the Unified National System of tertiary education was
forced by the Federal Government, through the purse, with
amalgamations establishing institutions of at least a minimum size
being the main method used to create the system. Development of a
Unified National System, by fiat, was short-sighted because it
became clear within two years that the Government was unwilling,
or unable, to fund all the new institutions at the level previously
considered appropriate for universities. Further evidence of the
ideological rather than rational nature of the change is that some of
the newly amalgamated institutions are already breaking up again to
form independent universities' (Bourke, 1994:4).

Continuing this discussion, Bourke argues that it is only natural the TAFE colleges would take action to fill the void in professional courses created when

the Colleges of Advanced Education exited; what this suggests, he argues, is that a two-tier rather than a uniform system is inevitable at the post-secondary school level of education. Accompanying this, Bourke notes, are large decreases in the sizes of some Faculties of Education in Australia and some could vanish altogether (p.5). The question that remains, according to Miller (1995:11), is 'whether institutional mergers, the establishment of a unified system of higher education, and new arrangements for the funding of research and teaching separately within the same institutions will yield the desired result'. As Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) aptly highlight, all change contains ambivalence and dilemmas and:

> 'when we set off on a journey to achieve significant change, we do
> not know in advance all the details of how to get there, or even what
> it is going to be like when we arrive' (p.345).

Professor Ian Lowe of Griffith University, commenting in 1995, is in no doubt the journey was exceedingly hard for the new universities many of which, he claims, had inadequate facilities and problems making ends meet.

> 'The reforms imposed on the university system while John Dawkins
> was Minister for Education...amounted to a systematic erosion of
> the capacity of universities to provide quality teaching and pursue
> research of international excellence' (Lowe as reported by Garcia,
> 1995).

In summary, Marginson (1997) notes that as a result of the reforms of 1987-1989, the Australian higher education sector underwent a radical restructuring process that saw it emerge as 'a quasi-market with expanding zones of commercial activity'. Through increased competition, the higher education sector was expected to become more efficient, more responsive to customers, and more innovatory in its practice. Yet while a culture of competition did develop at the time, the increasing dependency on private funding and ongoing competitive pressures worked, according to Marginson, to strengthen the dominant positions occupied by the leading institutions. This might not have been unexpected, given that a significant factor in the collapse of the binary system was the tendency towards 'upward academic drift', a process whereby 'those institutions at the bottom of the status structure tend to emulate those at the top' (Meek &

Goedegebuure, 1989). Another outcome of the changes, argues Marginson, was that rather than an improvement in the incentives offered to improve customer responsiveness, efficiency and innovation, these were in effect reduced. More recently, the market-oriented reforms that occurred in the mid 90s resulted in a further increase in the degree of protection afforded to the leading institutions. As Marginson (1997:5) comments:

> 'Overall in the 1987-1997 period it appears that in the higher education market the eight strongest universities (Sandstones) were strengthened in relative terms, the four leading universities of technology (Utechs) moved up the hierarchy, but most of the other ten pre-1987 universities (Wannabee sandstones) lost ground'.

2.3   MANAGEMENT OF MERGERS

Amalgamations and mergers in higher education had taken place previous to the Dawkins initiatives. These rarely proceeded smoothly, invariably threatening traditional institutional loyalties and administrative arrangements (Harman, 1988). As Harman observes:

> 'Completed mergers generally lead to major organisational upheavals and, in the process, there are usually clear winners and losers. At the same time, mergers can help solve problems faced by individual institutions and by tertiary education systems. Among other things, they can help ensure survival and provide opportunities for growth, for diversification, for re-adjustment and for innovation' (Harman, 1988:1).

For the purposes of this thesis, the terms 'merger' and 'amalgamation' are used interchangeably, and their meaning is in keeping with the definition provided by Harman (1988):

> 'Basically a merger is a combination of two or more separate institutions into a single organisational entity. Generally this means control within the new of continuing organisations by a single governing body and single chief executive. Further the common practice is for all assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former institutions to be transferred to the single new or continuing institution' (p.2).

Harman (1988) further distinguishes between various types of mergers or amalgamations: voluntary and involuntary; consolidations and acquisitions; intra-

or inter-sectoral, between institutions having similar or disparate fields of interest, and when involving two institutions only or a greater number.

While research conducted on amalgamations, mergers and closures is limited, several studies or papers are worthy of attention, including Brazier (1973), Gibson (1976), Clemson (1980), Birt (1985), Byers (1981), Jevons (1981), Potts (1997), and Watson, Nettle and Scott (1997). Over the period 1969 to 1975 proposals for mergers took place between a number of teachers' colleges and universities at Armidale, Newcastle, and Wollongong, as reported by Gibson (1976) who noted that considerable anxiety was generated amongst the staff involved. Issues such as job security, status and rank were prominent amongst the staff from the former teachers' colleges, while academic standing and status were issues for the university staff who expressed concern regarding the dilution effect resulting from incorporating a lesser institution.

Consequently, all the merger proposals ran into difficulties; for example, lack of clear consensus about the type of institutions to emerge, poor budgeting and protracted negotiations between college administrations. The existing university in each centre, on the other hand, saw benefits in reduced competition for students, access to greater resources and access to better teacher education programs.

A merger that was achieved somewhat more successfully was that between the Bendigo Institute of Technology (BIT) and the State College of Victoria in Bendigo (SCV Bendigo), obviously a less ambitious undertaking than the merger attempts at Armidale, Newcastle and Wollongong as no existing university was involved. Even so, the proposal, which was initiated in 1973 and finally took place in 1976, experienced a complicated series of events even predating 1973 (Brazier, 1973). Harman et al. (1985:25) report that the BIT staff were committed to the merger and the formation of a new institution comprising a new top level administrative structure, whereas the staff of the teachers' college hoped for administrative autonomy from the Victorian Education Department under the State College of Victoria umbrella. In the event, the merger became complicated by other events at the time such as the proposal to found a fourth university for

Victoria in a country centre (Clemson, 1980). Further, staff at both BIT and BTC developed fears and suspicions that appear to have affected their behaviour; a condition not assisted by the increased individual workload that resulted.

Although both these institutions were located in the same city and both were government funded CAEs, the merger demonstrated that there are complex relationships between each college and their respective communities. There were major difficulties in emphasis for academic programs, teaching styles, institutional orientation and mission, the range of students and in the buildings and facilities. An example of difference is that the Bendigo SCV placed more emphasis on their students learning teaching skills concurrently with lecture attendance throughout the course while BIT deferred field experience to the end of the course (Harman et al., 1985:26).

Although these two institutions at Bendigo could be assumed to be as compatible as is possible on the surface, nevertheless the negotiations for merger became protracted, and the rumours and delays created a climate of uncertainty about the future. Much administrative time that should have been directed towards the efficient discharge of everyday demands of college life was wasted in solving the political problems created by the uncertainties and suspicions. Staff interviewed at the time (Batt et al., 1975) identified losses such as the need for a new combined image to replace the separate images, differing teaching methods, job security, conditions of employment, prestige, the sense of community within each institution, and respective involvement with the local community outside the institution. Short-term disputes tended to override issues concerning the longer-term future.

On another front, amalgamations of libraries at academic institutions have been carried out both in Australia and overseas. It is interesting to note that, although library issues have not played a major role in the planning of higher education mergers, nonetheless they have created significant problems at implementation of mergers (refer Harman et al., 1985). When amalgamations do take place there is a tendency towards centralisation of control of library resources and services.

The process of amalgamation therefore rarely proceeds quickly. In the 1970s, a merger in Tasmania took five years in planning and implementation. In the process, regional issues became intertwined with the goal of amalgamation to the extent of being divisive. The establishment of Deakin University in Victoria by a process of amalgamation involved a two-stage process of staff downsizing. Those not offered jobs in the university were given jobs within the Victorian teaching service or public service. Similarly, the amalgamation of Wollongong Institute of Education with the University of Wollongong that began in 1976 (after the earlier merger mentioned) was not completed until 1981, in spite of considerable resolve by the individuals most involved with the process of change.

In studying the history of mergers in the USA, Shirley and Peters (1976) found that the merger process is more likely to proceed smoothly if the time taken is relatively short and the leadership perceptive and sensitive to the concerns of staff; long, protracted negotiations increase anxiety levels and tension, and affect morale. The process of amalgamation is greatly assisted by quality leadership, especially if those leading have expertise in the management of change.

2.4   FORMATION OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

As a result of the Australian Government's release of its White Paper, mergers of one form or another became prerequisites for entry into the post-binary Unified National System of higher education. This impacted on the four Catholic colleges of advanced education situated along the eastern coast of Australia. The formation of the Australian Catholic University took place through the amalgamation of four colleges comprising eight campuses located in Brisbane, Ballarat, Melbourne (2), Sydney (3 subsequently reduced to 2) and Canberra. The colleges were: McAuley College, Queensland with one campus at Mitchelton, Brisbane; The Catholic College of Education, New South Wales comprising three campuses: MacKillop at North Sydney, Mt St Mary at Strathfield, and Castle Hill; The Institute of Catholic Education, Victoria comprising three campuses: Mercy at Ascot Vale, Christ at Oakleigh, and Aquinas at Ballarat; and Signadou College of Teacher Education, Australian Capital Territory.

2.4.1 Origins of the University

Since colonial days 'the Catholic Church in Australia has devoted its educational resources principally to primary education' (O'Hearn, 2001:458). The early bishops insisted on the primacy of Catholic schooling; several bishops decreed that in new areas where schools were to be built, these should even take precedence over the building of a church. Given these priorities, it is not surprising that the Catholic Church placed such a heavy emphasis on Catholic teacher education programs (ibid., p.458).

Towards the late 1800s, Catholic teacher-training was largely carried out by 'learning on the job' (O'Hearn, 2001:458). Academic qualifications were minimal and largely involved six months (later to become twelve months) of study in English, History, French, Latin, Science, and Geography, not necessarily a sound basis for the primary school classroom career that awaited the trainee. Consequently, teaching standards were poor and the bishops sought support from overseas religious orders and congregations; an association still in evidence today (ibid., p.459).

The quality of teacher education (mainly involving novices in holy orders) improved markedly in the first few decades of the 20th century. A number of colleges were established specifically to train young nuns in primary school teaching. In some instances nuns were admitted to examinations at the secular universities; central training colleges in Sydney and Melbourne worked in cooperation with their respective central universities. As an example, Archbishop Mannix ensured the Catholic Teachers College in Melbourne be established at Ascot Vale (Mercy College) so as to be close to the University of Melbourne.

Rationalisation of colleges occurred in both Sydney and Melbourne in the 1970s. In Sydney five separate colleges were rationalised to two in 1980 and later, in 1982, to one Catholic College of Education. In Melbourne, seven independent Colleges became federated as the Institute of Catholic Education as part of the State College of Victoria in 1974.

Accompanying each of these changes came the demand for higher entrance standards to the courses, and an upgrade in accreditation on the completion of the course: certificates became diplomas and diplomas eventually became degrees (O'Hearn, 2001:461). Another significant change through the process, particularly in the latter decades of the 1900s, was that the student body grew away from one of clerical aspiration to one that was both co-educational and lay. In the first few decades of the 20th century the nuns and the brothers lecturing in the institutions 'were all Catholic, as were the students' (ibid., p.461). The impact of the post-World War 2 era and the population growth of the Migration Years created the necessity for a broader view, and the acceptance that staff and students of the (later) Australian Catholic University are characteristically 'of many faiths, and some of no discernible religious affiliation at all' (ibid., p.461).

2.4.2 Nursing in transition

Nursing in Australia had entered the tertiary system only in recent times and the improvement in the status of nursing had developed in incremental stages over a number of years. Before the 1970s, education for nurses was conducted in the hospitals and a home for nurses generally existed alongside the major government and Catholic hospitals. The nurses later strongly supported the policy of professionalising nursing. As noted by Kellett (1987), an essential step in this process was the transfer from hospitals to tertiary institutions.

Although the development of tertiary courses progressed differently in each state in matters of detail, the upgrades in Catholic Nursing in Victoria are typical of the transition history in this discipline. In Victoria, the Government was initially reluctant to support course development at the tertiary level but accreditation was finally granted in 1980. Then followed an investigation (called the Sax Committee of Inquiry into Nurse Education and Training), which reported favourably on nursing as higher education. Again the state Government of the day was reluctant to implement the recommendations which revolved around acceptance of Nurse Education within the State College of Victoria of which the Institute of Catholic Education was now part. Over the period 1986 to 1988 representations to the Government by the Institute continued while the various

Catholic education campuses introduced Nursing as a Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing). Eventually the Government agreed to fund these courses as they were progressively introduced. The course upgrades continued with the formation of the Australian Catholic University. Within a relatively short time period, Nursing had therefore moved from being closely connected to hospitals (indentured) to a university discipline that offered degrees even to Ph D level. The increased emphasis on the theoretical component in the education curriculum for nurses was a significant change, whereas in the previous system, the number of hours available for theory within the hospital system appeared to have been stretched to the limit. The reluctance of government to correct this imbalance stemmed, in part, from its desire to retain what was effectively a 'captured workforce'. Given the financial ramifications of any change, the possibility of gaining a higher funding allocation for 'education' as opposed to 'work' was rather limited.

Academics pointed to the union movement as a significant force in the generation of change, and in successfully promoting the changes in nursing in Australia. As one academic explains:

> 'The major push came from the Nurses Union in NSW, so it was a union movement supported by its members. Nurse educators could see how it had developed in America. Finally we gained support from government, which could see benefit in not paying for training in an apprentice style system. So we are very young in the tertiary system' (Interviewee 59).

Within NSW, Nursing moved to the Catholic College and then soon after, the College became part of the newly formed University. Respondent (60) notes the significance of these changes:

> 'It has only been since 1985 that nursing has been in higher education at all. Then it moved from a training certificate to a diploma from a CAE. Now it is a degree from a university. There have been huge changes' (60).

In Queensland, the move to the tertiary sector in 1990 was relatively slower than other institutions in the state, and by the time nursing moved from schools of

nursing in hospitals, QUT had already been in operation for a number of years. As this respondent explains:

> 'Nursing moved into that sector at that stage, but up until then we had been essentially Schools of Nursing in hospitals. It was a very big change for us but we did move into McAuley College. We moved into the Adult Education sector and not the University sector' (49).

While the improved professionalisation of the discipline had resulted in a more qualified workforce, some academics argued that the journey to reach this point 'had been a long struggle to achieve and made harder by the fact that we are mainly women and union agitation is different to that of men' (49). As respondent (59) explains: 'the majority of nurses are female...there has been a type of oppression but we don't want to be seen as second class. We want to be recognised for our own abilities and skills, as professionals'. Nurses, in particular, view themselves as 'a caring group of people', and this provides the framework through which they approach the things they do. Respondent (49) explained this as 'like living your philosophy, ...then everything that you do is presented in that same way'. Considering nurses comprised a large portion of the workforce, the opportunity to become a very powerful political lobby readily presented itself; however, the readiness to accept the role of carer had mitigated against the utilisation of that power in ways that 'an equivalent group of men would be able to use it' (49).

2.4.3   Campus snapshots

2.4.3.1   Queensland

McAuley College, Queensland was formed in 1955 by the Sisters of Mercy for the preparation of Sisters from the Order to teach in Catholic Schools. The mission of the College was soon extended to include members of other religious orders and then again in 1973, to admit lay students to the College. In 1976, the College was relocated from All Hallows in the city to Dutton Park, effectively taking over the former St Ursula's Secondary School. In the same year, the responsibility for the College was handed over to the Archdiocese of Brisbane with the Sisters of Mercy continuing close association through the Governing Council and the

appointment of the Principalship. In 1983 the College governance was further modified when the Bishops of Queensland assumed responsibility for the College through the Provincial Corporation.

Government recognition through state government accreditation of courses and National registration of awards, and Federal funding as a non-government Teachers' College were significant developments in the establishment of a Catholic Institute of higher education in Queensland (ACU Handbook, Qld, 1995)

The campus was re-established at Michelton in 1985 after land and buildings were acquired from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Financial support was predominantly from the Catholic Church in Queensland. The year 1990 saw the realisation of more than a decade of work with the introduction of Nurse Education at the College. At the end of 1990 the Council of McAuley College formally handed responsibility for the College and its operations to Australian Catholic University.

2.4.3.2   Australian Capital Territory

The *Signadou College of Education, ACT* derives its name 'Signadou' from a legend associated with Dominic de Guzman, who founded the Dominican Order in the thirteenth century. When praying for direction in his life's work, Dominic was given a 'Sign of God' (Signe de Dieu) urging him to teach the truth throughout the university towns of Europe. In keeping with the tradition of Dominic, the Dominican Sisters have remained committed to education establishing schools and colleges in five continents.

The Sisters came to Australia from Ireland and England after an invitation from the Catholic bishops. On arrival in 1867, the Sisters established their first school in Maitland, NSW and this has now grown to the present situation where they are engaged in the educational apostolate in every state in Australia and in the ACT. The Sisters also assume responsibility for a mission in the Solomon Islands. The sisters are involved in education at the primary and secondary level, as well as in the education of the blind, the deaf and the intellectually disabled.

The Teacher Training College for Dominican Sisters was founded in Maitland in 1926. The College was relocated in Wahroonga, Sydney after the serious Hunter Valley floods of 1955. Towards the late 1950s, the Major Superiors of the Religious Orders of Women in Australia sought approval from the Dominican Order to admit sisters of other religious orders to their College. The Dominicans agreed and the College was then moved to Canberra, opening in 1963. From its foundation the College was owned by the Dominican Order and administered by the members of the Council of the Dominican Sisters of Australia by whom the Principal was appointed and to whom she was responsible. Significant changes in Catholic education resulted in a decline in the number of religious sisters teaching in the schools and the corresponding demand for lay teachers to replace them. The College became a major provider of teachers for the Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese and for the dioceses of New South Wales.

The expansion of the College in the 1980s, government funding and accreditation of courses, and changes within the Dominican order necessitated a significant broadening of the policy of governance. A company was formed in 1987 to represent the Dominican Fathers and the Dominican Sisters of Australia and an enlarged Council was made responsible for the administration and management of the College. In 1989, Signadou College joined with the other Australian Catholic colleges to form a Catholic Institute of Higher Education, thence the Australian Catholic University.

A particular aspect of Signadou's history that is germane to this study is that its origins were based on a grand, national ecclesiastical vision that, as Brown (1996) reflects, is over: 'A National Project in the National Capital with a National Aim to fill a National Need no longer had the inspirational ring about it' (p.18). This, she posits, is neither to devalue the motives nor the work of its founders, but 'simply to note that a different world, and a decidedly changing Church, called for responses which were no longer certain and easy, nor predictable' (p.18).

2.4.3.3 Victoria

In Victoria, the *Institute of Catholic Education* was officially acknowledged as part of the State College of Victoria in 1974 when Aquinas College (Ballarat), Christ College (Oakleigh), Christian Brothers College (Box Hill), and Mercy College (Ascot Vale) were incorporated in the Institute of Catholic Education, State College of Victoria, (S.C.V.). This was the culmination of the rationalisation of Catholic Teacher Training in Victoria into a single, government funded, autonomous College of Advanced Education. However, the Institute itself dated back to an earlier period.

The concept of a multi-campus complex was not new to the Victorian Catholic education colleges. The amalgamations and incorporation into the state government system were the Victorian response to the changes in the Federal Government's role and funding arrangements under Prime Minister Whitlam. Incorporation was an essential prerequisite for Commonwealth funding in order to abolish tuition fees. In the event, much discussion took place before final incorporation as a constituent college into the SCV in December 1974.

The three main Catholic campuses, Aquinas College (Ballarat), Christ College (Oakleigh) and Mercy College (Ascot Vale), had already incorporated several smaller teacher education facilities from within the Melbourne metropolitan area. When the institute joined the SCV it was able to do so in a way that maintained its Christian ethos, probably best enunciated by the Very Reverend Eric D'Arcy as Chairman of the Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Teacher Education Board in a letter dated 16 February 1973 to the Hon Kim Beasley, Commonwealth Minister for Education, as follows:

> 'The underlying rationale of our position may be indicated quite briefly. It is commonplace that a teacher's college is, in a unique way, a centre of civilisation: not just of its preservation, as is a museum, nor of its acquisition by individuals, as is to some extent a university; a teacher's college is, of its very nature, a centre of the transmission of civilisation. Our colleges' concern is with the transmission of a distinctively Christian civilisation. For any Christian, and above all for the Christian teacher, religion cannot be separated from life; the teaching of religion always suffers if it is

isolated from the development of the whole person. Those who teach in our schools must be people with a pervading sense of the religious dimension of life in all their teaching. There is no such thing as Christian mathematics, or art or sport; but our colleges seek to teach one to do mathematics, to love the arts, to enjoy sport, as a part of Christian life. This is achieved by the osmosis of living in an explicitly Christian institution, as much as by formal instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, in recent years our colleges have been developing as centres of research and experimentation in the transmission of that Christian culture' (D'Arcy, 1973, cited in Kellett, 1987:6).

The next decade of the Institute's history was made difficult by reduced funding and cuts to student numbers instituted both by the State and Commonwealth Governments (e.g., razor gang, 1981, during which twenty-three colleges within Victoria were reduced to thirteen; however, the Institute of Catholic Education with its three campuses survived). The Institute was successful not only in bringing together three very different traditions (and loyalties) but also in developing Institute-wide policy on administrative issues such as staff selection procedures; terms and conditions of employment; course planning, development and monitoring; financial management; review processes; reporting mechanisms; and research activities. The first degree to be offered in Catholic Teacher Education in Victoria, a Bachelor of Education (Primary) occurred in 1980, a high point for the Institute.

J.N. Kellett (1987) concluded his summary of the development of the Institute with these words, 'There are signs that the Institute's second decade will be more tranquil than its first' (p.69). Unbeknowns to Kellett, further changes necessitating national amalgamations, and extrication from the state government education system, were just ahead.

2.4.3.4 New South Wales

Developments in NSW had fortuitously better positioned the campuses for amalgamation as a university than had been the case in Victoria. In 1982 the Mount Saint Mary College (Strathfield) in association with Polding College (Good Samaritan Teachers College, Glebe Point and the Catholic College of

Education, Castle Hill) upgraded the three year Diploma of Teaching course into a four year Bachelor Degree of Education.

At the same time the Federal Government placed increased pressure on all the Catholic Teachers Colleges in Sydney to amalgamate if funding was to continue. This brought together the former Polding College, the Mount Saint Mary College of Education (Strathfield) and the Catholic Teachers College (North Sydney) to form a single *Catholic College of Education*. This resulted in a new three-campus institution, with one administration situated at North Sydney and the closure of the Glebe campus. Thus, simultaneously, bachelor degree status and administrative amalgamation had been achieved well before the moves towards creation of a national university. This was an educational institution of considerable magnitude.

Several functional transfers were carried out in 1983. In 1985 Nursing was introduced as a full-time study program and a Masters degree in Religious Education was also made available. The Bachelor of Education course was revised in 1987 to better prepare teachers for work in Secondary years 7 to 12 in a variety of subjects. In 1990 a second Bachelor of Education course (Multidisciplinary Studies) was offered to help develop specialised teachers for secondary schools. A Bachelor of Arts course was also offered in 1990.

In 1991 the Catholic College of Education Sydney, joined with the campuses in Queensland, Victoria and the ACT to form ACU. Administration for the total university was centralised at North Sydney.

(Material in this section adapted from the Signadou College of Education Handbook, 1989, and ACU Faculty of Education Handbooks, 1995-2000).

2.5 BUILDING THE NEW UNIVERSITY

2.5.1 Impetus for change

The decision to embark on an organisational change process is influenced by many factors including the need for survival. Yet although the formation of this University gained its impetus from the Dawkins mandate, the amalgamation was

a voluntary process (Harman & Meek, 1988). As the individual colleges were too small to enter the UNS independently, the amalgamation proved to be the only means to retain a tertiary institution with a defined Catholic character (Gascoigne, 1993). Support for the notion of a Catholic university had not arisen so much from the Catholic community, but rather from 'a number of influential Catholics who saw an opportunity to form a Catholic university in the fluid situation, which emerged with the end of the binary system' (Gascoigne, 1993). Support for the project was not without its detractors, and some expressed concern regarding the need for such an institution, the realisability of the project, and the manner in which the task was being approached (Hill, 1991). Any residual doubts, however, regarding the commitment of the Catholic Church to the change were dispelled by Archbishop Little in his Inauguration address in 1992, in which he referred to the 'story of steady struggle, of perseverance, of patient endeavour by the many people around the country who argued, planned, dreamed, lobbied and toiled to bring it to reality' (Little, 1992:2). The new University gained its distinctive nature from its Catholic traditions, he posited, and 'its strength, inspiration, continuing motivation, ethos and purposes arose from a faith commitment' (Little, 1992:2).

Although the Roman Catholic Church in Australia had been active in primary and secondary education for almost 200 years, the concept of a Catholic university was unfamiliar to many Australians at the time of its formation. Yet its establishment followed in the footsteps of another newly established Australian university, notably, Notre Dame in Fremantle, Western Australia. Indeed, as a member of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the ACU 'joined with more than 170 Catholic universities worldwide in a continuing tradition of almost a thousand years' (ACU Inauguration, 1992). In the presence of other Australian universities, the ACU was acutely aware of its smallness and lack of experience. Initially, encouragement and guidance came through sponsorship arrangements with La Trobe University, Melbourne, and the provision of advice and assistance in the selection of senior staff, management, and the development of higher degrees and research programs.

2.5.2 Creating the structures

Unlike past mergers that had seen the creation of multi-campus tertiary institutions in the one state, the formation of the Australian Catholic University saw the emergence of a single institution, bringing together four colleges with eight campuses spanning across three states and a territory along the eastern coast of Australia. The enormity of this task provided extraordinary challenges for management to ensure the smooth transition and integration of eight disparate entities, each with its own history and significantly different academic and organisational culture.

Linked to the structural changes was the need to establish University-based symbols and nomenclature that would signal an end to the 'old ways of doing things' as applied to the previous colleges and institutes of education, and to herald in the 'birth' of the new organisation and culture (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Schein, 1992). The symbols chosen followed traditional lines, and the identification of the 'new' university became encapsulated in the symbolism of the shield and etched in the accompanying words of the Psalmist: 'You yourself will remain unscathed, with His faithfulness for shield and buckler' (Psalm 91, The Jerusalem Bible). Inspiration for the contemporary academic gowns came from the traditional costumes of the middle ages, and the selection of wattle blossom rather than the more traditional oak leaves, served to highlight the national character of the University. The eight campuses comprising the new University are symbolically captured in the four brass circles positioned below the University symbol of the Processional Staff, essentially creating the effect of a globe divided into eight sectors. The symbolism inherent in the sphere speaks to the catholicity underpinning the general university tradition and to the dispersal of the eight campuses of the University over four geographic territories.

With the creation of a multi-campus institution, the arduous task of establishing University-wide organisational structures commenced, including the creation of national faculties for a single set of awards with a common standard. In the resulting restructure of the colleges, the Faculties of Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, and Education were secured and academics working within the

structures of the previous institutes nominated their faculty preference for work in the newly established University. Following the creation of Faculties, state-based schools and departments were formed to facilitate local operations. Later discipline-based networks were organised under the direction of a convenor, and academics across all campuses were encouraged to work collaboratively on curriculum review, research and teaching projects.

In the first year of operation, 7500 students enrolled in courses at the University, many of whom were students in the position of advanced standing from the amalgamated colleges; by 1992 the numbers had grown to include some 8,285 students, 420 academic staff, and 380 non-academic staff (ACU Chronicle, 1992:4). At the time of the amalgamation, the University offered study in the faculties of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Health Sciences; initially degrees and diplomas were offered at undergraduate and postgraduate level in Arts, Business, Computer Science, Nursing, Religious Education, Social Sciences and Teaching (ACU Inauguration, 1992). Plans were also underway to establish Theology as an academic discipline, although this was not regarded as being a straightforward process. In a special Report to the Principal's Sub-Committee in 1990, the Special Advisory Group (SAG) noted the importance of theology in the new University, while identifying 'yet-to-be-resolved' political and educational issues in this area; namely: the relationship between existing Religious Studies departments and staff in the amalgamating colleges and the proposed faculty; the present and future relationship between the faculty and existing theological colleges; and the role of Church hierarchy in the faculty (ACU Report, April, 1990).

Reflective note

This chapter has created the contextual framework that surrounds this study of the impact of organisational change on academics within the new University formed during a period of unprecedented radical change within the higher education in Australia in the late 1980s. While the review of the literature reveals considerable study of the nature and impact of the changes at the structural level (e.g., Smart, 1989; Coaldrake, 1995; Smyth, 1995) less is available on the impact

of the changes within the higher education sector as perceived by the academics themselves. A major aim of this study is to address this need and further knowledge in this area through an exploration of academics' perceptions of the changes, and the impact of these on their personal and professional lives.

With the Inauguration ceremony came high aspirations and expectations regarding the nature and future direction of the University as outlined in the speeches of key members of the Church and educational community. The decision to radically change the structure and operations of the previous colleges was not entered into lightly and emerged from the collective forces comprising governmental pressure, opportunistic circumstances and a strong desire by key members within the Catholic community. Organisational change programs are fraught with difficulty and rarely proceed smoothly. The aspirations and ideals such as those espoused at the Inauguration may encounter overwhelming obstacles before being realised, and it is imperative that these be managed well in order to minimise the negative impacts, especially on those working within the University. The following chapter provides a critical review of theoretical models relevant to developing an understanding of organisations and the organisational change process.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Introduction

Radical changes in organisational structures as evidenced in the formation of the new University far exceed the mere refinement of existing operations; rather they entail the introduction of a new paradigm for organising and managing the University, accompanied by different ways of perceiving, thinking and behaving. This chapter critically examines the research literature relevant to developing an understanding of the nature and complexity of the processes of organisational change, its possible causes and practical effects. This necessarily requires consideration of the metaphors individuals draw upon in order to understand and manage organisations, as well as consideration of the role of organisational politics in facilitating or impeding the change process.

3.1 THE COMPLEXITY OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Organisational change is a ubiquitous phenomenon that may occur in response to an extensive array of external forces including economic, technological, cultural, legal, sociological, and more; or it can be internally motivated, directly aimed at improving existing methods and practices (Cummings & Worley, 1993:3).

> 'Movements in external conditions such as competition, innovation, public demand, and government policy require that new strategies, methods of working, and outputs be devised for an organisation merely to continue at its present level of operations. Internal factors also promote change in that managers and other members of an organisation may seek not just its maintenance but also its growth, in order to secure improved benefits and satisfactions for themselves' (Child & Kieser, 1981:28).

The constant pressure to adapt to changing external and internal forces has resulted in significant upheaval to organisational life in recent years, as evidenced by unsteady economic growth, and large-scale mergers, acquisitions, restructuring or downsizing programs. Increasingly, organisations think globally, and search for niche markets with international appeal; many businesses now operate transnationally, where markets remain local or regional while competition is global (Hesselbein et al., 1997). As Mitroff (1987) warned at that time:

'For all practical purposes, all business today is global. Those individual businesses, firms, industries, and whole societies that clearly understand the new rules of doing business in a world economy will prosper; those that do not will perish' (p.ix).

The challenge is how to reconcile the need to think globally and remain competitive in the global market while facing the demand for adaptation and responsiveness to the local market, culture and lifestyle (Doz & Prahalad, 1986). Arguably, the benefits of globalisation are elusive (Butler, 1998), and, many now find their working conditions have deteriorated significantly. What is not in doubt, however, is that the nature, distribution and organisation of work are changing rapidly (Butler, 1998). As Butler explains:

'the profile of the labour force and patterns of (paid) work contribute to change, including an increase in women's labour-force participation; a decline in full-time (core) jobs, and an increase in part-time, casual (peripheral, precarious and marginalised) employment; a decline in manufacturing and increase in service work; and continuing high unemployment, including youth unemployment' (p.72-3).

Organisational change has created environments of unprecedented uncertainty and chaos (Dess & Beard, 1984; Peters, 1987). Stability is no longer the prevalent condition of our age (Conner, 1998) and the sources of pressure 'cross all boundaries, profoundly affecting enterprises regardless of size, complexity, industry sector or geography' (Nadler, 1998:14). Competition is seen as the overarching source of change, intensified through the globalisation of the marketplace (Nadler, 1998; Hall, 1999). Evaporation of geographic boundaries between traditional competitors, the emergence of new players as traditional oligarchies collapse, and continual introduction of technological innovations provide the fuel for competitive pressure and the processes of change. Companies are now valued for their intellectual capital; knowing how to develop new products and services and being able to deliver them to markets quickly and efficiently, are highly rated assets (Wood et al., 1998). As highlighted by Cummings and Worley (1993):

'Increased foreign competition has forced many smokestack industries to downsize and to become leaner, more efficient, and flexible. Deregulation has pushed financial institutions, telephone

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utilities, and airlines to rethink business strategies and to reshape how they operate. Public demands for fewer taxes and more services have forced government agencies to streamline operations and to deliver more for less. Rapid changes in technologies have rendered many organisational practices obsolete, pushing firms to be continually innovative and nimble' (p.521).

The rapidity of change also impacts directly on the level of predictability made possible by organisations, leading to greater environmental uncertainty (Duncan, 1972, 1973; Leifer & Huber, 1977; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and the necessity for greater effort in monitoring and assessing organisational and environmental pressures (Milliken, 1987; Vecchio et al., 1992). Further, the acceleration and scope of social change (Mackay, 1993), lack of confidence in the ability to assign probabilities to environmental factors, the paucity of historical information relevant to important decision-making, coupled with the costs of poor decision-making, all contribute to the increasing uncertainty (Duncan, 1972) and intensify the need for the adoption of strategies, structures, and management practices that allow flexible, responsive and adaptive behaviours (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Robbins & Barnwell, 1993; Wood et al., 1998). Paradoxically, the more energy expended in the development of measures to increase environmental predictability and certainty, the less likely it is that certainty and predictability will occur. As Beetham (1974:28) aptly highlights,

'Whenever men seek to increase their freedom by making life more predictable, the structures they create take on a life of their own and come to limit that freedom'.

In an endeavour to maintain internal consistency and equilibrium some organisations cling to existing forms for too long and, as a result, remain structurally unchanged for considerable lengths of time, but then undergo periods of major restructuring (Miller & Friesen, 1984). Failure to respond to environmental changes predetermines that some organisations will remain inert and burdened by organisational structures that become increasingly less suited and responsive to environmental demands. As environmental pressures increase so too does the level of organisational vulnerability, leading some organisations to become more tightly controlled and less risky in their endeavours (see Khandwalla, 1972; Pfeffer & Leblebici, 1973; Corcoran & Wallich, 1992).

Ironically, this has the undesirable effect of stifling innovatory behaviour, characteristically found in more loosely coupled organisations (Weick, 1976), mitigating against future organisational growth (Hall, 1999). The ideal course of action is an appropriate alignment of organisational strategies, structures, and resources, aimed at what might be possible, rather than what is not (Porter, 1980). The need for a full justification before any action is permissible ensures that 'nothing new or different ever gets done; action is the antidote to the constraining and dulling effects of the 'dead hand of structure' and to the pervasiveness of uncertainty and ambiguity' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:332).

Organisational effectiveness is more likely to occur when structures mirror environmental conditions (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Even within the same organisation, different structures may be needed for specific divisions or departments facing different environments. Despite the inherent tension in coordinating these, effective organisations are able to find ways to attain higher levels of both differentiation and integration (Bolman & Deal, 1991:81).

Successful organisations are never static (Bartol et al., 1998:751). Over the past decade, a growing number of organisations have undertaken to implement the kinds of changes needed to survive and prosper in a complex, turbulent, and commercially operating environment (refer Wood et al., 1998:622). Traditional conceptions of organisation (e.g., hierarchical, bureaucratic) now make way for newer models that are designed to be more flexible, and involve employees in key decisions, set priorities for results from 'outside' the organisation and achieve performance in the market (Cummings & Worley, 1993). Within the workplace, individuals are constantly challenged to deal with turbulence and continuous change (Drucker, 1992). This, Peters (1987) argues, is the way of the future:

> 'The turbulent marketplace demands that we make innovation a way of life for everyone. We must learn as individuals and as organisations to welcome change and innovation as vigorously as we have fought it in the past' (Peters, 1987).

Decisions to embark on organisational change may reflect, or anticipate, major changes in the organisation's operating environment. Just as discontinuous change is more intense than incremental change, so reactive change is more

intense than anticipatory change (Nadler, 1998; Wood et al., 1998). The degree or extent of the changes will naturally vary according to organisational needs, and will range from large scale, radical change through to more focused change aimed at supporting the new direction through specifically altering the corporate culture, business strategy, and internal structures and processes (Tichy, 1983; Bowman, 1994). Of necessity, changes to the entire organisation require the implementation of different strategies and approaches to those focused on specific organisational components (Conner, 1998).

Unplanned change differs from planned change in that it occurs at random or spontaneously, whereas planned change results from the specific efforts of those attempting to instigate the change (Wood et al., 1998). While the aim of planned change is the reduction of a discrepancy between the actual and desired level of organisational performance, it is often accompanied by a belief that the future is predictable and change is a 'once-only' event with an 'end state to be reached' (Wood et al., 1998). Further, given the contextual dynamism and complexity of present environments, the assumption that effective practices from the past will also be effective in the future is flawed, and 'any linear extrapolation is at best misleading' (Wood et al., 1998:624). Conner (1998) describes this well:

> 'We don't pass through the changes necessary to survive and grow by leaving one distinct spot of our development to emerge completely fresh and intact at the next juncture. We progress through our lives, dragging baggage from previous experiences – our unmet aspirations, unrealised potential, and unresolved problems as well as our budding talents and honed skills. As the years of events and learning yield layer after layer of tangled circuitry reflecting our experiences, we become an intricate network of unsolved puzzles rather than a linear, easily understood stimulus-response organism'
> (p.15).

3.1.1   Types of organisational change

Over the years, numerous terms have been utilised to capture the essence of organisational change including: 'gamma change' (Golembiewski et al., 1975), 'double-loop learning' (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Argyris, 1990), 'strategic change' (Tichy, 1983), 'quantum change' (Miller & Friesen, 1984), 'culture change' (Kilmann, Saxton & Serpa, 1985; Martin, 1992; Schein, 1992), 'frame-bending

and frame breaking change' (Nadler & Tushman, 1986; Nadler, 1988), 'transformation' (Kilmann & Covin, 1988; Nadler et al., 1995), 'large scale change' (Mohrman et al., 1989), and 'fundamental change' (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992). Transformative change requires that the organisational form be altered and transformed in order to survive more effectively in the environment (Hage, 1980). This usually requires significant changes to existing belief structures (De Bivort, 1985), and the results can be traumatic and revolutionary (Kleiner & Corrigan, 1989; Kanter et al., 1992; Nadler et al., 1995). Hall (1999:185) argues against the acceptance of a totally environmentally based perspective, stating that any analysis of organisational change must also take into consideration an analysis of goal-related change. Transformations, it is argued, occur for numerous reasons, only one of which relates to environmental forces; accidental or attempts at rational choice should also be considered (p.193).

The nature and scope of change distinguishes transformational change from other planned change. Distinctions are drawn between first order or incremental change, best described as linear and continuous and requiring no major shift in the assumptions held by organisational members, and second-order or quantum change which is multi-dimensional, multi-level, radical and discontinuous, and necessitates a reframing of assumptions held about the world (Levy, 1986). Quantum change aims to create an entirely new alignment among the organisation's components to support a new strategic direction. Ideally, the changes are accompanied by ongoing innovatory practices and learning by organisational members so as to facilitate the discovery of ways to manage change and its impact (Cummings & Worley, 1993; Burnes, 1996; Drucker, 1998). Individuals undergoing such change are often required, of necessity, to 'unlearn years, even decades of procedures, rituals, beliefs, work habits, and ways of dealing with customers, suppliers, and co-workers – all of which, in their view, have been working just fine' (Nadler, 1998:50). Ironically, it is often the veterans working within these organisations who demonstrate greater competence to handle innovation and new technologies, and exude more confidence in their ability to see new initiatives through to completion (Corcoran & Wallich, 1992).

3.2   CHANGING ORGANISATIONS

3.2.1   Changing to what?

The art of understanding organisational life and reading the processes of organisational change is complex. Distinctions are drawn between 'rational' and 'action' oriented approaches to the management of change (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Brewer, 1995). While rational approaches emphasise certainty and control, action oriented approaches adopt a 'more expressive, artistic conception that encourages flexibility, creativity and interpretation; the former sees managers as mechanics, the latter as leaders and artists' (ibid., p.17). Rational approaches are best described through the use of such terms as 'mechanistic', 'rigid', 'cognate' and 'unresponsive', and are 'about making decisions and controlling actions of people, which support management in building efficiency and effectiveness within the workplace' (Brewer, 1995:2). Conversely, action-oriented approaches are considered 'organic', 'flexible', 'diverse' and 'emergent' (ibid., p.2). As Bolman and Deal (1991) explain:

> 'The more artistic among them are able to frame and reframe experience, sorting through the tangle underbrush to find solutions to problems.... At the same time, leaders, like artists, must bring their audience along. They must use their artistry to articulate and communicate their vision so that others are also able to see things differently' (p.11).

Behind efforts to manage organisational change or improve organisational life lies a set of assumptions, or theories, about how organisations work and how they might best be improved. Morgan (1997a) presents the view that theories of organisation and management are based on implicit images or metaphors such as machines, brains, organisms, cultures, psychic prisons and political systems that lead individuals to see, understand, and manage organisations in distinctive yet incomplete ways. The use of metaphor implies 'a way of thinking' and 'a way of seeing' that pervades our understanding of the world generally, but in its acceptance, brings with it a form of 'one-sided insight' in which less valued information is relegated to the background. While the use of metaphors may provide powerful insights, he argues, they are also paradoxically 'incomplete, biased and potentially misleading' (Morgan, 1997a:5). In recognising theory as

metaphor, Morgan argues, 'we become acutely aware that no single theory is perfect or all-embracing' (ibid., p.5). Grant and Oswick (1996:1) argue that while the pervasiveness of metaphors cannot be denied, this should not prevent us from questioning and analysing their value.

3.3   DIFFERING   PERSPECTIVES   ON   THE   NATURE   OF ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Bolman and Deal (1991) consolidate the major schools of organisational thought into four perspectives or frames: structural, human resource, political and symbolic. These frames act as:

> 'windows on the world and lenses that bring the world into focus. Frames filter out some things while allowing others to pass through easily. Frames help us to order experience and decide what action to take. Every manager, consultant or policy maker uses a personal frame or image of organisations to gather information, make judgments, and determine how best to get things done' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:11).

When faced with the prospect of changing organisations, leaders and managers encounter 'a cacophony of different voices and vision' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:10), and it is only through the utilisation of all images or frames of organisation that the depth and complexity of organisations becomes apparent. As each theory brings with it its own version of what organisations are like and its own vision of what they should be like, this 'conceptual pluralism' creates a 'jangling discord of multiple voices'; none of which, argue Bolman and Deal (1991), adequately captures the world of power and politics found in organisations.

3.3.1   Mechanistic approaches towards organisations

Mechanistic, as opposed to organic approaches to organisations (Burns & Stalker, 1961) emphasise organisational goals, formal roles and technology and the development of structures that best fit organisational purposes and environmental demands. Reorganisation occurs when organisational structures become non-aligned with environmental demands. Through the creation of rules, policies and management hierarchies, the diverse activities of organisations are coordinated and participants' responsibilities made clear. The role of authority is emphasised

and deemed the prerogative of those formally legitimised to make decisions that are binding on others. The common-sense logic of the approach can be appealing:

> 'The idea of a machine-like business in which people are the cogs, performing according to their job descriptions, using their prescribed authority, working in carefully balanced departments to achieve carefully worked out goals is not bad as a simple model' (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:24).

If management has done its job competently then higher productivity, profits and ultimately higher dividends for owners should flow from the increased efforts of workers. 'Everybody wins – workers get high wages, owners get high dividends, and managers are happy because they have done their job well' (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:23). But these are 'universal prescriptions' that indicate what should happen rather than descriptions about 'reality'; their simplicity and generality does not easily transfer 'into actual organisations with their wide range of technologies, markets, sizes and other differences' (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:23). In conditions similar to those where machines operate effectively, and where tasks are straightforward, the approach may have some merit (Morgan, 1997a). This is only the case, however, when environments are sufficiently stable to guarantee the products are not only appropriate but can also be replicated repeatedly, when precision is important, and 'when the human 'machine' parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do' (p.27).

The 'ideal' bureaucracy as theorised by Weber (1947) thrived as a result of its reliance on legal authority, logic and order (Wood et al., 1998:800) and its strong emphasis on 'the division of labour, hierarchical control, and promotion by merit'. These features were all designed to maximise organisational efficiency (Hall, 1999), but the reality may be far from the ideal due largely to the human element. Thus the general thrust of classical management theory and its modern derivatives suggests that organisations can or should be rational systems that operate as efficiently as possible; they often fail to live up to expectations because they deal with people, not with 'inanimate cogs and wheels' (Morgan, 1997a:21). While the need to achieve a balance between human and technical aspects is recognised and factors such as initiative, equity, leadership, benevolence, esprit

de corps, and other aspects influencing human motivation given some consideration, the human aspects of organisation do not usually receive high priority. In the strong drive for efficiency, the internal reactions of individuals to aspects of their work are not seen as relevant (Bartol et al., 1998); the main orientation is 'to make humans fit the requirements of mechanical organisation' (Morgan, 1997a:22).

Mechanistic organisations are static, rigid entities and the notion of change and the means of coping with it are rarely considered. As the principles underlying organisational effectiveness are predetermined, managers are easily seduced to believe they need not understand the complexities of organisational life (Lee & Lawrence, 1985) and often become divided from the rest, producing a 'them and us' mentality (Morgan, 1997a:24). This approach fails to recognise the conflicts of interest and attitudes that exist within organisations, including the role of trade unions in industrial life (Lee & Lawrence, 1985). But rapidly changing environments require 'flexibility, and the capacity for creative action rather than narrow efficiency', and an ability 'to do the right thing in a way that is timely and 'good enough' rather than do the wrong thing well or the right thing too late' (Morgan, 1997a:28).

Mechanistic or bureaucratic organisations operate most effectively in environments that are stable or in some way protected; conversely, they experience great difficulty in adapting to changing circumstances due to an over reliance on the achievement of predetermined goals. The compartmentalisation created by the mechanistic divisions between the different hierarchical levels, functions, roles, and people create organisational barriers, and the high degree of specialisation in the various functional areas within the organisation increases the difficulty of responding effectively to changing circumstances (Morgan, 1997a:28). As Morgan explains:

> 'Interdepartmental communications and coordination are often poor, and people often have a myopic view of what is occurring, there being no overall grasp of the situation facing the enterprise as a whole. As a result the action encouraged by one element of the organisation often entail negative consequences for others, so that one element ends up working against the interests of another' (p.29).

Mechanistic, as opposed to organic approaches to organisation, tend to discourage initiative and limit, rather than promote, the development of human capacities. This results in a double loss to both employer and employee through lost opportunities for personal growth and the loss of creative and intelligent contributions that most employees are capable of making, given the right opportunities (Morgan, 1997a:30). Individuals are moulded to fit organisational expectations and discouraged from questioning their role, rather than the organisation utilising the strengths and potential of its organisational members.

> 'The hierarchical organisation of jobs builds on the idea that control must be exercised over the different parts of the organisation to ensure that they are doing what they are designed to do, rather than being built into the parts themselves. And while defining work responsibilities in a clear-cut manner has the advantage of letting everyone know what is expected of them it also lets then know what is not expected of them' (Morgan, 1997a:29).

The tendency of managers to adhere to the principles of objectivity, universality, managerial centrality, measurement and consensus that underlie the rational approach to organisational change, fails to acknowledge that organisational change is 'shaped by the actions of individuals, working together or alone who produce their own logic or rationality about what is happening' (Brewer, 1995, p.xvi). Although the performance of an organisation might be deemed efficient against a range of subjective and objective criteria, the emergence of less controllable factors such as industrial, legislative, political or psychodynamic factors may limit its success when undergoing organisational change (Brewer, 1995:2). Successful organisational change not only addresses objective measures, but also is cognisant of the subjective elements present, including the values, interests and attitudes of the individuals undergoing change. With the increasing pace of social and economic change, the 'limitations of the approach have become more and more obvious' (Morgan, 1997a:31).

3.3.2   Developing the human side to organisations

The deficiencies of the mechanistic approach, in particular, 'the lack of compassion for the human response' (Gummesson, 1991:37), gave rise to the *human relations* approach devoted to the explanation of human behaviour in

organisations. It did not, however, replace it; rather it was seen as 'putting meat on the classical skeleton' (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:27). Advocates of the human resources approach argue that organisational goals should be more extensive than mere profit, and that 'managers are obligated to provide social and psychological satisfactions to employees as they are entitled to fair treatment in return for their efforts' (ibid., p.27). With greater emphasis placed on the construction of collaborative and co-operative workplace relationships, effective managers now require social as well as technical skills (Bartol et al., 1998). Yet a belief in the consensus model that interesting work, opportunities for promotion and social fulfilment will automatically lead to increased effort and higher profits, and that 'everyone can have what they want' is rather idealistic, and few exponents, it seems, would suggest that the needs of employees should take precedence over profits (Morgan, 1997a:28).

For human resource theorists, the interdependence between organisations and individuals is paramount to organisational effectiveness and the key to success is in finding an organisational form that enables people to get the job done while feeling good about what they are doing (Bolman & Deal, 1991). While individuals possess both skills and limitations, and a capacity to learn, the capacity to adamantly defend old attitudes and beliefs is often greater. Tension results when an imbalance occurs between the needs of individuals and the goals of organisations, or from the utilisation of inappropriate strategies to manage interpersonal and group dynamics. Although the approach contributes significantly to an understanding of the quality of workplace relationships, it fails to address the underlying political forces, generated by conflict and power plays that confound organisations time and again (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

3.3.3 Organisations as socio-technical systems

Recognition of the need to integrate the human and technical aspects of work as an important principle is reflected in the study of organisations as socio-technical systems (Morgan, 1997a:38). With its emergence in the 1950s came the recognition that effective management comprised more than sound structures or simply satisfied employees. Organisations, it was argued, should be viewed as

open systems comprising interacting sub-systems that are integral to numerous inter-linked systems that perform functions across the wider society (ibid., p.30).

Systems functions have a tendency to become goals, one of which is the strong desire for survival. Acceptance of an open-systems approach has implications for organisational practice, including 'the importance of being able to scan and sense changes in task and contextual environments, of being able to bridge and manage critical boundaries and areas of interdependence, and of being able to develop appropriate operational and strategic responses' (Morgan, 1997a:42). The strength of the approach is in its recognition that organisations need to not only survive in differing environments but must also cope with complex threats and challenges, thereby providing explanations for the differences between organisations and why they change over time (Morgan, 1997a:29).

Given the approach is dominant in the management literature, the basic tenets of contingency planning are widely accepted, and often adopted without question; its critics 'in danger of being considered heretics' (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:29). The contingency approach to organisational analysis posits that no single form of organisation will have universal applicability. This therefore necessitates finding relationships between specific 'contingency factors' and 'organisational characteristics', and designing organisations and managerial practices that are specific to particular situations (Lee & Lawrence, 1985:39).

The five basic ideas that underpin contingency planning, as summarised by Morgan (1997a:44) are: 'firstly, organisations, as open systems, need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environmental circumstances; secondly, there is no one best way to organise, and the appropriate form will depend on the kind of task or environment with which one is dealing; thirdly, the top priority for management is the achievement of alignments and 'good fits'; fourthly, different approaches to management may be necessary to perform different tasks within the same organisation; and finally, different types of 'species' of organisations are needed in different types of environments'.

Early research by Burns and Stalker (1961) and Woodward (1965) highlight the importance of choice in the relationship between the selection of a particular organisational form and the success of an organisation when attempting to deal with its environment. In the processes of adaptation, many choices have to be made by top management and for an organisation to organise effectively there should be a 'balance or compatibility between strategy, structure, technology, the commitments and needs of people, and the external environment' (Morgan, 1997a:48).

As the complexity of organisational environments has increased, so too has the proliferation of various species of organisation, each possessing 'distinct characteristics and distinctive niches in which it excels' (Morgan, 1997a:52). The distinctive names accorded these species attempt to capture in visual form the nature of the organisation, for example, the 'matrix' form (Kolodny, 1981); the 'adhocracy' (Bennis, 1966); the 'federal' and 'shamrock' organisations as proposed by Handy (1978; 1990); and Quinn's (1992) 'cluster' organisations.

3.3.4   Information processing approaches to organisations

Another approach to the study of organisations and organisational change has developed as a result of the study of the modern principles of cybernetics as they apply to organisations. From this perspective, changing environments require that organisations conceptualise new ways of operating, be responsive to the information age, and develop flexibility and responsiveness through team-based structures and more relevant leadership style and roles (Garvin, 1993; Pearn et al., 1995; Argyris & Schon, 1996; Buckler, 1996; Vennix, 1996; Robbins et al., 1998). Experimental organisational designs characterised by little or no underlying functional hierarchy and the move to 'dejob' organisations reflect an awareness of the need for organisational designs that remain attuned to environmental circumstances. Adapting organisations are reinvented to become 'learning organisations' specifically aimed to improve individual and organisational learning (Morgan, 1997a:88). As Senge (1990) explains:

> 'As the world becomes more interconnected and business becomes more   complex   and   dynamic,   work   must   become   more

'learningful'…the organisations that truly excel in the future will be the organisations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organisation' (p.4).

Organisations must not only be able to respond to the changing environment, but should also have the capability to predict future changes to ensure they are well positioned to meet potential demands (Paton & McCalman, 2000).

The concept of the 'learning organisation' has become, in the late 1990s, what total quality management was to the 1980s and reengineering in the early 1990s (Stewart, 1993); it is distinct in having 'developed the continuous capacity to adapt and change' (Robbins et al., 1998:545) and the ability to continually expand its capacity 'to create its future' (Senge, 1990). Senge et al. (1994:51) provide a list of characteristics that define the organisation: 'people feel they're doing something that matters; every individual in the organisation is somehow stretching, growing or enhancing his/her capacity to create; people are more intelligent together than they are apart; the organisation continually becomes more aware of its underlying knowledge base; visions of the direction of the enterprise emerge from all levels; employees are invited to learn what is going on at every level of the organisation; people feel free to inquire about each others' assumptions and biases; people treat each other as colleagues; and people feel free to try experiments, take risks, and openly assess the results'.

Marsick and Watkins (1999:17) utilise the metaphor of 'sculpturing' to add meaning to the process whereby organisations engage in 'chipping away' at existing systems, attitudes and practices in order to encourage learning and design interventions that suit specific needs; there is no 'standard set of prescriptions that an organisation can adopt to achieve its learning goals (p.17).

Further, the learning approach assists in overcoming significant difficulties such as fragmentation and competition often found in more traditional organisations. New technologies are utilised to create networks of interaction that can self-organise and be shaped and driven by the intelligence of everyone, rather than work to reinforce bureaucratic principles and centralised modes of control (Morgan, 1997a:116) that have been found to be ineffective in dealing with

ongoing change (Mintzberg, 1979). The approach challenges traditional assumptions concerning:

> 'the importance of strong central leadership and control; about the wisdom of setting clear goals and objectives; about the role of hierarchy; about the concept of organisational design; and about the wisdom of trying to develop and impose systems from the top down' (Morgan, 1997a:116).

Distinctions are drawn between the process of learning and the process of learning to learn; or, more precisely, the engagement by organisations in single-loop or double-loop learning (Morgan, 1997a:86). Senge (1990) argues that most organisations engage in single-loop learning only, relying on past routines and present policies to overcome difficulties when they arise. Learning organisations purportedly engage in double-loop learning that challenges the deep-rooted assumptions and norms of the organisation. Solutions to problems are found through the modification of organisational objectives, policies, assumptions and standard routines. Organisational members require skills in understanding the paradigms, metaphors, mind-sets or mental models that underpin how the organisation operates to avoid 'being locked in the past' (Morgan, 1997a:92).

Successful organisations, Senge (1990) argues, are those that encourage organisational change and improve organisational effectiveness through the development of a shared vision that is seen to emerge from the personal visions held by individuals within the organisation. Central to effective management is the development of an understanding of the underlying common assumptions that organisational members share about the identity and ultimate mission or function of the organisation. Altering the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions underlying the organisation's relationship to its environment requires significant shifts in corporate philosophy and values and in the numerous structures and organisational arrangements that shape the behaviours of its members (Cummings & Worley, 1993; Carr, 1997). For successful double-loop learning to occur, organisations must develop cultures that support change and risk taking. They have to embrace the idea that in rapidly changing circumstances with high degrees of uncertainty, problems and errors are inevitable (Morgan, 1997a:94).

The ability to adopt self-reflective practices and promote an openness that encourages dialogue and the expression of conflicting points of view is essential to the process (Morgan, 1997a). This can generate high levels of anxiety within an organisation and create difficulties for those managers preferring to be 'on top' and 'in control' rather than excited by 'the kind of creative chaos on which innovation thrives' (Morgan, 1997a:94). Organisational change can therefore be inherently messy and invariably involves an array of sharply conflicting demands; it rarely turns out exactly as planned (Nadler, 1998:3).

With the increasing emphasis on the new knowledge 'economy' or 'society' (Drucker, 1993, 1997; Stehr, 1994), or 'information society' (Archer, 1990) it seems reasonable to expect that human intelligence, creativity and insight will assume major importance and the metaphor of organisations as brains 'more and more a reality' (Morgan, 1997a:116). Some argue the concept of a learning organisation might best be regarded as an 'ideal' towards which to strive, rather than providing 'a realistic description of structured activity' (Robbins et al., 1998:547); others are more critical. Jarvis (1998) muses at the speed with which the concept of the learning society has gained acceptance and, although numerous articles on the subject have been published, few, he believes, have dealt sufficiently below the surface; the metaphor is assumed to be the reality (p.59). The difficulty in effectively measuring learning organisations (Adler & Cole, 1993; Berggren, 1994; Easterby-Smith, 1997) and a lack of clear research evidence to suggest the superiority of learning organisations in comparison with other organisations (Addleson, 1996) remains problematic. As Palmer and Hardy (2000:226) highlight, insufficient performance data and problems associated with designing sustainable learning organisations may see them 'end up as just another fad whose time has come and gone'.

Kincheloe (1995) regards as problematic the unquestioned acceptance of the demands of a global economy in which productivity equates to model employees and 'smart' workers. From this perspective, organisations are able to effectively maintain control of the learning process, ensuring that it is continually focused towards 'actual corporate needs and practical benefits' (Savellis, 1995/6 in Butler, 1998:74).

3.3.5 Organisational culture and change

Another approach to understanding organisations is through the symbolic or cultural frame, although agreement on definitions remains somewhat elusive. This is not surprising, argues Meek (1988b), given the term culture is borrowed from anthropology where its usage relates to 'the customs and rituals that societies develop over the course of their history' (Schein, 1992:3). Difficulties arise, argues Sathe (1983:6) because 'different people think in different slices of reality when they talk about culture'.

Palmer and Hardy (2000:135) highlight the ambiguity inherent in the irreconcilable differences between two opposing views of culture. While one argues culture is dead, due to its 'limited practical relevance', the other postulates that culture remains 'dominant, but dead'. The first view suggests the revival and usefulness of culture can only occur when management supports its relevance. The second view maintains that while the study of culture once offered a means to explore the 'soft', rather than 'hard', side of organisations as evident in managerialism (p.136), research on the subject has become corrupted over time. What is needed, they argue, is a revitalisation of culture through the adoption of a postmodern approach, i.e., the deconstruction of claims made about it. Culture then becomes a 'double-edged sword' in that it 'not only serves 'positive' functions such as fulfilling people's needs for meaning, guidance and expressiveness but also leads to closure of mind, restriction of consciousness, and reduction of autonomy' (p.136). Paradoxically, culture provides direction but also prevents us from 'seeing' (Alvesson, 1993:120); it may also become a mechanism for social control and manipulation (Kunda, 1992).

The lack of a clear definition of culture has impacted on the manner in which it is studied and the resultant confusion 'translates into fundamental differences concerning conflicting levels of analysis' (Palmer & Hardy, 2000:119). This has produced not only an interest in organisational culture, but research into the role of individuals in an organisation's culture, the development of subcultures, and a proliferation of differing approaches towards cultural change (Kanter, 1983; Schein, 1983; Sathe, 1983, 1985; Allen & Kraft, 1984; Meyerson & Martin,

1987; Fitzgerald, 1988; Senge, 1990; Gagliardi, 1990; Schein, 1990a; Westley, 1990; Frost et al., 1991; Schneider et al., 1996; Wilkinson et al., 1996; Silvester, Anderson & Patterson, 1999). As Lewis (1994:43) points out, these differences have generated some confusion among researchers who, when discussing the manner in which organisational culture should be changed, are not necessarily discussing the same thing, and as such 'they are not sure what it is that they should change this 'thing' into, and really have no idea what effects this 'thing' actually has on the organisation anyway'.

Palmer and Hardy (2000) argue that much of the literature on culture assumes it can be changed (Ashforth, 1985; Schneider et al., 1996) and individuals 'are assumed to be malleable and open to change, if not their values, then at least their behaviour' (p.133). Further, this position assumes 'that managers know the appropriate values and behaviour that will enhance organisational success' (Palmer & Hardy, 2000:133). After an extensive review of the literature, Lewis (1994) concludes that although disagreement exists on the details of just how culture affects an organisation and this has led to some confusion in the literature, there is general agreement that culture does have an effect, either on organisational effectiveness and competitive advantage or as an integrating or control mechanism (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Ray, 1986; Weick, 1987; Petrock, 1990; Fiol, 1991; Brown, 1992; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Schein, 1992).

For some, the adequacy of organisational descriptions is dependent on capturing not only the organisation's structural characteristics, but also that which creates its unique 'personality'. Horst (1989) sees organisational culture as synonymous with an organisation's self-concept in a similar way to the personality of an individual; that is, it is multi-dimensional and complex. As such, it provides a 'strong guiding force for determining actions and attitudes (Robbins, 1993:601); this creates the differences between organisations, which become recognisable by their 'conservative, friendly, rigid or innovative' image (ibid., p.601). In this way, organisational culture is a powerful concept that makes possible the understanding of those aspects of organisational life that might otherwise 'remain vague and difficult to articulate, but which organisational members are painfully aware of' (Vecchio et al., 1996:688). This is especially so for new organisational

members who soon become aware of 'the way we do things around here' (Bolman & Deal 1991:268). The value in this is that it 'defines the rules of the game', as Deal and Kennedy (1983:501) highlight:

> 'Until newcomers learn the rules, they are not accepted as full-fledged members of the organisation. Transgressions of the rules on the part of high-level executives or front-line employees result in universal disapproval and powerful penalties. Conformity to the rules becomes the primary basis for reward and upward mobility'.

After an extensive review of the literature, Trowler (1998:24) identifies four approaches to the conceptualisation of organisational culture, namely: the nomothetic; the functionalist; inductively-derived categorising; and phenomenological approach. With the exception of the phenomenological approach, these approaches are portrayed as 'enacted', he argues, in that:

> 'they consider individuals within organisations to be simply adopting a set of pre-existent values and attitudes which they encounter there and performing sets of behaviours which have come to be considered 'the way to do things round here' by members of the organisation' (p.25).

This approach to understanding organisational cultures, Trowler believes, fails to recognise that culture is at least partly constructed by individuals and groups within the organisation, as evidenced in his own research.

While differences between approaches and definitions still remain problematic, some agreement exists regarding common elements across definitions, including 'common beliefs and feelings, regularities in behaviour and a historical process for transmitting values and norms' (Vecchio et al., 1996:689). Yet while values, behaviour patterns, rituals, and traditions are often shared or held in common by group members, they do not, argues Schein (1992:10) constitute the 'culture' of an organisation or group. 'Culture', according to Schein, requires two further elements: an element of 'structural stability' within the group and a form of 'patterning or integration' that brings the distinct elements together to form a larger paradigm or gestalt. It is the patterning or integration that 'is the essence of what we mean by 'culture'' (Schein, 1992:10). In this way, culture is defined as:

'A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems' (Schein, 1992:12).

From this perspective, the development of culture strengthens over time and gradually assumes significantly deeper meaning so that eventually solutions come to reflect basic assumptions 'about the nature of truth, time, space, human nature, and human relationships' (Schein, 1992:49) that 'cease to be questioned or debated' (ibid., p.12). Although organisational size may impact on any description of culture, especially large organisations, Schein (1992:14) believes the term is legitimised when certain assumptions are shared across all components of the organisation, even though a number of discrete sub-cultures each possessing their own integrity may still exist.

Schein (1992:16) argues that confusion surrounding the definition of culture derives from a lack of differentiation between the levels at which it manifests itself, or in Schein's words 'the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer'; these range from the observable or tangible manifestations of culture at the first level, through to the level of espoused values, norms and rules of behaviour, and then to the deepest level comprising the taken-for-granted, non-negotiable, basic underlying assumptions (ibid., p.16). While the first level is the most tangible, including important organisational elements as ceremonies, physical setting, signs, rituals, and unique stories, it can also be the most misleading (Vecchio et al., 1996:689), as incomplete interpretations can lead to discrepancies between the organisation's espoused culture and the culture in action (Argyris & Schon, 1978). The next or shared values level can work effectively to bring individuals together as well as create a 'powerful motivational mechanism for members of the culture' (Wood et al., 1998). Values become 'basic assumptions' when they are taken for granted and are assumed to be unchangeable. To have any utility, argues Schein (1992), the concept of culture should:

'draw our attention to those things that are the product of our human need for stability, consistency, and meaning. Culture formation,

therefore, is always, by definition, a striving toward patterning and integration, even though the actual history of experiences of many groups prevents them from ever achieving a clear-cut paradigm' (p.11).

Others have attempted to understand the culture of an organisation through the evaluation of the key characteristics valued by that organisation (Hofstede et al., 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991) such as people focus, risk tolerance, control orientation, and member identity. By analysing each characteristic along a continuum, a complex picture of an organisation's culture is constructed, and it is this that forms the basis for the shared understandings regarding organisational procedures and expectations (Robbins, 1993; Mc Nay, 1995). Others utilise the concept of type to differentiate between types of cultures found in organisations, including Sonnenfeld's (in Hymowitz, 1989) academy, club, baseball team, and fortress, while Handy's (1993) work distinguishes between power, role, task and person cultures. Categorising organisations in this manner can be problematic, as many organisations are 'blends of cultures' or might lack distinctiveness when undergoing transition. When considering organisations from this perspective, specific types of organisation are said to attract individuals who 'fit' well with the culture of the organisation, as often evidenced in the speed with which they 'move up the management ranks' (Robbins, 1993:604).

Tenuous links between strong organisational culture and organisational performance have been drawn (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Wilkins, 1983; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984), although Siehl and Martin (1990) found little to support this connection. The relationship gaining prominence through the publication of Ouchi's (1981) Theory Z, and Peters and Waterman's (1982) study of organisational 'excellence'. Successful organisations, it is argued, gain strength or power through the development of a coherent set of shared values (Peters & Waterman, 1982), rather than through procedures and systems of control, which provides the 'glue' that holds the organisation together (Owens, 1991:170). Successful organisations exhibit strong cultures with high agreement among organisational members regarding the organisation's core values (Weiner, 1988); this 'unanimity of purpose builds cohesiveness, loyalty, and organisational commitment' (Robbins, 1993) and lessens the inclination of individuals to leave

the organisation. Characteristics of a strong culture as identified by Deal and Kennedy (1982) include a widely shared philosophy, a concern for individuals, a recognition of heroes, a belief in ritual and ceremony, a well-understood sense of the informal rules and expectations, and a belief that what employees do is important to others (Wood et al., 1998:445). More recently, Collins and Porras (1994), in reference to their work on visionary companies, stress the desirability of a strong culture when building an organisation through the translation of the core ideology into more concrete reinforcing mechanisms.

Kanter (1983) coined the terms 'culture of pride' and 'climate of success' in identifying successful organisations. Increased levels of confidence and pride are experienced by individuals when they feel as though they belong to a valued organisation with a record of achievement, and are treated as organisational members rather than as simply employees. A culture of pride tends to be more evident in integrated organisations, where the wholeness of the enterprise is emphasised, the broader implications of actions are considered, and where innovatory practices are encouraged through diversity and an acceptance of change as challenging. Conversely, less successful organisations are described as 'segmented'. Kanter (1983) defined segmented organisations as those in which members are made to limit their focus to the narrow confines of their immediate work area. They are not able to gain meaning and involvement from the wider organisation because they are isolated from it. They therefore feel little pride in the organisation. Such organisations usually fail.

It is assumed that organisations with strong cultures achieve their success by channelling workers' efforts toward productivity; individual productivity only comes from being motivated through values that promote diligence, creativity and enthusiasm, and that corporate productivity is a function of individual productivity (Collins & Porras, 1994, 1996). However, the profitability of an organisation is not only dependent on culture and access to technology, financial constraints and market availability will also impact on the effectiveness of an organisation. Therefore, it might be assumed that strong cultures will only improve performance when the organisational culture aligns strategically with environmental pressures (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). While strong cultures can

provide 'a strong corporate identity, enhance collective commitment, provide a stable social system, and reduce the need for formal and bureaucratic controls', they can also 'reinforce a singular view of organisation and its environment' (Wood et al., 1998:445) that might prove equally detrimental to performance if the culture resists change and innovation. Although a specific element of an organisation's culture might prove beneficial for a particular purpose, it can equally prove to be detrimental for another (Hofstede et al., 1990; Sackmann, 1992; Ebers, 1995). As has been highlighted, a number of Peters and Waterman's 'excellent' organisations did not live up to expectations over a longer period of time, suggesting a more complex relationship. Nevertheless, these concerns did not deter managers and administrators from believing some practical relevance existed in the concept of organisational culture. Further, Owens (1991:171) points out, American businessmen faced with 'recession, deregulation, technological upheavals, foreign competition, and transforming economic and social change', readily accepted the assumption that the key to adaptation in uncertain times was dependent on the quality of an organisation's culture.

It is often in response to crises that organisations reveal some of 'the deepest assumptions of the founder', and when manifested, these impact, either positively or negatively, on the 'culture of the group around them' (Schein, 1992:67). If called upon to respond to a series of crises, organisations may develop a systematic bias towards problem resolution, and the style of operation will 'reflect the very biases and unconscious conflicts that the founder experiences' (Schein, 1992:230). This can lead, in some cases, to the emergence of chronically dysfunctional or 'neurotic organisations (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984, 1987; Miller, 1990). Responses to crises, therefore, provide significant opportunities to unearth those aspects of a culture already in existence while simultaneously enabling 'culture building'. Senge (1990) argues that culture building in the face of the fundamental change facing tomorrow's competitive organisations is about celebrating the personal power and strategic contribution of every employee in an organisation. It is about helping managers embrace the potential of the individual and also to appreciate that every individual worker as well as his/her manager has an 'internal image' or 'mental model' of the organisation. The notion of

management belongs with the notion of mindsets, while the notion of change requires a concern with changing mindsets. The analysis of the process of organisational adaptation, argues Schein (1992:67) is most important, because where a discrepancy exists between the established culture and a proposed change, 'culture always wins' (Horst, 1989). Through the possession of their own distinctive symbolic forms, organisations as cultures are capable of becoming 'more powerful motivators than rules, policies and managerial authority' (Morgan, 1997a), leaving managers with only 'a limited ability to create organisational cohesion through power or rational design' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:15). Problems arise, however:

> 'when actors play their parts badly, when symbols lose their meaning, and when ceremonies and rituals lose their potency' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:16).

An important consideration is that of gender and the role it plays in shaping an organisation's culture. Gilligan (1993) and Helgesen (1990) note that organisations operating along predominantly traditional lines tend to be shaped by male attitudes and values. Schein (1992:367) also points to the implied assumption, particularly within Western cultures, that knowing and being in control is 'particularly associated with masculine roles'. This, he argues, denies the value of women as leaders who might contribute 'a whole range of methods for arriving at solutions'. Male oriented value systems are more likely to emphasise linear modes of thought and action, results-focused approaches and completion of specific tasks (Morgan, 1997a:135); meetings and communications are often adversarial. Female-oriented values that are more likely to emerge through the use of networks and community building tend not to be emphasised. Women are often marginalised or excluded from the male-dominated reality of traditional corporate management although generally accepted, in large numbers, in the subservient roles.

Yet organisations that recognise female values and align their purpose and goals around them are more likely to be successful and possibly less stressful as the culture will be based on 'empathetic, intuitive, organic forms of behaviour' (Morgan, 1997a:136); these characteristics will be more in tune with the natural

processes of life and are more likely to encourage stability, certainty, order and meaning.

3.3.6   The politics of change

As change invariably threatens the status quo it inherently implies political activity in organisations (Pfeffer, 1992). Organisations are 'alive and screaming' political arenas where various interest groups compete for power and scarce resources, and bargaining, negotiations, coercion and compromise all form part of everyday organisational life (Bolman & Deal, 1991, Lee & Lawrence, 1991; Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992). Difficulties arise if power is concentrated inappropriately or is so dispersed that little is accomplished. As Argyris (1964) has noted, the higher the level within an organisational hierarchy the greater the importance of interpersonal relationships and the less likely that work will be routine and programmed. Individuals situated at the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy are more likely to find their behaviour constrained by systems of technology, organisational structure and managerial controls. Excessive levels of formal authority result in excessively slow and inaccurate decision making processes while, conversely, overly diffuse authority leads to confusion that creates frustration, conflict and stifles individual initiative.

Exponents argue that politics should not be attributed to individual selfishness, myopia, or incompetence, but that, regardless of the players, political forces will invariably emerge as a result of the 'interdependence, difference, scarcity and power relations' found in the organisation (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Coalitions are found throughout an organisation and form when the need arises, even though the interests of coalition members may not be fully congruent (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Perhaps not unexpectedly, politics becomes more noticeable under conditions that are complex, wide-ranging and diverse than under conditions of stability; far more agreement and harmony is possible in a homogenous group or organisation where similar values, beliefs and cultures are shared (Greiner & Schein, 1988; Buchanan & Badham, 1999).

Distinctions between 'over-bounded' and 'under-bounded' systems have been drawn (Alderfer, 1969; Brown, 1983); over-bounded systems tend to be tightly

regulated and the power highly concentrated, while in more loosely controlled or under-bounded systems the power is diffuse, and greater opportunities exist for conflict and power games. When power is concentrated at the top of highly regulated systems, politics does not disappear; it is just forced underground. Politics will be more evident and intense during times of crisis, and conflict becomes more central to organisational dynamics as resources dwindle; at such times, the distribution and exercise of power becomes the most important resource (Bolman & Deal, 1991). In such circumstances, power is either used constructively to create visions and collective goals or, more negatively, to exploit or dominate. The influence of politics and power-plays is often ignored by managers who prefer to rationalise their decision-making in terms of technical skills rather than as power-plays that might reflect poorly on themselves or the organisation (Standing & Standing, 1998; Paton & McCalman, 2000).

Environmental dependency is characteristic of most organisations, and environmental changes create shifts in power. For contingency theorists, a multitude of differing approaches might be adopted to handle specific environmental pressures, including the adaptation of internal strategies (Snow & Hrebriniak, 1980). Hall (1999:219) contends that it is the political processes in action within the decision-making structure that will determine the approach selected or choices made. The organisational tightness that develops as a result of increasing environmental pressure most probably results from a preference for traditional approaches by powerful groups within the organisation, even though these may not be the most expedient for the organisation.

The effectiveness of the change process is largely dependent on the degree to which pre-existing balances of power are managed. The prospect of losing position and authority become real for some individuals as skills and behaviours, once valued by the organisation, become less valued in the developing culture of the new organisation. More recently recruited individuals or executives occupying positions slightly removed from the main power structure have less invested in retaining the status quo and are more likely to adapt to the organisational changes. The redistribution of power is an issue likely to significantly impact on the speed and extent of any change. Effective

management will deal equitably and fairly with all staff and be seen to set exemplary standards of behaviour, be able to communicate fairly and constructively challenge complacency and any lack of responsiveness by staff.

3.4 FACING THE REALITY OF CHANGE

For Nadler (1998), the reality of change in organisations defies rigid academic models due to its intense personal and political nature; real change he argues, is dynamic, integrated, unfolds over time, touches every aspect of the organisation and is in need of constant revision. The way to successful change is through leaders and then managers able to convert the vision for change into a new reality. While successful change starts at the top, without active support from skilled and committed managers he argues, it can just as easily 'end at the top' (preface, p.xiii). With the increasing flexibility required by organisations today, Hesselbein et al. (1997) argue, far more clarity is needed in respect to mission, values, and strategy, in balancing long and short range goals, and in defining results, if the risk of ambiguity and confusion is to be avoided. For Brewer (1995) the attainment of a successful organisational change program is like that of a jigsaw puzzle; while the pieces might be observable, the key to completion is in being able to make the pieces of the plan fit together successfully.

The essence of effective management lies in the ability to 'reframe' old problems to create new perspectives; managers, should be more imaginative and are 'imprisoned only to the degree that their palette of ideas is impoverished' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:4). The widening gap between 'dreams and reality' and 'noble aspirations and disappointing outcomes' is a pressing problem, 'made all the more acute by the growing dominance of organisations in our lives' (ibid., p.4). The importance of flexibility in management effectiveness in captured by Bolman and Deal in these terms:

> 'Artistry is neither exact nor precise. The artist interprets experience and expresses it in a form that can be felt, understood, and appreciated by others. Art allows for emotion, subtlety, and ambiguity. An artist reframes the world to help us see new possibilities. Modern organisations rely too much on engineering and too little on art in their effort to foster such attributes as quality, commitment, and creativity. Art is not a replacement for

engineering, but an enhancement. Artistic leaders and managers are essential in helping us see beyond today's organisational forms to those that will release untapped individual energies and improve collective performance. The leader as artist will rely on images as well as memos, poetry as well as policy, reflection as well as command, and reframing as well as refitting' (Bolman & Deal, 1991:19).

Reflective note

This chapter has critically examined the major theoretical models or frames through which the study of organisations and organisational change is often conducted. Each model or frame has its own strengths and limitations in providing an adequate description of the nature of organisational change due to the uncertainty and complexity of the process. While the common sense logic of mechanistic approaches towards organisational change is appealing, such an approach does not adequately address the human side of organisations. This can lead to the development of a schism between those managing the changes and other organisational members, thereby resulting in the creation of a 'them and us' mentality that works against the effective implementation of the change process.

Nor do mechanistic approaches to organisational change allow sufficient flexibility during times of radical change given that the principles underlying organisational effectiveness are predetermined; this can have serious implications for the survival of an organisation. Further, the adoption of mechanistic approaches does not adequately address the role of politics and the conflicts of interest that exist within organisations and this can have severe consequences for the effectiveness of the change process.

As argued throughout this chapter, the art of understanding organisational life and reading the processes of organisational change is complex. Recognition of the differences inherent in the various theoretical models utilised when studying organisations and organisational change is essential to the focus of this research and especially in the interpretation of academics' perceptions and evaluations of the organisational changes that occurred during the formation of the Australian Catholic University. These changes far exceeded the mere refinement of existing operations; rather, the changes required the adoption of a new paradigm for

organising and managing the University, and a radical reconceptualisation of the nature of academics' work.

As Morgan (1997) and others have highlighted, individuals draw upon differing images, models or frames of organisation when constructing their ideal organisation and these will strongly influence an individual's interpretation and response to the organisational change process. The model preferred by those charged with the responsibility for the leadership and implementation of the organisational changes will have direct implications for the nature and successful achievement of the change process as well as the level of intensity of the impact experienced by the members throughout the organisation. Further, it is argued, the level of congruence experienced between the model preferred by those implementing the changes and those held by organisational members, or academics in this study, will directly influence the level of success or resistance experienced during the change process.

Individuals bring to the process of organisational change differing expectations regarding the nature and outcomes of the change. The extent to which these expectations are realised will also impact on the individual's level of acceptance of the changes. Further, the differing perspectives held by individuals will influence the manner in which the changes are interpreted and evaluated. The emergence of such differences is likely to result in the production of tensions in the form of contradictions or paradoxes that have the potential, if not resolved, to become established as serious barriers to effective organisational change.

Of importance for this research is the understanding of the complexity of the change process and its management, the contributing factors that influenced the level of acceptance of the changes, the personal impact of the changes on academics and the strategies they utilised to cope.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW: MANAGEMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Introduction

While numerous explanations exist for the phenomenon of organisational change, its impact is often underestimated and 'continuous improvement in dynamic work environments often hard to achieve' (Wood et al., 1998:621). Changes to organisations can have positive or negative effects, resulting in growth, decline or an alteration in form (Gollan et al., 1996; Hall, 1999). As has been noted, when organisations seek to implement new systems or arrangements the primary focus is on the creation of new structures and facilities that can consume considerable time and energy. Conversely, in many instances, negligible time is committed to the actual planning and management of the change process itself (Wilson, 1992; Buchanan, Claydon & Doyle, 1999). As Burke (1982) highlights, somewhat more cynically, insufficient planning for the processes of change, even when the outcomes of the change may be known, means that change often just happens and as a result the process invariably goes badly astray.

This chapter examines the literature pertinent to developing an understanding of the management of organisational change.

4.1 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to make sense of the change process including personnel turnover (Kaufman, 1971); transitions (Bridges, 1980, 1988; 1995) life cycles (Woodward & Buchholz, 1987); internal politics (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992); and the historical or developmental perspective (Kochan & Useem, 1992). One of the most cited approaches to the study of the change process is the three-stage model of change originally proposed by Lewin (1947, 1951) and later expanded and developed by Schein (1980) and Burke (1982). Briefly, the theory consists of three stages: the first stage, *unfreezing*, involves the preparation of members for change, and the disruption of established beliefs and behaviours to generate the motivation for change. As established behaviours are now considered to be ineffective, discomfort is experienced. During the second stage of *changing*, interventions aimed at establishing new

behaviours and beliefs are gradually introduced to produce the momentum required for change and, finally, new behaviours are reinforced by positive outcomes and made permanent through *refreezing*. While Lewin's approach to change is still recognised as contributing useful insights for managers (Huse & Cummings, 1985; Certo, 1992), the view of change as wholly controllable, linear and static receives less favour in the recent climate of rapid change driven largely by competition and technology.

Further insights regarding organisational change and management are gained through the study of the nature of change itself and the contributions made by such theories as autopoiesis, chaos theory, cybernetics and dialectical opposition. Although not widely recognised until recently in organisation theory, the study of organisations through this perspective has the potential, argues Morgan (1997a:252), to 'challenge the foundations on which many existing theories of organisation build'.

The traditional view positions change as originating in the environment, that is, external challenges to an organisation lead to internal changes in order to survive. Maturana and Varela (1980) challenge this approach, claiming it reflects an external view of the change taking place within an organisation whereas the process of change is best understood by reference to internal mechanisms. The term autopoiesis, as described by them, refers to the capacity for self-production, self-creation or self-renewal through a closed system of relations. Identity (of organisms and organisations) is maintained in the face of change by engaging in circular patterns of interaction that are always self-referential as defined by the organisation itself. The manner in which an organisation appears to relate to the changing environment is, from this perspective, in fact only a reflection of part of its own organisation. Its environment is therefore really a part of itself; it is part of the self-reference activity that distinguishes the organisation and facilitates its own self-production. This activity characterises the closed loop of interaction in organisations. The system operates in circular patterns and has no beginning or ending.

It is therefore unwise to draw an artificial boundary around one element of the system, such as the external environment, as this breaks the circular nature of interaction. Changes do not arise as a result of external influences but are rather created by variations within the total system. New patterns evolve from processes of reproduction, mutation, chance interconnection and innovation. It is essential therefore, that before an organisation can come to understand its environment it must begin by understanding itself. As Morgan (1997a) highlights, many organisations attempt to sustain unrealistic identities or produce identities that ultimately destroy important elements of themselves and the contexts of which they are part.

4.1.1 Chaos and complexity theories

The contributions of chaos and complexity theories, as illustrated in the work of Gleick (1987), Peters (1987), Lewin (1992), and Kelly (1994), provide insights regarding the manner in which ordered patterns of activity can evolve from new organisations. These theories describe how unpredictable events, and behaviours, even if complex and random, eventually lead to novel patterns of change that acquire a coherent form. Provided a system is sufficiently robust, factors such as randomness, diversity and instability become resources for change.

Building on the earlier approaches, cybernetics regards change as unfolding through loops rather than in a linear fashion (refer Maruyama, 1982; Weick, 1979; Senge, 1990).

> 'When we analyse situations as loops rather than lines, we invariably arrive at a rich picture of the system under consideration. This can gave its advantages in that the analysis highlights key connections and provides a way of identifying the configuration of positive and negative feedback loops defining a particular context or 'attractor pattern'. It also shows the points at which it may be desirable to intervene either to reinforce the existing attractor to help the shift to a new one. But the richness and sheer complexity of the analysis can be overwhelming' (Morgan, 1997a:281).

While positive feedback loops are essential to assist the system to gain form, it is possible that the lack of negative stabilising loops can result in exponential change that cannot be controlled or sustained in the long term; a runaway occurs.

Small changes can create large effects. Implementation of organisational change therefore needs to respect patterns of mutual causality. This may call for considerable wisdom in recognising and changing patterns.

4.1.2 Paradoxical nature of change

Organisations are rife with paradoxes and contradictions (Kets de Vries, 1980; Hall, 1999; Stacey, 1996a) and from a dialectical perspective, potential new futures always create oppositions with the status quo, and new initiatives or new directions become entangled in paradoxical tensions that undermine the desired change (Morgan, 1997a:292-3). The existence of paradox results from the internal tensions generated 'by the fact that elements of both sides of the paradox may embrace equally desirable states' (Morgan, 1997a:294).

Lewin (1951) assumes the presence of resistance in any change process and categorises the forces of change as either 'regulatory', which maintain the status quo, or 'non-regulatory', which alter it in some way. From Lewin's perspective, opposing external forces affect potential change. Successful change results from 'unfreezing' an established equilibrium state by enhancing the forces driving the change and removing or reducing the forces resisting the change. 'Refreezing' in a new equilibrium state completes the process.

Although potential solutions might exist to resolve these paradoxes, the 'very fact that the tensions are experienced as contradictory may, in effect, be sufficient to negate transformational change' (Morgan, 1997a:293). From this perspective, change is seen as inevitable, and reflects:

> 'the struggle of opposites and the fact that any system development always contains elements of a counter development, because each position tends to generate its opposite' (Morgan, 1997a:293).

Successful management of paradox lies in the ability to 'create contexts that can minimise the negative dimensions while retaining desirable qualities on both sides' (ibid., p.294). The manner in which key paradoxes or contradictions are played out in organisations may take many forms, as illustrated by Morgan:

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Innovate-------------------- Avoid mistakes
Think long-term------------Deliver results now
Cut costs--------------------Increase morale
Reduce staff----------------Improve teamwork
Be flexible------------------ Respect the rules
Collaborative--------------Compete
Decentralise----------------Retain control
Specialise------------------ Be opportunistic
Low costs------------------- High quality
```

<div align="right">(Morgan, 1997a:292-293)</div>

Managing such contradictions requires skill and an ability to 'reframe' is essential so that new patterns of development can emerge. The key to the successful management of paradox lies 'in recognising that both dimensions of the contradictions that accompany change usually have merit; it is this requirement that distinguishes the management of paradox from the management of resistance to change' (Morgan, 1997a:293-4). Paradox cannot be successfully resolved by eliminating one side; the challenge is to find ways of integrating the competing elements. Crook, Pakulski and Waters (1992:220) allude to the difficulties in defining elements (dimensions) of change as it is:

> 'both pervasive and paradoxical. As soon as we attempt to acknowledge the rule of change by specifying its principal dimensions and fields of operation, we are left with only its empty husk: the phenomenon itself has moved on'.

New contexts are needed that reframe the paradoxes and contradictions in a positive way, argues Morgan (1997a). Small changes need to be found that can create large effects, which produce positive outcomes for both sides of the paradox; for example, to improve quality and so reduce production costs through reduced wastage and defects. By directing the creative energy towards overcoming areas of weakness the organisation is more likely to be innovative thereby becoming more competitive while also reducing mistakes.

Whereas people generally notice and respond to discrete events it is the processes behind those events that are more significant. Understanding the processes may allow change to be managed at a new and higher level than before. In the end, survival can only be survival with, never survival against, the environmental context in which the organisation operates as a closed loop configuration. The

theories of chaos and complexity suggest that managers need to be able to initiate small changes that can lead to large beneficial effects. They also need to recognise that the management of organisations (also, society and personal life) ultimately involves coping with paradoxes. Traditional management theory is based on the ability to organise, predict and control, and given the realities now faced by complex systems, this is no longer possible. Stacey (1996b:15-16) challenges us further:

> 'When you insist on your vision, when you try to stick to your blueprint, when you cling with so much determination to control, are you destroying the capacity of your organisation for complex learning? When you expel the surplus resource from your organisation out into the community, have you become more efficient but also so brittle that you cannot survive turbulence? Is there time left for the play and the dialogue without which nothing truly new can happen?'

Pettigrew (1985, 1988) argues that the meaning of organisational change and the way in which individuals respond to change can only be understood through observing a significant period of historical time. As Butler (1998) highlights, further understanding of the events, phenomena and issues within the specific context in which the organisational change occurs can only lead to a greater appreciation of why some change strategies appear more effective than others.

Paton and McCalman (2000:129) believe people management is often carried out poorly in organisations today mainly because managers are narrow in their thinking, preferring to concentrate more on the equipment hardware or mechanical design of the organisation rather than the feelings of people involved in the change process. Decisions on purchasing or development options based on a mechanistic perspective follow well-understood principles of machine theory: analyse the problem, produce the desired design, and install the design, while the human contribution to the system may be ignored.

4.2   IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

In the process of developing a new product, an organisation may carry out extensive research and design over a period of years with considerable effort and funding expended in market research, advertising and marketplace conditioning

to assure success and profitability. On the other hand, the time spent on designing a new organisation to cope with change, including the changes demanded by the new product, may be minimal and possibly non-existent. Often little consideration of the likely outcomes of the changes occurs, nor is there extensive consultation with those affected by the changes. Consequently much dissatisfaction may result and productivity may decline or be affected by attitudinal problems within the organisation. Rather than a change process involving only mechanical processes and analytical thinking, an organic system involving synthesis is needed.

4.2.1   Approaches to the management of change

The change process is often made more difficult by the reluctance of managers to delegate responsibility and treat individuals as they themselves expect to be treated. Effectively, subordinates are not trusted and therefore lose motivation. Managers too are often limited in their ability to think systematically about the organisation's core values and philosophy in relation to the nature of work and the shared part that people, especially subordinates, play in organisational success (Paton & McCalman, 2000:129).

Turner and Crawford (1998) emphasise the importance of three dimensions: the economic, the social and the managerial. Economic requirements necessitate that organisations 'deliver the goods', both to those with the vision to implement the changes and in the competitive marketplace. Secondly, organisations must achieve their purposes as social entities utilising the collective ideas and intents of individuals within the organisation to deliver the economic benefits. From this perspective, organisations, as social entities, need to be managed into existence and through the change, while simultaneously achieving their performance objectives and outcomes. Both are needed, Turner and Crawford argue, 'whether the change is small or large, is short, long or continuous, incremental or transformational' (p.5).

Turner and Crawford (1998) argue that any significant organisational change inevitably requires actions and changes on the part of 'many' before the change becomes embedded in people's beliefs, understandings and behaviours, and in the

organisation's systems, practices and resources use (p.69). Effective change means change in the collective attitudes, behaviours and skills of the 'many' and it is through these 'collective states' that an organisation is able to move from inaction to action or from one action to another (p.70). Collective states 'affect our predisposition and willingness to act, influence the levels of energy available for action, and impact upon our collective resilience under pressure' (Turner & Crawford, 1998:70).

Nine organisational states are identified by Turner and Crawford (1998): Understanding, Commitment, Empowerment, Esprit de corps, Conflict, Resistance, Anxiety, High Workloads, and Systems and Practices suitability (p.71). Of importance is the strong link between commitment and change effectiveness while conflict, anxiety and resistance produce a negative effect on change effectiveness. From the results of their research, Turner and Crawford (1998:72) concluded that:

> 'organisations change more effectively when their people: are committed to the changes being made; understand the changes that are happening and how the changes are expected to work; are empowered to make the changes work, having the necessary authority, resources and competencies; and have a shared confidence in the collective ability of the organisation to achieve its aims and have high mutual trust (that is, have esprit de corps)'.

Yukl (1998) argues that during periods of radical change, organisational members need to hold a vision for a better future that is sufficiently attractive to sustain commitment to the changes and justify any losses and hardships that may occur. Understandably, individuals will hold differing views about their role and the future direction of the organisation. Not unexpectedly, they will also vary in their perspectives regarding what constitutes the 'ideal' organisation. Yet accepting this, successful organisations still have the capacity, Senge (1990) argues, to project a coherent and common identity to those outside the organisation and are able to galvanise individual perceptions and goals into common group goals within. Successful managers work to maximise the strengths of their employees, and their management style is distinguished by their ability to 'read what is

happening' in order to understand and transform particular situations (Morgan, 1997a).

This approach assumes that organisational leaders are motivated to seek employee consultation and involvement, yet as Butler (1998) contends, the poor record of consultation undertaken by Australian managers (see Davis, 1997) suggests the 'rhetoric and reality are far from congruent' (p.73). The Karpin Report (1995) highlights the deficiencies of leadership and management in Australia, and argues for a more proactive approach towards opportunities, the adoption of a global orientation, and improved teamwork and people skills. The continuing reference to obsolete models of organisation and change in management education has resulted in change programs that are characterised by the movement of information 'across old and obsolete boundaries' (Duck, 1993:117).

Kotter (1996) believes organisational excellence requires a quality of leadership that is able to motivate people and accomplish important objectives despite the obstacles. Unfortunately, he argues, managers tend to be either naïve or cynical, and neither stance is effective. While naïve managers view the world through rose-coloured glasses reluctant to believe that people are selfish, dishonest or exploitative, cynical managers believe the opposite: everyone is selfish, everything is political and a 'get them before they get you' mentality pervades.

Turner and Crawford (1998) believe that it is essential that managers have the skills necessary to 'engage' people within organisations, to motivate them and obtain their commitment to new directions if the change process is to be successful. The link between 'engagement' and 'change effectiveness' is strong and the impact of 'engagement' highest 'when the organisation is trying to change its culture, and has relatively less impact when organisations see the challenge of change as a threat rather than as an opportunity, especially when the source of the threat is external, such as governments, unions or the community, as compared with a threat from market-related sources, such as competitors' (p.89). If a significant change in organisational culture is necessary, a large proportion (critical mass) of the individuals within the organisation must be engaged in the

change process. Their hearts, minds and actions must be focussed on the change, as it is their values, beliefs and behavioural norms that influence how the business is carried out (p.90). The capability to engage individuals within the organisation, requires:

> 'the competencies to communicate, motivate and enthuse people, to identify and convey new directions for the organisation's future, and to achieve commitment and integrated action across the organisation' (ibid., p.92).

4.2.2   Reordering priorities

Some argue that academic studies place the concerns of the organisation and its management first, rather than concerns for individual members. At best, such studies seek to make more palatable the 'integration' of individuals into carefully managed organisations (Denhardt, 1981). A radical reordering of priorities is needed, argues Denhardt, where individual growth, rather than the efficiency of the productive process, is emphasised. While organisations provide useful avenues for growth and productivity, individual success has often proven costly by effectively limiting personal autonomy and responsibility. For Denhardt (1981), important individual concerns are about identity, the establishment of meaningful lives, and the development of effective behaviours or actions that facilitate the expression of personal and important meanings. Through the establishment of an independent perspective on the world, individuals are presented with the opportunity for choice and given this opportunity, are able to elaborate on the meaning of their lives through action. This, for Denhardt, constitutes the struggle: to establish one's own meaning, to develop contexts for action, and establish continuity with our surroundings (p.1).

For O'Toole (1995), effective change and successful leadership should be values-based and underpinned by the moral principles of trustworthiness, respect, promise-keeping, and service. While contingency theorists would conclude that 'leaders must act with different styles, behave in different ways, and pursue different methods of power and persuasion in light of the exigencies of their particular times, places, challenges and constituencies' (p.107), O'Toole argues that 'situational leadership', or 'it all depends' leadership, where no basic,

immutable principles constitute a single 'best way' to lead, is highly ineffective. Contingency advocates, argues O'Toole, ignore countervailing sources of knowledge, in particular those derived from logic, history, and moral reasoning. Lacking a moral compass, he argues, 'leaders in the realist-relativist-contingency school are prone, when pressed by the inevitable exigencies of public life, to behave in ways that destroy the trust of followers' (p.107). Individuals refuse to follow leaders whom they do not trust, and this has serious implications for organisational change.

Organisational change is expensive, both in terms of the financial costs incurred by the organisation and as a result of the psychological effect on individuals (Johansen, 1991; Turner & Crawford, 1998; Wood et al., 1998). Alarmingly, Turner and Crawford found that of 243 cases of corporate change in Australia, 67% of firms encountered at least one major setback while attempting to change, 47% by at least two, and 29% by at least three. This was in spite of the fact that, in 88% of the cases, the executives believed the intended changes and new directions for their firm were right, and almost all, 92%, believed the changes were not beyond their organisation's capacity to achieve. However, 'the reality turned out to be otherwise' (p.ix). It is therefore imperative that as organisations continue to evolve and change their structures and practices, the implementation of strategies to bring about those changes contributes to, rather than negates, the health of the organisation (Hodgkinson, 1991; Duignan & MacPherson, 1992). More effective ways of handling change in the future to minimise organisational and personal loss are essential if the adverse findings of Turner and Crawford are to be improved. This is especially important when we consider organisational change not simply as a single event to be overcome, but as a continuing, integral part of the normal growth and life of any organisation (Morgan, 1997a).

4.3   MANAGING CHANGE IN UNIVERSITIES

Taylor (1999:75) believes it ironic that the messages promulgated by management 'gurus' such as Deming, Drucker and Peters advocate a flexible workforce comprising independent, self-managed workers, yet academics find themselves increasingly in a position of diminishing autonomy; a condition made worse by

the ongoing demands for accountability. Whereas ideal organisations should be 'held together by visions rather than bureaucratic 'red tape'; be values-focused rather than profit-driven; and should rely more on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of staff rather than on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of management' (Taylor, 1999:76), universities appear to be heading down a different pathway where collegiality is being 'displaced by bureaucratic control, academic values are consistently challenged by the values of commercialism, and management has become a new career path' (ibid., p.76).

Academic culture is often portrayed in the literature as resistant to change: 'conservative, inward looking, bound by tradition' without due recognition that 'the intellectual skills of academics make them less amenable to change strategies that rely on instruction' (Taylor, 1999:76). Paternalistic approaches to the management of change 'tend to generate dissent and result in alienation rather than contribute to the achievement of commitment to some new order (ibid., p.76). Unfortunately, Taylor argues, the predominant approaches to management in higher education now 'are based on leadership as patriarchy and paternalism, of leader-follower relationships'; and these are diametrically opposed to the 'academic traditions of collegiality (shared decision making) and autonomy. As such, they are resisted' (ibid., p.76).

Much about the cultural tensions generated by these changes has been well represented by McNay (1995) who identifies two dimensions: policy definition and implementation control. Each of these dimensions becomes a continuum based on the degree of managerial control ranging from 'loose' to 'tight' orientation. The model is represented as follows:

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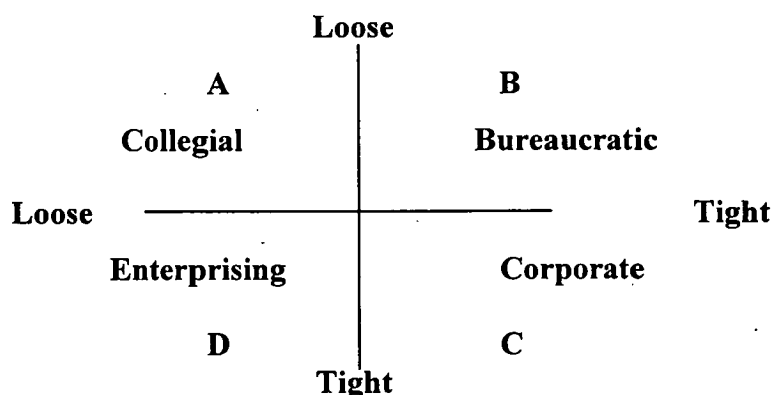
McNay identifies the Type A culture as characterised by loose policy definition and loose (permissive) control over implementation; this aligns with the traditional collegial culture. Staff remain within academic disciplines and experience a sense of academic freedom to pursue university and personal goals; students are apprentice academics. Peer review is emphasised with loose policy definition but with tight control of implementation.

A Type B culture is characterised by loose policy definition but with tight control of implementation. There is an emphasis on control, regulation, consistency and predictability, and power is concentrated with senior administrators who audit compliance. This is the bureaucratic model and constitutes a form of managerialism in higher education. Standards are set by external sources while students are regarded as statistics.

The Type C culture represents the corporation with tight control over both policy formation and implementation. Power is centralised; the focus is on loyalty to top management. This culture encourages competition and decision-making is political. Standards are related to the plans and goals of the organisation itself while students are customers or, even less flatteringly, units of resource.

The Type D culture is notable for its tight control over policy definition but loose control over implementation. It is an enterprising culture with an emphasis on leadership, at all levels. Decision-making is flexible; implementation is left to those nearest the 'coal face'. Decentralisation is a characteristic allowing individuals and departments to seek and respond to local opportunities. Power is more independent than in other cultures and tends to be with the entrepreneurs within the organisation and also with the students who are viewed as clients, or even partners. While McNay (1995) suggests no university is actually monocultural, i.e., positioned neatly within one of the four cultures, his research conducted through the use of surveys shows a progressive 'displacement' of academic culture by corporate culture, a shift in the balance between the four options. The pattern of change has been from collegium and bureaucracy to corporation and enterprise.

Hort (1997) suggests that as a result of the changes to higher education, university staff have been transported from "liberal education' and an interest in 'knowledge for its own sake" to a new place within society where academics now 'fulfil instrumental and strategic roles' (ibid., p.1). This had forced academics to move from an 'academic' or 'collegial' culture into a 'managerialist' or 'corporate' one. As a consequence, university staff, like many other 'intercultural travellers', had experienced disorientation and unease characteristic of 'culture' shock (ibid., p.2); a process whereby academics not only face deprivation of known 'customs, cues and meanings', but must also adapt to unfamiliar practices that reflect different basic values and assumptions (Janssen, 1989:124). Hort disputes claims that the tensions within higher education, especially the rise in managerialism, emerged as a result of 'the clash of cultures brought about by the CAEs and university amalgamations' (Moses, 1992). Rather, both the changes to the nature of academics' work and their relationships with universities relates significantly, Hort argues, to 'the 1988 industrial agreement between the academics' unions, and the universities' employers association, signed under pressure from the Federal Labor Government' (Hort, 1997:1).

Trowler and Knight (2000:28) note that the literature on university cultures tends to lag behind theorising found in the areas of management and organisational studies (e.g., Alvesson, 1993; Sackmann, 1997), and despite the criticisms of nomothetic and functionalist approaches, university cultures still tend to be described in this way (e.g., Bergquist, 1993; Smart & Hamm, 1993). Trowler and Knight (2000) reject the view of culture as 'static, to be learned and conformed with' preferring it described as both 'enacted and constructed' (p.29-30).

The exploration of areas such as the cultures within universities (e.g., Harman, 1989) has gained more attention in recent years. In a study of a British university, Trowler (1998) explores academics' responses to change in higher education. He identifies four educational ideologies that revolve around three axes: the aim of higher education (Newmanite or vocational); the important content (discipline-based propositional knowledge or general transferable skills); and the important functions taking place within higher education (research or teaching). At the

most fundamental level, these, he believes, answer three essential questions about education: 'what exactly should we do?', 'why should we do it?', and 'how should we do it?'. Within this matrix, Trowler identifies four ideological positions held by academics towards the role of the university: traditionalism, progressivism, enterprising, and social reconstructivism (Trowler, 1998).

In brief, those adopting a Traditionalist position view universities predominantly as elitist in nature, and consider that academics are custodians of the cultural, research and disciplinary heritage of society. Access to universities is limited to the talented minority, able to cope with the inherent difficulties of study at the level of higher education. Conversely, those adopting a Progressivist position reject the elitist perspective and believe universities should be open to all comers. An important role of the university, from this perspective, is to encourage those who are disadvantaged and, in so doing, to provide opportunities for balancing the inequalities imposed by an unjust social system. Academic standards are seen as of lesser relevance and teaching is favoured over research. The third position, titled Enterprising, promotes the view that the university should equip students with the necessary skills to be able to pursue a successful career, i.e,. development of the human capital. The motivation and rationale for the university is therefore economic. This view embraces new technology and other advances seen as improving production efficiency. Skills are more important than content; teaching is more important than research. Finally, the fourth position, described as Social Reconstructivism claims that education can be a force for encouraging social change. Individual students are 'improved' through participation in higher education, and are therefore better able to address the prevailing social norms and help change them for the better. This perspective supports the use of variety and flexibility in courses. The university is therefore a change agent but is incorporated into the system of state control.

Winter (1995) argues rather optimistically that the challenge created from the imposition of an industrial, profit-oriented logic on the higher education sector may present educational opportunities to 'shed some of the oppressive practices enshrined in higher education's traditional forms and to begin to realise some innovative and progressive possibilities' (p.130). Contradictions, Winter argues,

not only generate problems, but also 'generate spaces within which power can be contested and reforms can be won' (p.130). Further, the conditions of ambiguity and uncertainty that become an integral part of daily life during periods of rapid change can often provide the catalyst for the development of new ways of undertaking academic work, including research (Sachs, 1998).

In the increasingly managed university, academics are requested 'to spend more time in more arenas of work' (Rhoades, 2000:45). The ever increasing number of new functions and partnerships needed by universities to better articulate to the external world, has resulted in the emergence of new organisational structures and changing roles and realities for academics; academics now find themselves more dependent upon and interacting more frequently with other professionals and technicians in their daily activities (Rhoades, 2000). Reflecting upon the changes in higher education brought about by the introduction of the new technologies, Dator (2000) somewhat cynically but graphically captures their impact:

> 'For too long you have sat and worked, biding your time. Power-pointing here, net surfing there, convening a workshop now, and yet stealthily spinning the wiry web of the virtual university everywhere until, as the crews of the flagships endlessly rearrange their deck chairs, you rise up with righteous fury, engulfing the professors and their stifling administrators, digitising all libraries, and proclaiming for all who have ears to hear that you, and your colleges of continuing and distance education, are now the proper conduits for learning, just-in-time, for the 21st century' (Dator, 2000:69).

While some have argued that the changes to higher education occurred without substantially impacting on the role of faculty and academics who remain insulated from the internal and external world by modifications in the formal structure of the university (Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), Rhoades argues that there exists sufficient data to demonstrate that quite the contrary holds true (Rhoades, Leslie & Oaxaca, 1999). As Rhoades (2000) explains:

> 'Instructional time exceeds research time even in research universities, and the pressure to teach more, teach better, and adopt technological innovations has increased throughout the 1990s. As

for being buffered from external pressures by the university's formal structures, the evidence again leads to the opposite conclusion' (p.45).

Ramsden (1998) argues that the work of academics becomes more effective when the approach to leadership is:

'enabling, coherent, honest, firm and competent; when the leadership combines efficient management of people and resources; and when it blends a positive vision for future changes with a focus on developing staff – a focus on helping them to learn' (p.365).

4.4   RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Organisational change does affect people, including academics, and regardless of its origins, its implementation can have significant social consequences; 'it can be resisted, sabotaged, or just poorly implemented' (Cummings & Worley, 1993). Resistance to change is not a new phenomenon and its prevalence has been noted for some time (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Hurst, 1991; Lovat & Smith, 1995). Wood et al. (1998) defines resistance to change as 'any attitude or behaviour that reflects a person's unwillingness to make or support a desired change', while Brewer (1995) argues that not only is resistance inevitable it is a 'normal' response in the learning and adjustment processes necessary during any organisational change (p.xiv). During any change process, individuals make assessments regarding the relative costs of changing to meet the demands of the new change or organisation; resistance occurs when individuals 'do not believe it is in their interests to change or the change is contradictory to their value system, they have limited knowledge about the reasons for the change and the need to perform differently, or there is a lack of resources, time and capacity to implement the necessary interventions' (Brewer, 1995:xv).

It is usually assumed that for organisational change to be effective resistance to change must be overcome, yet it has the potential to be useful in accomplishing change objectives when viewed as feedback (Klein, 1969 in Wood et al., 1998). From this perspective, resistance can provide a degree of stability and predictability to behaviour that otherwise might take on the characteristics of chaotic randomness. Nonetheless, although a possible source of functional conflict, resistance can greatly hinder adaptation and progress (Robbins,

1993:674). By understanding the underlying factors that affect resistance, including the situations that are likely to cause it, why individuals resist change and how they express that resistance, the management of change is more likely to be effective (Sadler, 1991; Bartol et al., 1998).

Individual commitment to the change process is essential if it is to be accepted, and this implies a readiness to accept the goals and values introduced with the change, a keenness to engage in the change process, and a desire to remain a member of the changing organisation (Brewer, 1995). While overt and immediate resistance is easier to manage, implicit or deferred resistance is more difficult to recognise, and may take the form of: 'loss of loyalty to the organisation, loss of motivation to work, increased errors or mistakes, and increased absenteeism owing to 'sickness'' (Robbins, 1993:670). Concealed resistance is less desirable and more destructive in intent.

Resistance may take place on two levels: individual or organisational. Hall (1999) argues that it is the conservative nature of organisations generally that creates resistance. Katz and Kahn (1978) identified six major sources of organisational resistance including: structural inertia, limited focus of change, group inertia, threat to expertise, threat to established power relationships, and threat to established resource allocations. The built in mechanisms that organisations utilise to create stability and predictability, often create human problems (Argyris 1957, 1964) and become the barriers to change, as exemplified through formal rules and procedures, selection processes, training and other socialisation techniques that reinforce specific role requirements and skills (Robbins, 1993). Reasons for resistance may include the corporate lack of vision, poor communication, inadequate feedback mechanisms, or perhaps failure to anticipate the resistance itself.

Kaufman (1971) believes obstacles such as ''sunk costs' or investments in the status quo; the accumulation of official constraints on behaviour, such as laws and regulations; unofficial and unplanned constraints on behaviour in the form of informal customs; and inter-organisational agreements, such as labour-management contracts', are found within the overall system in which

organisations operate and contribute to resistance to change (Kaufman in Hall, 1999:187). Goss et al. (1998:83) argue that when an organisation requires fundamental shifts in its capabilities, it is through 'reinvention' that improvements will be made; in this the organisation is 'not changing what is, but creating what isn't'.

Aging organisations are often faced with the 'dilemma of success' (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992) in which the organisation becomes 'too good at what it does' (p.45). Successful practices, accumulated knowledge and specific values become fixed entities that create barriers to major innovation. Douglas (1986) observed that the individuals' structure of assumptions is vital to the manner in which they accommodate new experiences. The more consistent a new experience is with past assumptions the more confidence individuals have toward those assumptions. Hence individuals may unwittingly ignore, distort or reject those facts that sit uncomfortably with their existing assumptions. As individuals age, their investment in their underlying assumptions grows firmer. Newly observed facts are already pre-selected, organised and labelled during the very act of perceiving.

By distinguishing between that which is similar, dissimilar, liked or disliked, individuals employ a process of classification to make sense of and bring order to experiences or phenomena (Douglas, 1986; Foucault, 1973). The difficulty with this, as with any classificatory system, is that it tends to create in the mind 'a natural, objective and enduring perception of things that are actually artificial and transitory' (Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989:21).

4.4.1 Controllable and uncontrollable barriers to change

Wood et al. (1998) discuss barriers to change, some of which are controllable by the leadership while others are not subject to direct personal control. Controllable barriers include those that affect morale and performance. These include: the organisational culture; leadership skill; group involvement in decision-making; structural arrangements; and the reward system. Effective change must be able to satisfactorily address all these factors. A barrier to adaptation may actually be

introduced if the staff must follow newly installed structures and procedures that then act as a barrier in the change process.

There are two main uncontrollable barriers. Firstly, those that arise during the process of change itself. They need a response that is appropriate, available and up-to-date. If such barriers can be brought under control, and monitored, then they can become channels for success. On the other hand, should the staff feel out of control and helpless then the organisation's most valuable asset, its staff, may be 'wasting away'. The other main uncontrollable barrier is the mindset and set of assumptions behind decisions and actions taken by staff.

Potential sources of resistance to change for individuals include: no felt need for change, habit, need for security, economic factors, fear of the unknown, self-interest, misunderstanding, lack of trust, contrasting interpretations, and selective information processing (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Robbins, 1993, Bartol et al., 1998; Wood et al., 1998); or from groups within the organisation who may be motivated by altruistic or selfish motivations in opposing change (Hall, 1991).

At times, individuals may become overly committed to particular forms of action, and tend to defend and even strengthen these behaviours rather than attempt to adapt to the changes. Consequently, some organisations will find they have only a limited potential for change. When proposed changes are perceived as threatening, panic occurs, and if individuals are unable to refute the changes logically they revert to the lowest level of defence (O'Toole, 1995); that is, to challenge the validity of the examples used to illustrate the general proposition. As Morgan (1997a:93) highlights, once organisations become trapped by the status quo:

> 'They become myopic, accepting their current reality as *the* reality.
> To learn and change they must be prepared to challenge and change
> the basic rules of the game at both strategic and operational
> levels…When change threatens the status quo, defensive routines
> 'kick in', diluting or diverting the attack on established practice'.

Successful implementation of change, it is argued, involves understanding the way in which individual and institutional 'frames of reference affect resistance, what circumstances cause it, how people express resistance and handle disruption,

why they resist change, and how to manage reactions to organisational change for the best outcome' (ibid., p.53). The consequence of not adequately dealing with resistance to change is that it may be merely 'deferred' and 'stockpiled' ready to resurface at a later time (Robbins et al., 1998:675).

The response to change is often reflected in the level of disruption caused by the change. As a result of change, the working environment is altered from one that is stable, predictable, calm and harmonious (or at least perceived in hindsight as such) to one that is uncertain, unpredictable, stressful, dissonant, disturbed and upset. Three levels or degrees of disruption can be noticed, these being 'no disruption', 'manageable disruption', and 'unmanageable disruption' (Robbins et al., 1998). The term 'no disruption' refers to change that is acceptable as problems encountered are minimal. 'Manageable disruption' is when an individual's equilibrium or normal frame of reference is upset and support mechanisms are needed to assist in the acceptance of change. 'Unmanageable disruption' occurs when the organisational change is of such magnitude that the individual's frame of reference is not able to support the changes and cognitive dissonance results. In this situation, the changes present a crisis characterised by great uncertainty and confusion and the consequences will be disruptive. The task presented to management then is to be able to offer staff a vision for a favourable outcome so the change is viewed as acceptable as is possible.

4.4.2   Leading change

Ideally, some argue, organisational change should result from carefully planned, goal-oriented and purposeful actions that involve the intentions, aspirations, and goals of organisational members (Nadler, 1998). O'Toole (1995) argues that an essential feature of effective leadership since the 1980s has been the degree to which followers change their behaviours and embrace change. Leaders must have followers, yet there still exists a persistent reluctance by leaders to accept readily available knowledge about leadership, preferring instead to focus 'on their tasks, visions, and roles, to the near exclusion of the needs, aspirations and roles of followers' (O'Toole, 1995:158). Ironically, this ensures that:

'people in organisations resist change advocated by their leaders for exactly the same reasons that the leaders of organisations resist change advocated by outsiders' (O'Toole, 1995:158).

Conner (1998) sees the resistance to learning, development and planned change as 'a ubiquitous phenomenon' that is impossible to understand without some consideration of the culture of an organisation as a primary source of resistance (p.xii). Further, organisational leaders, he argues, should adopt a more sympathetic and realistic approach to resistance and management of change and more fully understand the complexities involved when members of various subcultures are required to change their basic assumptions, values and behaviours. Several forces operate to maintain an organisation's culture, argues Robbins (1993:624), including the perceived congruence or 'good fit' between the individuals' values and the values of the organisation; the greater the comfort, the more likely individuals will resist efforts to disturb their equilibrium. Earlier work by Harvey and Brown (1988) asserts that the strength of resistance encountered is dependent on the degree of change involved and the impact of the change on the culture of the organisation. Whereas minor organisational changes with little impact on the organisational culture results in minimal resistance, large-scale change that impacts heavily on organisational culture provides the most challenge with less chance of success.

Schein (1980) presents the somewhat less democratic view that organisational change is mediated through key individuals operating within the organisation. For most individuals, not so closely involved, such change is generally perceived as threatening and painful. Individuals are generally reluctant to endure discomfort, even when possible gain might result, and the greater personal effort required to learn new behaviours and attitudes will be perceived as punishing and stressful; this is especially so when individuals experience minimal control over the changes (Sikes, 1989). The key to decreasing resistance to change, Sikes argues, is through encouraging active involvement in goal setting and the mechanisms for change.

Johansen (1991) refutes the claim that all change is considered punishing, and although identified changes are perceived as having costs and benefits, they are

not seen as punishing. Johansen found that participants not only considered both the short-term and long-term costs and benefits of change, but were also willing to endure short-term discomfort to achieve long-term gains (p.96). The research results did, however, support the contention that low levels of control cause high levels of stress; both high control and very low control are associated with lower levels of stress. Higher levels of stress were reported when uncertainty existed about the amount of control over an event.

4.4.3 Scott & Jaffe's change grid

Recognition of the emotional stages individuals traverse in order to personally deal with change is important if the management of change is to be effective (Robbins, 1993). The Change Grid (Scott & Jaffe (1989) defines denial, resistance, exploration and commitment as representative of four transitional phases that are applicable to 'individual, group, organisational and even social transitions' (Robbins et al., 1998:679). As individuals move horizontally through the grid the focus moves away from the past to the way things might be in the future. The vertical axis distinguishes between attention focussed on the internal self or on the external environment.

4.4.4 Bereavement literature

The bereavement literature provides another avenue for understanding the stages individuals progress through when undergoing change. Bridges (1980, 1988) distinguishes between the external process of 'change', which is defined as an event with a clear beginning and end, and the internal psychological process of 'transition', which consists of the three phases: endings, the neutral zone and beginnings. Transitions are not as easily managed nor as carefully planned as change. The ending phase comprises three components: disengagement, disidentification and disenchantment. During this phase current beliefs and roles must be discarded to facilitate forward movement and the use of powerful metaphors, such as death, to describe the sense of loss and grief is characteristic at this time. Feelings of grief and the severing of relationships with others are evidenced during disengagement and recognisable in denial, anger, bargaining and despair. Disidentification occurs through the loss of role identity while

disenchantment is experienced as a loss of personal meaning related to the change. For the transition to be successful, the grief process must be allowed to 'run its course'.

The neutral zone phase comprises three components: disorientation, disintegration and discovery. Although previous relationships, roles, and understandings may have disappeared, nothing has yet filled the void. Disorientation results from a lack of a distinct role as the relationships that once existed have now collapsed. The final phase of discovery commences when individuals begin to reorganise and devise new structures, roles and relationships, after they have accepted and grieved for the loss of the past. Bridges identifies six types of loss that individuals may experience including: loss of turf, loss of attachments, loss of meaning, loss of the future, loss of role, and loss of control. Bridges then makes the observation that managers seldom allocate priority to such grieving processes, at least in the USA, but tend to follow the pioneering heritage into new tasks and adventures. This concept of progress denies the essential need to recognise the mourning and facilitate the phases so reducing their trauma.

4.4.5 Dissonance theory

Another important aspect of the relationship between individuals and the organisation that employs them is their level of acceptance of specific aspects of the organisation with which they might disagree. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance in which individuals attempt to reduce the level of dissonance or discomfort experienced as a result of incompatibility between two or more attitudes, or between behaviour and attitudes, is useful here. The desire on the part of the individual to reduce the dissonance will be dependent upon the importance of the causes of the dissonance, the degree of influence the person has over those causes and the effect of reward systems involved. Sometimes significant dissonance exists but is rationalised, justified or subjugated as the individual may have received rewards that help counter balance the dissonance.

A consequence of cognitive dissonance theory for organisations is that it is difficult to predict the behaviour of individuals based on their personal attitudes.

The fact that individuals experience dissonance does not necessarily mean they will seek consistency, as the balance between high dissonance and high rewards may provide the stability. Without the high rewards the high dissonance will remain out of balance in the person's character, attitudes and beliefs.

Burnes and James (1995) investigated the manner in which the culture of an organisation and the degree of dissonance generated by proposals for change, influence the depth and types of employee involvement necessary to create a positive climate for change. From their findings they argue that these factors are essential in identifying the best approach to managing change in a particular situation, but also in determining if such a project should be undertaken in the first place.

Morgan (1997a) suggests that dissonance and loss of creativity largely arise from the inflexible nature of traditional organisations. Traditional modes of control in organisations, such as the use of hierarchy, can have no real fixed form when they are considered as in constant flux and transformation; patterns must emerge, rather than be imposed. Indeed, in changing organisations, hierarchical patterns may develop as different members or functions, from anywhere within the system, take a leading role. The pattern evolves and finds its won form and in this way, argues Morgan, existing hierarchies become merely 'snapshot points on a self-organising journey'. An important role for managers therefore is to shape and create the overall contexts in which appropriate forms (details) of self-organisation can occur. To the extent that the system remains locked into the old context (perhaps due to substantial resistance to change) no significant change is possible. If managers can learn to identify emerging paradoxes, or even if they create new paradoxes that reflect the tensions between the old organisation and the desired future then they have the understanding needed to reframe the paradox in such as way that the organisation (system) will itself provide the productive energies necessary for the change to occur. Order will arise from chaos.

Reflective note

The literature presented in this chapter outlines the various theoretical approaches pertinent to developing an understanding of organisational change, the

implementation and management of change, and the numerous factors that might assist or impede the change process. Emphasis has been given to the importance of and need for the effective management of change, especially if resistance to change is to be minimised. It has been argued in this chapter that individual commitment to and ownership of the change is essential if the organisational change process is to be successful. This involves an acceptance of the goals and values of the change, and a willingness to participate in the process, provided opportunities are readily available. Further, it has been shown that the level of congruence between organisational and individual goals and expectations is important in ensuring individuals maintain the desire to retain membership of the organisation and become committed to its new direction.

While theoretical approaches to the study of organisational change provide explanations and guidance regarding the implementation of change, the process still generates, more often than not, considerable disruption and resistance from organisational members. Understanding the factors that contribute to the emergence of such disruption is important to this thesis, especially given its focus on ascertaining how and to what extent the organisational changes brought about by the formation of the newly formed University impacted on the personal and professional lives of academics within the organisation.

Building on the research of organisational change and its management, the following chapter continues this discussion through a critical evaluation of the major theoretical perspectives and studies specifically related to the impact of change on individuals, including differing approaches to the study of coping, the selection of coping strategies, and methodological issues that impinge on the development of effective explanations and an understanding of the manner in which individuals respond to and cope with organisational change within the workplace.

CHAPTER 5:   LITERATURE REVIEW: IMPACT OF CHANGE ON INDIVIDUALS

Introduction

Major organisational restructuring, downsizing, mergers and acquisitions and other workplace changes have also been shown to impact negatively on individuals (Jick, 1985; Cooper & Payne, 1988; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Bergin & Solman, 1995; Cascio 1993; Kets De Vries, & Balazs, 1997; Trowler, 1998) resulting in increased job insecurity (Schweiger & Lee 1993), higher levels of stress and uncertainty, reduced job satisfaction, trust and commitment, and greater desire to leave the organisation (Tombaugh & White, 1990; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991; Le Craw, 1992; Terry, Nielson & Perchard, 1993; Potts, 1997; Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). Organisational restructuring in particular is likely to result in feelings of powerlessness by individuals to effect any improvement in their situation (Sutton, Eisenhardt & Jucker, 1986; Schweiger et al., 1987; Trowler, 1998). Rarely have decisions to restructure been reversed (Begley, 1998).

5.1   RESTRUCTURING THE WORK OF ACADEMICS

5.1.1   Links to the past

Since the demise of the binary system, institutes of higher education in Australia have continued to undergo considerable transformation brought about by further amalgamations, extensive restructuring and cultural reorientation.   Further, continuing pressure to improve competitiveness and increase economic efficiencies has also impacted significantly on academics, at both a personal and a professional level (Currie & Woock, 1995; Ramsden, 1998; Bailey, 1999).

In the Introduction to his book Learning to Teach in Higher Education, Ramsden (1992:1) sets the scene and highlights the pressures facing academics due to the increased level of interference experienced in the nature of their work:

> 'Today's lecturers work in a climate of expanding government intervention. They are told that higher education has obstinately refused to accept the need to respond to the changing economic and social condition of the second half of the twentieth century. They are

assailed with the accusation that higher education is a drain on scarce national resources; simultaneously, they are informed that it holds the key to improved economic performance. Requirements to cut public expenditure have led to less money in the system and to demands to use what there is more efficiently. Growing numbers of students and moves towards more open access have meant that the available resources have to be spread more thinly' (p.1).

Academics in Australia at this time found themselves encapsulated in a paradoxical situation emerging on the one hand from the message that their work was greatly valued and the 'key' to the country's prosperity, yet faced with increasing pressure to reduce their cost through improved efficiency.

Under the binary system (pre Dawkinisation), the nineteen existing universities functioned as research and teaching institutions, whilst the expanding College of Advanced Education (CAE) sector, including the Institutes of Technology and the former teachers' colleges, comprised institutes predominantly responsible for teaching undergraduate students. Like most binary systems, this was an hierarchical arrangement, with the traditional universities having higher status and higher levels of funding than the CAEs (Nicholls & Allen, 1993). Involvement in research effectively formed a dividing line between the colleges of advanced education and universities. For academics in the existing universities, research and the teaching of higher degree students was a distinguishing characteristic while CAE academics were generally categorised as non-researchers. While research experience and skill had generally been taken for granted in traditional universities, many academics in the colleges of advanced education entered higher education in the early-to-mid seventies after substantial careers in schools, educational administration or in the private sector, and subsequently spent the following years predominantly as teachers and administrators rather than as researchers (Nicholls & Allen, 1993). Following the formation of the new universities and gradual cultural reorientation towards research and publications as priorities, these academics faced difficult choices: to either change their profile, continue to work as before with little prospect of promotion, or leave the organisation altogether.

Findings from several studies show that academics from the former Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) experienced a decline in optimism regarding promotional opportunities as teaching became less valued in the new university environment (Everett & Entrekin 1987; Moses & Ramsden 1992; McInnes, 1996). As Adams (1998:424) highlights, academics generally have been 'disinclined to believe the rhetoric emanating from university administrations that good teaching is valued' in regard to promotion. While some CAE academics had engaged in research activity prior to the demise of the binary system (Everett & Entrekin, 1987; Sheehan & Welch, 1996), Moses & Ramsden (1992) ranked these academics less highly on academic motivation than academics from the established universities, although Hort and Oxley (1992:5) argue there is 'surprisingly little difference between university and college academics in their attitudes to, motivation for, and activities within higher education'. McInnes (1996) found an increase in the professional autonomy of 44% of CAE academics after the changes; an outcome possibly attributable to greater access to funding and institutional expectations (Adams, 1998).

5.1.2 Academics under pressure

Since the late 1980s many academics have expressed disquiet about the nature of their role in the workplace and organisational changes within universities have had a deleterious effect on the productivity of academics, as well as on their health, well-being, and levels of stress and tension experienced (Hort & Oxley, 1992; Fisher, 1994; Broadbent, 1997, 2000; Trowler, 1998; Borg & Arpa, 2000). Reflecting on the changes in higher education, Blackmore, Gough and Green (1994) suggest the educational community was at that time categorised by:

> 'wide-spread 'disarray', together with a general 'demoralization' – a problem of identity and purpose, in Australia linked to and in part stemming from the collapse of the binary system and what even now we can call the 'Dawkinisation' of higher education' (p.iii).

This was accompanied by financial pressure on the higher education sector to be more accountable to audit and the treasury from which it derives its funding. Measures of performance of a numerical nature are obviously attractive to

funding bodies and seemingly transparent. Thus research output and formal staff appraisal schemes are now integral to higher education policy (Ramsden, 1992:1).

The stress generated by the range of demands made on academics, especially commercial imperatives, the lack of time and the shortages of resources available, has been, according to Noble (1994) one of the most intractable issues for contemporary academia. Significant increases in the number of staff suffering symptomatic illness in the work environment has also caused concern, with such factors as increasing role conflict and ambiguity, particularly amongst staff involved in the amalgamations, an increase in responsibilities, poor management overall and information overload identified as underlying stressors (Report on Occupational Stress at the University of Adelaide, 1993 cited in Noble, 1994). Others have noted similar concerns (Perlberg & Keinen, 1986; Blix et al., 1994; Dua, 1994; Fisher, 1995; Abouserie, 1996).

Organisational constraints or aspects of the work environment including job related information, equipment, materials and supplies, budgetary support, required services and help from others, task preparation, time availability and the physical work environment are known to not only interfere with and prevent effective performance in the workplace (Peters & O'Connor, 1980; Spector et al., 1988) but to also impact on the level of workplace stress and satisfaction, frustration and possibly turnover as well (Jex & Gudanowski, 1992; Spector, 1996; Borg & Arpa, 2000). Successful organisational mergers might well be assessed in terms of the impact each event has on employee outcomes such as turnover, job satisfaction, commitment and stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1994).

The ongoing change regarding the role of universities and the nature of academics' work has continued to generate widespread discontent, especially regarding the widening gap between teaching and research (Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Martin, 1999; Robertson & Bond, 2001). Martin and Ramsden (2000) suggest the trend is continuing and 'relative to research, the status of teaching remains low' (p.133). As a consequence, academics have become increasingly alienated from their organisations (Ramsden, 1998) and dissatisfied with the way in which their institutions are managed (Lacy & Sheehan, 1997).

Reflecting on changes in the UK, Taylor (1999) argues that while the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the UK: Higher Education in the Learning Society (NCIHE, 1997) report 'provides a thorough and current statement on the state of higher education in the UK' (p.3) and lists a number of the potential changes likely to impact on the future of higher education over a twenty-year period, it does not acknowledge 'the impact of change itself' (p.4). Taylor believes this to be an unfortunate omission, given that recent evidence suggests the morale of academic staff is falling (Martin, 1999); a condition more likely to negate any creative responses towards the impact of the other changes.

5.1.3   Contemporary challenges

Ongoing change has seen academics coping with an increasingly diverse range of students enrolling in university courses, larger class sizes resulting from trends towards mass education, increased internationalisation, and the impact of information and communication technologies (Perry, 1998). Many academics have baulked at complying with the vast array of new regulatory requirements and questioned the wisdom of the proliferation of administrative staff needed to manage the burgeoning administrative duties, new technologies and budgetary requirements (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998).

Rising student numbers created an increased demand for greater numbers of academic staff, resulting in the proliferation of short-term contracts arguably more cost effective than the employment of full time staff. The notion of tenure had 'democratically been broadened from a professorial privilege to an industrial condition to which most academics aspire' (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998:3) and the growing unease about career prospects and the inadequacy of academics' salaries, continues to remain a further source of discontent for many.

Taylor (1997) notes the increasing sense of insecurity developing amongst academics as they experience the pressure emanating from the efforts of universities to cope with contemporary challenges. Consequently, academics are suffering identity crises due to the demands, the changes in those demands, and the limited resources they have to meet those demands. Notions of collegiality, or cohesion and stability have been replaced by competition, disjuncture and never-

ending change, leaving workers increasingly exhausted from 'change fatigue' (Rodger, 1998). As operating environments become increasingly competitive and turbulent, academics within universities are challenged to constantly respond to change through the adoption of new strategies and reassessment of individual goals (Hort, 1996; Perry, 1998).

Also problematic, Ramsden (1998) argues, is the self-imposed burden carried by academics themselves, as evidenced in their sense of obligation to perform more effectively in all aspects of academic work, and to do so with less resources, thereby creating an even greater sense of disillusionment. Feelings of alienation are made more intense by the manner in which academic work is organised and managed. As Lacy and Sheehan (1997) highlight, academics are concerned that:

1. There is an apparent lack of vision and direction: we don't know where the university is going, or why.

2. The university's administrative processes work inefficiently, reducing the time we have available for core tasks such as research and teaching.

3. The focus is too much on managing resources and budgets well, and not enough on managing people well; the management don't seem to care.

4. There's too much telling us to change; there's not enough reasons given why we should change.

5. There is too little emphasis on training and development to help people adapt to change (Lacy & Sheehan, 1997 cited in Ramsden, 1998:363).

Taylor (1999:141) points out that the ability to cope with uncertainty is often required in many different forms of employment, and, in fact, 'many people are employed because of their capacity to deal with novel situations'. Drawing on the work of Lipshitz and Strauss (1997), which highlights the importance of context-specific values and personal identity in the conceptualisation of and ability to cope with uncertainty, Taylor (1999) suggests the use of coping strategies is 'learned in context'.

5.2   COPING

Professionals in academia are not alone in experiencing coping difficulties. Those in the general workplace environment are also faced with the need to adapt

to change. Understandably, interest in coping in the workplace has been primarily aimed at reducing the impact of numerous work-related stressors such as role ambiguity, role conflict, work demands (Nelson & Sutton, 1990; Parkes 1990; Latack & Havlovic, 1992; Callan, 1993; Cox, 1993; Warr, 1994; HSE, 1995) and racial stressors (Piper, 1999).

Once described as 'the Black Plague of the eighties' the financial costs of occupational stress to business and industry can be significant (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Clearly, stress has a dysfunctional impact on both individual and organisational outcomes and, as such, is a significant hazard for personal and public health (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Leong, Furnham & Cooper, 1996). This should not negate the role of organisations to act responsibly, nor to claim that effective coping be regarded as a panacea; on some occasions it might prove more expedient to alter the structural design or operational aspects of an organisation, rather than the individual, when endeavouring to reduce work-related stress.

From an interactionist perspective (Cox, 1978; Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988; Edwards & Cooper, 1990) stress occurs as a result of the 'lack of fit' between environmental demands and individual needs, and the interrelatedness of both subjective and objective stressors is important. Yet most workplace intervention strategies focus on the improvement of individuals to adapt to continuing environmental demands, the implicit assumption being that organisations are incapable or unwilling to modify the change process and, as a consequence, workplaces remain stressful. This then places the responsibility on individuals to strengthen their resolve to either adapt to, or resist, ongoing workplace stressors; far less attention is directed towards reshaping the environment to 'fit' the individual. This is not surprising, argues Ivancevich et al. (1990), given that the professional 'interventionists' comprise counsellors, physicians and clinicians who most probably feel more comfortable changing individuals rather than organisations.

5.2.1   Relationship between stress and coping

The increasing interest in 'coping' research (Leong, Furnham, & Cooper, 1996; Oakland & Ostell, 1996; Gowan & Gatewood, 1997) is indicative of a belief that coping behaviours comprise a substantial component of the relationship between the stress experience and adaptational outcomes (Oakland & Ostell, 1996). Many of the underlying principles relevant to coping have emerged as a result of an improved understanding of the stress process, and although certain aspects of coping have been studied for some time, general coping models are more recent and focus on the efforts of individuals or systems to more effectively respond to stress (Carpenter, 1992).

According to Frydenberg (1997), coping is now generally considered to be a dynamic, multifaceted construct comprising thoughts, feeling and actions that are used to deal with problems encountered in everyday life and is regularly used interchangeably with 'concepts such as adaptation, mastery, defence or realistic problem-solving' (p.28). This is reflected in the changed emphasis from a deficits or disability model of behaviour towards 'ability' models that focus on health and wellbeing, prevention and productivity, or are supportive of 'a quest for staying ahead and on top' (Frydenberg, 1997:26). Although considerable differences exist regarding the meaning of coping, most accept that the stress-coping process is highly individualistic and complex (Jones, & Bright, 2001). Both the amount of stress experienced and the manner in which coping is approached are important (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982; Cooper & Payne, 1988), while low perceived control, lack of predictability, and lengthy exposure to stress are more likely to result in a stress response (Carpenter, 1992).

The readiness by researchers to link stress with coping emanates from the perception that 'coping' necessarily implies a 'problem'; that is, coping with a given life problem or stressor. While this assists in clarifying the dynamics of particular stressors, it can create difficulties. As Carpenter (1992) explains:

> 'firstly, a comprehensive examination of stressful situations is unwieldy due to the large number of potential stressors; secondly, the obvious and usual ways of distinguishing stressors (e.g., marriage, divorce, death etc) are often not along the dimensions that

have implications for coping; and finally, a number of coping process models appear to have relevance across many situations' (p.vii).

Lazarus (1966) argues that stress defies objective definition; rather, it should be regarded as an interactive process between the individual and the environment, which takes into consideration the individual's characteristics, situational variables, and the appraisal of the situation. Both the individual's perception of the demands of the environment and his or her perceived capability to respond to the demand determine the effect of the stressor. Importantly, the identification of concerns or life experiences as stressors is dependent on individual interpretation and experience; 'potential stresses only become real stresses when they are perceived as threatening' (Frydenberg, 1997:17). As well, the ability to retain a positive state of mind has been found to be important in negating stress and facilitating coping (Bandura, 1982; Seligman, 1992).

5.2.2   Coping as an adaptive function

The extensive research conducted by Lazarus and associates (e.g., Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus et al., 1974; Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus, 1991) has stimulated ongoing interest in coping. From their perspective, coping is an adaptive function in which the individual and the environment engage in an interactive process characterised by a 'reciprocity of causation' where both the individual and situation mutually impact on each other (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). As these researchers point out:

> 'An individual subjectively appraises threat or promise in the situation by considering personal transition characteristics as well as physical and social environmental factors. As a person directs a coping response to environmental demands, the actual or perceived nature of the environment undergoes change. Environmental demands will change over time in a response to coping efforts and factors associated with the transition itself' (Lazarus & Launier, 1978).

Coping then is a process comprising complex feedback loops and constant updating, with the possibility that, over time, individual behaviour will be changed or modified (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985); as such, it is not well characterised by 'relatively static measures' (Carpenter, 1992:6). The importance

of conscious cognitive activity in all phases of the stress appraisal and coping process is emphasised by these researchers, as are distinctions between problem-oriented and emotion-oriented coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While emotion-oriented coping attempts to deal with the individual's emotional response to a problem, problem-oriented coping involves the development of plans and actions aimed at directly dealing with the problem causing the stress. A third strategy termed appraisal-oriented coping and usually subsumed under emotion-oriented coping in Lazarus' scheme, involves redefining the stressful experience in more acceptable terms. The ability to cope is regarded as highly important as a means of satisfactorily reducing tension and restoring equilibrium, thereby protecting or enhancing wellbeing.

5.2.3   Other approaches to the study of coping

Over the years, numerous theoretical perspectives have informed the study of coping, including: psychoanalytic (e.g., Menninger, 1963; Haan, 1977); personal trait or style such as: locus of control, neuroticism (Rotter, 1966, 1975; Lefcourt, 1976, 1982; Costa et al., 1996; Hewitt & Flett, 1996), hardiness (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984), and Type A behaviour (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Glass, 1977; Newton, 1989); stage theories (e.g., Kubler-Ross, 1969); and specific methods or foci (e.g., Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Billings & Moos, 1981; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Edwards, 1988). Further contributions have emerged from the study of identity formation (e.g., Erikson, 1985); social learning theory and modelling (e.g., Bandura & Walters, 1963; Bandura, 1977); Vygotsky's socio-cultural context of learning (e.g., Newman & Holzman, 1993); and apprenticeship (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1993).

The move to more ability-focused approaches has revitalised interest in the role of optimism in 'stress inoculation' (Seligman, 1992), happiness (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Lu & Argyle, 1991), the power of humour, and the use of metaphors to enhance the acquisition of coping skills (Frydenberg, 1997). Yet much remains to be learnt regarding the specific use of individual coping strategies, the manner in which strategies are selected and implemented, and the interplay between stress and coping. Coping is such a complex phenomenon, argues Frydenberg (1997)

that 'no single study has to date empirically determined how we acquire coping skills' (p.175).

5.2.4   Role of cognitions in coping

Throughout the coping process individuals appraise or make judgements about specific stressors, the adequacy of resources and their coping efforts (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Carpenter, 1992). In this way, cognitions become an important aspect of the stress-coping relationship. Carpenter (1992) argues that more research is required in this area as the number of thoughts and beliefs, not always clear from the construct of appraisal, might help to account for differences in stress response, coping activities, and coping outcomes. Of particular importance is the impact of more global beliefs and values held by individuals and the manner in which these might affect the coping process.

Bolman and Deal (1991) distinguish between personal and institutional frames of reference, which individuals utilise when assessing organisational viability and robustness during change. As described by them, personal frames comprise personal values, emotions, knowledge and behavioural patterns that develop over time, while institutional frames reflect an individual's position, role, understanding of or commitment to the organisation. When utilising personal frames of reference individuals determine what is 'relevant or irrelevant, good or bad, a problem or opportunity, or an asset or liability' (Robbins, 1993). Once established, these frames or worldviews become difficult to alter and through a process of selective information processing, individuals ensure their perceptions remain intact by rejecting or ignoring information that might present a more positive view of change. The 'more elaborate our frames, the more difficult and disruptive it is to restructure them' (Taylor, 1999:140). Clearly, argues Taylor (1999:140) 'human cognitive capacities are most effective in situations of relative stability':

> 'We sensemake by looking to our prior experiences, understandings
> and values, drawing on the frames of reference that our biography
> has led us to construct. In everyday life the majority of actions are
> planned without conscious attention, using a cognitive 'autopilot',
> which is 'programmed' by previous experiences, particularly by

beliefs and attitudes'. Individuals 'go into the future' paying little conscious attention to new experiences, relying on existing frames of reference to help make sense of the expected as well as the unexpected in those experiences. This form of cognitive functioning is effortless – it just happens'.

From this perspective, individuals are 'programmed' through their cognitive functioning to 'expect the future to be maximally continuous with the past' (Taylor, 1999:140). Autopilots, he argues, function in context-specific ways and 'there is a powerful contextual priming of cognitive functioning that is reflected both in what is learned and then in what is planned' (ibid., p.141). While such cognitive context-specificity may create difficulties in the transfer of learning to new situations, it does allow 'access to relatively distinct sets of context-specific beliefs and purposes' which allows 'sense-making in context-specific ways, and the enactment of relatively context-specific identities' (ibid., p.141). This, he believes, allows individuals considerable flexibility. Difficulties arise, however, when continuity is disrupted, leading to a situation where 'cognitive functioning becomes increasingly effortful, requiring mental concentration to cope with uncertainty' (p.141).

5.3   MEASUREMENT OF COPING

Approaches to the measurement of coping vary considerably and include observational methods, standardised coping inventories, interview schedules, and personality or defence mechanism inventories (e.g., Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Moos et al., 1982; Latack, 1986; Oakland & Ostell, 1996). Frydenberg (1997:48) suggests the driving forces behind the development of such instruments are:

- 'the predilection of researchers and investigators to measure anything that is quantifiable in order to describe human endeavour';

- 'wider community interest in the development of policies and programs to assist individuals to develop their coping repertoires and to modify their coping actions'; and

- 'the psychological and clinical community interested in the development of instruments that facilitate diagnosis and assist with clinical intervention.'

The most generally accepted approach to the study of coping is the methods-foci approach. This entails the development of a taxonomy of coping items that categorises coping efforts according to the method used or the focus of the responses. Although a number of researchers have generated their own categorisation schemes (Billings & Moos, 1984; McCrae, 1984; Carver et al., 1989), these are generally modifications of the widely accepted coping taxonomy, 'The Ways of Coping Checklist' (WCCL), constructed by Lazarus and colleagues (Aldwin et al., 1980) and later revised by Folkman and Lazarus (1985).

Extended research on data collected from coping instruments, such as the Ways of Coping Checklist, has led to the identification of a number of other coping factors (Moos & Billings, 1982; Endler & Parker, 1990). The COPE inventory (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989) distinguishes between five subscales: problem-focused; emotion focused; behavioural disengagement; mental disengagement; and alcohol-drug disengagement. The problem-focused sub-scales cover: active coping; planning; suppression of competing activities; restraint coping; and seeking instrumental social support. These are self-explanatory, as also are the emotion-focused coping sub-scales that cover: seeking emotional social support; positive reinterpretation; acceptance; and denial. The three other subscales are less germane to this research study (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

5.3.1   Limitations of quantitative approaches to the study of coping

The emergence of different factor structures from comparative studies utilising the Ways of Coping Scale have led some to question the stability of the instrument (Stone & Neale, 1984) and, more generally, the inability of quantitative methodologies to capture the multifaceted nature of behaviour (Jones & Bright, 2001) nor provide sufficient data upon which to construct interventions (e.g., Costa, Somerfield & McCrae, 1996; Coyne, 1997; Somerfield, 1997). One criticism is that questions relating to specific coping functions assume that respondents are sufficiently insightful to recognise their real motivations for participating in an activity. What is not clear, argues Carpenter (1992), are the elements of the coping scale that are most important for measurement purposes;

for example, is the range of separate behaviours more significant than the number of times each one is performed. These difficulties highlight the importance of utilising broader categories when studying coping, and the unsuitability of traditional empirical procedures such as factor analysis (Carpenter, 1992; Oakland & Ostell, 1996). As Carpenter (1992:8) highlights, because individuals

> 'engage in multiple coping activities to achieve multiple functions, it may not be sufficient to assess outcomes separately from coping: it may be necessary to determine the relationship of each activity or function to outcomes'.

Some researchers believe that the use of problem-oriented and emotion-oriented categories are too broad and call for greater specificity in the categorisation of coping behaviours. Latack and Havlovic (1992) refined these two broad categories by introducing proactive/control methods versus escapist/avoidant methods to describe coping behaviours. Proactive/control strategies are aimed at taking charge of the situation in order to exert some control over it, while escapist/avoidant strategies attempt to circumvent or dodge the situation or show little or no concern for it. While this approach brings greater specificity, it still retains value judgements regarding the 'best' strategies, and the escapism/avoidance category holds negative connotations.

Insufficient research on the changing nature of coping over time, and the continued reliance on available coping measures has resulted in many contradictory findings, perhaps not surprising considering the many factors impinging on the conceptualisation of the coping process, including situational factors, personality characteristics, cultural practices and preferences, and cognitive appraisal (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Costa & McCrae, 1990; Jones & Bright, 2001). Efforts to link behavioural definitions of coping with traditional measures of coping such as ego strength and repression also remain problematic. Further, attempts to measure specific coping behaviours have not always been productive and considerable variation has been noted both among and within individuals across various stressors, even in situations where the same stressor is experienced (Scott & Carpenter, 1990). By continually focusing on the study of specific coping behaviours, argues Carpenter (1992:7) the establishment of

'meaningful patterns and laws' remains elusive, and 'highlights the idiosyncratic nature of coping'.

In a critical review of studies utilising the methods-foci approach, and by drawing on qualitative data from a study of stress, coping and health among headteachers, Oakland (1991) and Oakland and Ostell (1996) highlight some of the advantages and limitations of adopting the methods-foci approach when studying coping. Their review left them believing there still exists a strong need for the refinement of quantitative coping measures due to shortcomings in the approach. Efficacy of coping actions and the adequacy of external resources have been found to be two pivotal variables in the stress, coping and health relationship (Oakland, 1991), yet both are completely overlooked in quantitative coping checklists. Coping efficacy, in particular, can have profound effects on psychological stress reactions, subsequent coping behaviours and, ultimately, on personal and situational outcomes. It is therefore imperative that alternative methodologies be considered if the role of coping in the stress-health relationship is to be better understood. In reviewing the studies cited in their paper, Oakland and Ostell make several deductions, namely that:

- Planful problem solving appears to be used more in situations that are appraised as changeable or challenging and, by and large, is associated with favourable outcomes in terms of health, whereas confrontive coping tends to be related to unfavourable health outcomes;

- Emotion-focused efforts appear to be used most frequently when situations are appraised as unchangeable or when the stakes are physical or psychological loss or threat; and

- Although their primary function is to facilitate coping, it would seem that many emotion-focused efforts (e.g., distancing, avoidance, fantasizing) are frequently related to unfavourable health outcomes.

(adapted from Oakland & Ostell, 1996:5)

The danger in such deductions, they argue, is that they imply coping strategies can be neatly categorised as 'effective' or 'ineffective' and can be widely applied, regardless of differences between individuals and situations; yet many inconsistencies can be found in the coping literature; see review by Oakland and Ostell (1996). Importantly, their review highlights that a particular coping strategy cannot be valued and labelled as 'effective' or 'ineffective' without

reference to the context in which it is used. Given this, they believe the most that can be deduced from studies using coping checklists:

'is that some forms of coping, such as planful problem solving or positive appraisal or seeking support, will have salubrious effects on certain person and situational outcomes, in certain circumstances involving certain individuals. Or, strategies such as confrontive coping, denial or escapism will have deleterious effects in some populations and in some contexts' (Oakland & Ostell, 1996:6).

The common approaches to the measurement of coping, they argue, capture only 'static snapshots' of what should be regarded as a dynamic process between the individual and the situation. The fact that many coping behaviours or thoughts are able to be used in a number of ways, with different intentions and with various degrees of efficacy might partially explain the contradictory nature of many of the findings; a problem not addressed through quantitative assessments of coping (Oakland & Ostell, 1996).

A major criticism, they believe, is that quantitative measures do not adequately assess coping as a transactional process. Coping is often protracted and unpredictable, particularly when other people are involved, requiring the 'coper' to not only be aware of his/her goals but also to be cognisant of the goals and previous actions of other people when determining a course of action; this may necessitate the modification of initial strategies.

'The complex ties of coping with problems involving others, the unfolding and often uncertain nature of the process and the variability of the situational factors which influence coping reactions cannot be assessed by purely quantitative measures' (Oakland & Ostell, 1996:10).

Secondly, individuals often need to develop specific knowledge or skills in order to cope with a specific work-related problem (Ostell, 1991). The time required to acquire these competencies will vary considerably between individuals, during which time other strategies, such as emotion-focused ones, might need to be utilised. The quantitative measures therefore do not address the full range of options available to achieve stress reduction, nor variations in the time span needed for coping strategies to be implemented successfully (Oakland & Ostell, 1996).

A further limitation of coping studies utilising quantitative measures such as coping checklists, is that they provide information regarding the frequency with which a specific coping strategy is used, whereas research utilising qualitative data has shown that coping efficacy, rather than type or frequency of a strategy, is crucial and an important factor regarding outcomes. It is hardly surprising, argue Oakland and Ostell (1996), that many studies reviewed earlier yield contradictory results, as the practice of simply correlating outcome measures with the frequency use of a particular strategy assumes the use of the strategy will have similar effects regardless of the person or other situational aspects. The relationship between the adoption of specific coping strategies and perceptions of whether they had been successful is complex. A difficulty with coping inventories is that they do not answer the important question of whether the coping strategies proved to be successful; a significant oversight.

5.3.2   Qualitative approaches to research on coping

Problem situations are usually dynamic and multidimensional in nature, and occasionally coping solutions only generate more problems. Gaining insight into this process, including understanding the way in which individuals generate further problems when coping, is best achieved through qualitative measures, rather than quantitative measures that are limited in their ability to provide explanations for the relationship between coping strategies and situational and personal outcomes (Ostell & Oakland, 1992; Jones & Bright, 2001).

Qualitative studies by Ostell and Oakland (1992; 1995), and Oakland and Ostell (1996) demonstrate that 'the number, nature and combinations of strategies vary tremendously and involve a multiplicity of factors including situational requirements, time constraints, personal skills, judgments and choices, access to external resources and so on' (ibid., p.8). Yet, when respondents' statements about coping are viewed in purely semantic terms and in isolation from other contextual data, individual responses fall into the usual problem-focused and emotion-focused categories. Attempts by Oakland and Ostell (1996) to create a quantitative measure of coping using content analysis to categorise open-ended responses also yielded little result.

5.4   SELECTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COPING STRATEGIES

As discussed previously, individuals adopt various means of coping with the everyday stresses encountered in their lives. Of interest is the manner in which specific coping strategies are selected for use, and the efficacy of those strategies in both reducing stress and producing desirable outcomes. In contrast to the common lay usage of the term 'coping', a tendency towards separating coping from its consequences is apparent in the literature. This distinction can be problematic when attempting to define coping, and some argue that it may be more advantageous to define many of the behaviours that qualify for coping, as those for which we have particular outcome expectancies (Carpenter, 1992:4). This still allows outcomes to be separated from coping activities, Carpenter argues, while also providing information on how those outcomes impact on the individual or system. The separation of coping activities from coping outcomes can prove beneficial; however, in illustrating that some coping behaviours, traditionally thought of as primitive, regressive, or negative, might, in fact, be quite useful in certain circumstances, and that many coping activities can have both positive and negative consequences (Carpenter, 1992:4).

Most coping models view coping behaviour as a response to a stress reaction, thereby accounting for individual variability by making a stress response a necessary precursor (Carpenter, 1992); coping occurs only when the individual is experiencing stress. From this perspective, the acceptance of stress avoidance or stress prevention behaviours as coping is problematic, and the individual:

> 'who anticipates stress and works to avoid stress, even though perhaps doing exactly what someone already stressed by the same situation is doing, is not coping' (Carpenter, 1992:5).

The element of time has also been highlighted as an important factor determining the selection of coping strategies. Suls and Fletcher (1985) distinguish between avoidant and non-avoidant coping strategies. Avoidant behaviours are regarded as generally more effective on short-term stressors as, in similar circumstances, non-avoidant strategies would necessitate the expenditure of too much effort and arousal, given that the stressor is most likely to last only a short time. Avoidance of potentially long-term stressors, however, eventually results in more negative

outcomes than use of non-avoidant strategies, as difficulties are neither reduced nor solved. In cases where there is little control over a stressor, avoidant stressors remain superior regardless of time factors. Koeske (1993) measured the coping strategies of case managers on entry to the job over a period of 3, 12, and/or 18 months later and found that control-oriented strategies clearly acted as work stress buffers, while those who relied exclusively on avoidance coping strategies reported higher general levels of negative consequences months later.

Perrez and Reicharts (1992) believe the desire to maintain perceptions of personal control and the promise of success play an important role in the selection of either problem-oriented or emotion-oriented coping strategies. The former may be effective if the problem is thought to be changeable, whereas, success may be regarded as unlikely if the problem is regarded as unchangeable. Emotion-oriented coping may then offer the best option for eventual wellbeing. The individual's perception of the coping strategy most likely to be successful leads to the eventual choice, and if, indeed, the strategy is successful this reinforces a sense of efficacy. Conversely, a lack of congruence occurs between strategy and efficacy if an incorrect diagnosis and selection is made; this produces frustration in the individual.

5.4.1   Begley's nine-category classification system

Begley (1998) suggests that a more neutral and general set of categories might best be created through representing problem-oriented, emotion-oriented, and appraisal-oriented strategies as behavioural, affective and cognitive forms of coping. Three dimensions of response to stressors are possible within each form thus creating a nine-category response classification system:

Within the behavioural form, the responses could be to:

- Take direct action to change the stressor
  involves planning which targets the stressor

- Adapt to the stressor
  involves changing the relationship between individual and stressor (e.g., work harder or undergo retraining)

- Disengage from the stressor
  quit the situation

Within the affective form, the responses could be to:

- Direct emotion by the individual toward the stressor
  being angry may elicit a change in the stressor

- Adapt at an emotional level
  seek care and support from others

- Disengage
  cover-up feelings generated by the stressor or cut them off,
  e.g., by use of addictive substances such as alcohol

Within the cognitive form, the responses could be to

- Mentally reclassify the stressor
  positively change the perception of the stressor so that it is an
  opportunity not a threat and therefore not a stressor at all

- Adapt by a personal change
  mentally accept the stressor as a fact of life, don't change it,
  rather change the person

- Remove the stressor from the mind
  strong willpower needed

When faced with a potentially stressful situation, individuals adopt one or more of these responses, according to Begley (1998). If there appears some chance the situation may be changed then a behavioural or emotional change-the-stressor strategy is more likely to be chosen. If this is unlikely, then individuals are more likely to choose either to adapt to the stressor or to disengage from it, argues Begley; disengagement is especially attractive when the costs of active coping outweigh the benefits (Schoenpflug & Battmann, 1988).

Begley (1998) described a hospital restructuring process that involved the consolidation of functional units. Management implemented the process to address the problem of decreasing patient numbers, a factor over which the staff had little control. Opportunities for adaptive coping, especially in the short term, tend to be relatively limited in such circumstances, argues Begley. Schoenpflug and Battmann (1988) argue that 'consciously doing nothing' can sometimes be effective as a form of acceptance or resignation develops, i.e., individuals become resigned to the state of affairs created by the stressor and their stress is mitigated. Use of the cognitive strategy 'positive reinterpretation' is also a possibility, but

unlikely to be adopted in a restructuring scenario as the traumatic events involved with downsizing would be difficult to view positively (Begley, 1998).

Staff turnover as a result of restructuring is now taken for granted. Much depends on alternative employment opportunities. If such jobs are available (e.g., Hom et al., 1992) attitudes may be positive. In Begley's (1998) hospital study, employees had good prospects elsewhere and so leaving was a realistic option. If management wishes to retain staff it is faced with the need to reduce distress. Strategies that increase distress could obviously be expected to lead to staff losses.

5.5   ACADEMICS COPING IN THE WORKPLACE

In an extensive study of the response to policy change by academics in UK universities, Trowler (1998:114) arrived at four main categories to describe academics' behaviour in the workplace: sinking, swimming, coping and reconstructing. These categories of behaviour, as displayed in Fig.5.1, are not to be regarded as mutually exclusive; it is expected that some academics will move from one category of response to another during their working lives.

Fig. 5.1:   Categories of response by academics

	Accept status quo	Work around or change policy
Contented	Swimming	Policy reconstruction
Discontented	Sinking	Using coping strategies

Academics categorised as 'Sinking' had reacted negatively to the increased work intensity, reduced resources, deskilling, and increase in student numbers and, as a consequence, experienced 'weariness, disillusionment and even illness' (p.114).

Trowler (1998) recognises the importance of informal power in the success of any organisational change process. In reference to the work of Mechanic (1962) Trowler notes that this form of power can emanate from numerous sources including: 'expertise; effort and interest; attractiveness; location and position; conditions, and knowledge of rules' (p.116). Informal power can develop after time spent within an organisation, through the accumulation of knowledge about

it, and the level of security experienced in the occupied position. Those academics categorised as 'Swimming' were often able to play a major role in course development thus assuring their own speciality retained currency, while some were able to recruit students to (teaching) modules within their department by using more flexible delivery patterns. Others benefited from changes implemented by their department such as redefining essential goals (generic skills rather than discipline content), and by removing resource-intensive laboratory work. Thus both individuals and their departments were able to 'swim' in otherwise difficult waters.

Many academics interviewed by Trowler held negative views of the changes but had developed 'coping strategies' to deal with their new environment, particularly regarding the administrative 'fallout' and increased workload. While the tactics adopted allowed these academics to survive, they often had negative consequences for the students and others. Old 'overheads' were reused and lecture notes recycled rather than to engage in redesigning lectures. Lecturers made themselves unavailable to students, avoided meetings, refused as a matter of course any invitations to become involved in optional projects, set in-class tests to avoid formal examination procedures, used open-book methods or distance learning techniques to reduce class contact time. Although all those interviewed regretted having to adopt such tactics, and saw them as compromising their professionalism, the responses were necessary, they believed, to preserve their own health and life outside the institution (Trowler, 1998).

The final category uncovered by Trowler, described as 'Policy Reconstruction', applied to those academics who utilised techniques to reinterpret and reconstruct the new policies, thus effectively changing those policies to either resist the changes or to alter their direction. These academics were 'movers and shakers'; their work was proactive, not passive, but could not, argued Trowler, be considered as productive. One extreme example, named 'policy manipulation' and considered a serious offence by Trowler, involved, for elective subjects, ensuring only a few capable students knew the subjects were to be offered. This was achieved by adding the subject to a computer list after publication of the

course handbook but then removing the elective subject before publication of the next year's handbook. An extreme exercise in subterfuge indeed!

Reflective note

As discussed in the earlier chapters, new organisations form for many reasons, including political, economic and social factors, and in the process of their growth and development natural tensions emerge as a result of the differing perceptions of individuals regarding the potential gains and possible losses inherent in the change (Morgan, 1997a). This chapter has provided a critical review of the research literature relevant to the study of the impact of organisational change on individuals, including academics. The processes of organisational change within the higher education sector were examined, especially in regard to the sometimes-deleterious impact that mergers and amalgamations have had on academics. As a result of ongoing changes within the higher education sector, it is apparent that many academics are now required to cope with an increasingly diverse range of workplace issues; consequently, many have been left feeling exhausted and demoralised.

Theoretical considerations underpinning the study of coping have also been addressed in this chapter. Discussion has focused on the research literature related to the stress and coping relationship, the measurement of coping, selection and effectiveness of coping strategies, and academics' responses to change. The chapter provides a critique of methodological approaches to the study of coping and argues that, given the deficiencies of quantitative measures in providing adequate explanations for the selection and utilisation of specific coping strategies, and the lack of success in planning successful interventions, qualitative methodologies should be used more prevalently to progress an understanding of the coping process. Due to the complexity of the process, coping should be studied within the context in which the coping behaviour occurs and preferably over a significant period of time. The nature and focus of this research aims to address these issues and correct the methodological imbalance for the study of academics' responses to change.

During any period of radical organisational change, individuals will be confronted with a multitude of new experiences and stresses that will impact in varying degrees on their personal and professional lives. This research examines the complexity of organisational change at the new University and, more broadly, within the context of change within the higher education sector in Australia. The theoretical framework developed in this chapter therefore holds special relevance to the focus of this research.

CHAPTER 6:   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical assumptions underpinning this qualitative research project and describes the key elements of the research design including: the research focus and questions, rationale for the selection of the research methodology, the timing and length of the research project, the composition and number of participants interviewed for the study, and the methodological approach utilised for the collection and analysis of data. In keeping with the qualitative nature of the research, in-depth interviews were utilised for the collection of data from sixty-nine academics situated across the various campuses of the University.

6.1   RESEARCH FOCUS AND QUESTIONS

6.1.1   Research focus

This thesis is a case study of a new multi-campus university formed after the 'Dawkinsation' of higher education in Australia. As highlighted in the earlier chapters, the study investigates the nature and intensity of the impact of those changes on academics' personal and professional lives. Academics' perceptions and responses to the changes are contextualised within the broader socio-economic climate that pervaded higher education in Australia in the late 1980s to mid 1990s and, more specifically, as reflected in the radical organisational changes brought about by the formation of the Australian Catholic University. The researcher is particularly concerned with explanations of the impact of those changes as perceived by academics. Of importance also is the development of an understanding of those factors that contribute to the level of acceptance by academics and the strategies they adopted when attempting to cope with their changing workplace environments.

6.1.2 Specific research questions

This research aims to bring understanding to the research focus through addressing the following questions:

- How do academics perceive and evaluate the changes that occurred within the higher education sector in Australia from the late 1980s-mid 1990s?

- How do academics perceive and evaluate the organisational changes that occurred as a result of the formation of the Australian Catholic University?

- What factors contribute to academics' level of acceptance of the changes at the Australian Catholic University?

- How and to what extent do the organisational changes at the Australian Catholic University impact on academics' personal and professional lives?

- What strategies do academics adopt in order to cope with the organisational changes within the work environment?

6.1.3 Rationale for selection of research methodology

The nature of the investigation, as highlighted above, suggests the appropriateness of qualitative research methodologies that allow the researcher to 'document and interpret as fully as possible the totality of whatever is being studied in particular contexts from the people's viewpoint or frame of reference' (Leininger, 1985:5). Through the adoption of qualitative methodologies, this researcher is provided with the opportunity to study the organisational changes and impact of those changes within the natural setting in which these are occurring. This allows the researcher to 'make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln (1994). Rationale for the adoption of a case study approach is addressed in section 6.2.2 of this chapter.

As highlighted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, previous research conducted on universities and academics within Australia has focused predominantly on the use of surveys and questionnaires for the collection of data (refer review by Neumann, 1993) and research in this area has been limited (Smyth, 1995), especially that conducted from the perspective of academics

themselves. Trowler's (1998) UK study extends the boundaries through the use of case study and ethnographic methodologies in bringing meaning to academics' responses to change, especially in regard to policy reconstruction. In a similar vein to this study, Trowler's work breaks with tradition and studies changes within the organisation from the perspective of those at the 'ground level'. Further, the inadequacy of quantitative studies to capture the complexity and dynamic nature of the coping process, as noted in Chapter 5, provides strong argument for the adoption of qualitative research methodologies that create opportunities for the development of a deeper understanding of the complexity of the process.

6.2 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical perspectives provide 'a way of looking at the social world' and utilise 'a particular language, a conceptual framework, or a collection of 'theoretical' concepts and related propositions, within which society and social life can be described and explained' (Blaikie, 2000:159-160). This ensures that some aspects become more prominent while others become less noticeable. As noted in Chapter 1, this research is located within an interpretivist theoretical framework and draws upon the traditions of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Plummer, 1991; Charon, 2001) in the study of human action. From an interpretive perspective, the researcher is committed to 'searching for and interpreting what is happening and being done, according to the interpretations of the participants in the social activities being studied' while recognising as crucial 'the meanings of social action to those who are acting' (Wiseman, 1993:105).

6.2.1 Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism emphasises the nature of 'interaction' and 'perspectives' or 'frameworks through which people make sense of the world' (Woods, 1983:7). Charon (2001:xi) argues that symbolic interactionism comes closer than any other perspective in 'capturing the essence of the human being as a social being – a creator, a product, and a shaper of society'. Symbolic interactionism stresses the

dynamic nature of everything human: the individual, society, mind, self, and truth are not 'things' but are thought of as processes, undergoing constant change (Charon, 1979:32). Individuals are regarded as active agents who act on the basis of meanings they give to objects and events and actively build systems of meanings and understandings of reality through their experiences and interactions (Slavin, 2000). Through this process, individuals reconstruct their worlds in ways that are 'not simply different interpretations of the same world, but literally different world versions' (Schwandt, 1994:126); that is, 'our frames of interpretation (versions) belong both to what is interpreted (worlds) and to a system of interpretation' (ibid., p.126).

Blumer (1969:53) argues that an important role of the symbolic interactionist is the articulation of the means by which 'this process of designation and interpretation is sustaining, undercutting, redirecting, and transforming the ways in which the participants are fitting together their lines of action'. Recognition of the intentionality of human behaviour is also essential if that behaviour is to be fully understood. As Wiseman (1993:103) highlights:

> 'Generally people act because they choose to act. Their own intentions guide what they do and they also believe other people similarly act from conscious intentions. In investigating why people do what they do there is a crucial difference in describing the observable behaviour and in understanding or interpreting action'.

With this in mind, a researcher 'uses his or her skills to understand the subjective worlds of others, especially the meanings which exist for them and the beliefs which they hold' (Wiseman, 1993:12). Further, the beliefs, expectations, values, and behaviours of individuals are recognised as more than merely the products of 'nature' and 'an objective environment', but form part of an historical legacy whereby 'our ideas, our institutions and our lifestyles are constructions reflecting the values and dispositions of our forebears' (Wiseman, 1993:116). Nevertheless, Crotty (1998:81), nevertheless, cautions the researcher to remain alert to the fact that any particular set of meanings 'has come into being to serve particular interests and will harbour its own form of oppression, manipulation and other forms of injustice'. For this reason, the researcher should never lose sight of the 'objective character and critical spirit' (ibid., p.85) of the research.

6.2.2   Case study research

This research project is based on a single case study of an institution of higher education undergoing organisational change within the context of radical change within the higher education sector in Australia. The adoption of a case study approach appeared particularly relevant to this research as it allowed the researcher an opportunity to study in-depth a 'specific instance' (Nisbet & Watt, 1984:74) or, as related to this research, the perceptions and impact of change on academics within the new University. The case study, as defined by Goode and Hatt (1952:331) provides 'a way of organising social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied'. The adoption of this approach builds on a tradition of common use (Pettigrew, 1973; Nisbet & Watt, 1984; Yin, 1989; Robson, 1993), and provides the researcher with the opportunity to 'obtain and portray a rich descriptive account of meanings and experiences of people in an identified social setting' (Wiseman, 1993:137). Further, the approach is advantageous in that it encourages the development of an holistic view of a specific phenomenon, and the investigation of that phenomenon 'within its real-life context' (Yin, 1984:23). As Valdelin (1974:47 in Gummesson, 1991) highlighted some time ago:

> 'The detailed observation entailed in the case study method enables
> us to study many different aspects, examine them in relation to each
> other, view the process within its total environment'.

The case study allows the researcher to explore both the common and particular elements about the case, and is afforded the opportunity to capture its uniqueness through the collection of data relevant to 'the nature of the case; its historical background; the physical setting; other contexts, including economic, political, legal and aesthetic; other cases through which this case is recognised; (and) those informants through whom the case can be known' (Stake, 1994:238). The breadth of focus made possible through the adoption of a case study approach aligns well with the intentions of this research project and thereby supports its use for this study.

One disadvantage of case study research is the difficulty in guaranteeing the anonymity of participating individuals or institutions. In keeping with ethical

guidelines for this research the anonymity of individuals is preserved, although the identity of the institution is clearly visible, given the centrality of its developmental history to the discussion of this thesis. The aim is not that of criticism but of constructive analysis of the processes of organisational change at a single institution during a significant period in its history.

Ideally, exploration of the meaning individuals attribute to a particular event, and the impact of that event, is best conducted after the event has transpired, as individuals must 'live the experience' before being able to construct their interpretations (Gephart, 1984; Weick, 1988). It is therefore appropriate that the collection of data for this research project commenced five years after the formation of the new University.

6.2.3   Triangulation

In highlighting the importance of 'sensemaking' in the construction of coherent inquiries, Chenail (1997:1) argues that 'the circular process of comparing and contrasting what was known as the phenomenon from the field, literature and personal experience becomes the triangulatory engine' of the inquiry. By combining a number of different methods in a single study, the researcher is able to add 'rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2) and therefore elicit deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The process of 'blending and integrating a variety of data and methods' may take numerous forms and utilise different techniques (Patton, 1990:188). This has the advantage of allowing the researcher to gain relevant information pertinent to the phenomenon and strengthens the degree of validity not possible through the use of one method only. As Marshall and Rossman (1989:146) highlight, triangulation is 'the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point' (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:146) including the use of 'different sets of data, different types of analyses, different researchers, and/or different theoretical perspectives to study one particular phenomenon' (Chenail, 1997:1). Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2-3) liken the work of the qualitative researcher to that of 'bricoleur' who, through the use of multiple methodologies creates a 'bricolage'; that is, 'a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that

represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis' (p.3). Through this process, the researcher is able to bring together the disparate elements of the research to form a meaningful whole.

The design of this research project incorporates the process of triangulation through the inclusion of a number of diverse methods such as: the observations of the researcher, the conduct of in-depth interviews with academics across all faculties and organisational levels of the new University, interrogation of relevant documents, and introduction of some simple quantitative methods that 'strengthen and make rigorous' (Mason, 1994:101) the qualitative data presented throughout the thesis. The interrogation of relevant documents included University publications, articles and other materials related to the focus of the research; these University sources ensured the consideration of a multiplicity of perspectives and proved an invaluable source of data-rich information.

While the use of multiple methods is advocated in the traditional social science literature (Jick, 1983), its adoption does raise some epistemological issues regarding the meaning and status of different kinds of data (Mason, 1994). This necessitates 'the working through of intellectual questions about what we think we are doing conceptually when we integrate different types of data, as well as technical questions about how, in practical terms, such integration might be achieved' (p.89). The manner in which the research is contextualised, decisions regarding the selection of data to collect and the manner in which relationships between themes in the data are understood, remain 'matters of intellectual judgement which form part of the process of developing the analysis' (Mason, 1994:95).

Qualitative methodologies stress the evolutionary nature of inquiry, during which interpretations develop and change throughout the conduct of the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The focus of qualitative research is on:

> 'identifying, documenting, and knowing (by interpretation) the world
> views, values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and general

characteristics of life events, situations, ceremonies, and specific phenomena under investigation...(with its goal being) to document and interpret as fully as possible the totality of whatever is being studied in particular contexts from the people's viewpoint or frame of reference' (Leininger, 1985:5).

Qualitative methodologies aim to provide 'a deep rather than broad set of knowledge about a particular phenomenon' in order to achieve 'empathetic understanding' (Jones, 1997:3). As Jones suggests, the researcher is more likely to 'ascertain deeper underlying meanings and explanations' than is possible by capturing mere 'snapshots' of a situation (p.3). Through the deployment of a broad range of 'interconnected methods', the qualitative researcher is, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2), 'hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand'.

6.2.4   Limitations of qualitative methodologies

Criticisms of the use of qualitative methodologies have highlighted the existence of 'an uneasy awareness' that in its acceptance, the researcher is committed to a 'critique of the positivist project', and this constitutes 'an assault on this tradition' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4). Qualitative researchers have been criticised for the lack of detail in the treatment of research problems and their inclination to 'gloss over the specifics of their methodology' (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984:150). The inherent lack of objectivity within qualitative research has been derided as unscientific and sometimes 'sloppy' (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:19), while the transferability of findings to other settings remains somewhat problematic (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:146). Conversely, the objectivity of quantitative research is more likely to be regarded as characteristic of 'good research' (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:19). Further concerns regarding utilisation of qualitative methodologies relate to the concept of validity and the difficulty in drawing generalisations from the findings, especially where the sample size has been limited to only a small number of participants.

Technical adequacy is essential in all research (Pollard, 1984). Therefore, qualitative researchers must recognise that their personal biases may pose a threat to the credibility of an emerging inquiry (Abbott-Chapman, 1993). This might be

overcome through the development of both quantitative and qualitative approaches that 'complement each other, with as wide an array of analytical and conceptual tools as feasible' (Abbott-Chapman, 1993:54). Although qualitative methodologies emphasise the presentation of data through words rather than numbers, Miles and Huberman (1984:215) offer three good reasons why the incorporation of numbers can be advantageous at times: 'to see rapidly what you have in a large slice of data; to verify a hunch or hypothesis; and to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias'. The use of numbers and the comparison of data across situations pertinent to the study should not, however, imply a lessening of value for those patterns and themes that emerge through qualitative analysis.

While some authors have advocated the use of a single methodology, their arguments appear more related to pragmatic concerns, such as time constraints, the need to limit the scope of a study, and the difficulty of publishing the findings (Creswell, 1994). Each approach has its advantages and limitations; when fused, the positive aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methods may be seen (Tripp-Reimer, 1985:179) enabling the researcher to gain from the significant contributions of both (Nau, 1995:1). For this reason, this research is predominantly a qualitative study that utilises some simple quantitative measures to support and extend meaning.

6.3   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

6.3.1   Selection of research participants

Of the sixty-nine participants engaged in the interview process all, except one, had been an employee at the new University for at least five years prior to the commencement of the study. All had been involved in the changes within the University to a greater or lesser degree depending on their length of service.

Selection for interview was determined on the basis of an incidental or opportunistic approach to sampling. As might be expected in an organisation undergoing significant change, there was no shortage of academics from across all levels, faculties and campuses of the University keen to participate in the interview process to contribute to the research project and discuss their

perceptions, concerns, and expectations regarding the organisational changes. A small number of interviews occurred as a result of recommendations made by participants keen to assist the researcher locate 'information-rich' individuals within the university. This was extremely helpful for the collection of data of a historical nature or specifically related to a particular campus.

Accepting the limitations of an opportunistic approach, including that of replication, selection was purposeful and guided by the need to maintain a balance of factors in the sample, including those of gender, age, and geographical location, to ensure that a diversity of viewpoints, attitudes and experiences was included in the sample. No preset 'desirable' number of academics was determined before the interview process commenced. A total of thirty-six males and thirty-three females were interviewed during the research project.

Table 6.1 provides a summary of academics interviewed and their positions within the three faculties of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Health Sciences. In this study, level D equates to Prof/Associate Professor, level C to Senior Lecturer and level B to Lecturer level. The decision to combine the Professor/Associate Professor levels was made to ensure the anonymity of the one Professor interviewed for the study. As academics occupying level D positions within the Faculty of Health Sciences were organisationally under-represented within the University at the time the research was conducted, none has been interviewed for this study.

Other background details of the interviewees are set out in Tables 6.2 and 6.3.

Table 6.1:   Participants interviewed

Faculty	Level		
	D	C	B
Health Sciences	0	4	9
Education	12	10	10
Arts and Sciences	5	10	9
Total	17	24	28

6.3.2   Biographical details

Biographical information was collected from each participant before the commencement of each interview and assisted in providing relevant background information of the interviewees regarding years of service, faculty, and area of specialisation.

Table 6.2:   Interviewee years of service

State	Academics Interviewed	Years of Service		
		1-9	10-19	20-25
ACT	11	7	4	-
NSW	30	11	14	5
Qld	12	5	6	1
Vic	16	5	8	3

Note: NSW and Victoria each had 3 campuses at the time of interview.

Table 6.3:   Distribution of interviewees based on gender and level

Gender	Level			Total
	D	C	B	
Male	12	14	10	36
Female	5	10	18	33
Total	17	24	28	69

The research design and methods for this thesis are in keeping with the theoretical framework outlined earlier in this chapter.

6.4   COLLECTION OF DATA

In keeping with the qualitative methodological approach adopted for this research project, the collection of data was predominantly through the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants from across all eight campuses of the new University situated along the eastern coast of Australia. Although the formal collection of data through the interview process commenced late 1995 through to mid-1996, the researcher was well aware of the processes of organisational

change within the University for some time prior to, and since the official formation of the new University in 1991.

6.4.1   Site, location and timing of interviews

The interviews were conducted in a variety of settings on the eight campuses of the University in as relaxed an environment as possible to ensure participant comfort and the production of free flowing responses.   Interviews were generally conducted at the site of each interviewee's workplace and were normally conducted in the interviewee's office.   This provided a familiar, quiet, setting, and, with the necessary precautionary procedures in place, disruptions were minimal.

To facilitate this process, extensive interstate travel was required to all eight campuses of the University including McAuley Campus at Brisbane, Qld; the three NSW campuses comprising Mac Killop Campus at North Sydney, Mt St Mary Campus at Strathfield, and Castle Hill Campus at Castle Hill; the three Victorian campuses comprising Mercy Campus at Ascot Vale, Christ Campus at Oakleigh, and Aquinas Campus at Ballarat; and Signadou Campus in the Australian Capital Territory.   To ensure sufficient data were collected from each campus, several visits were made to the Sydney and Melbourne campuses.

The schedule of interviews was organised well in advance to ensure each interview did not intrude into an already heavy academic workload.   Three unscheduled interviews took place as a result of participants' recommendations or spontaneous offer to participate.   On several occasions, interviews were conducted at the researcher's workplace when academics visited the campus for meetings or other business-related matters.

In order to manage the interview schedule, interviewees received an introductory telephone call to provide them with information on the research project, an outline of the interview procedure and to discuss ethical considerations, such as anonymity.   This was followed by an invitation to participate in the interview process, and, upon acceptance, the relevant organisational details such as timing and place were negotiated.   Interviewees received a copy of the interview

questions well in advance of the interview to allow time for reflection on the focus of the research questions and an opportunity to decline from the interview if desired. Of those academics approached for interview, only one academic withdrew from the interview process after receiving a copy of the questions and only one academic was absent from the campus at the pre-arranged interview time, due to unexpected work commitments. Exceptional hospitality and support was offered to the researcher on all campuses of the University during the interview process.

6.4.2 Development of the interview guide

A set of 26 semi-structured questions (refer next subsection) was designed to facilitate thinking about change in higher education and within the new University. The focus of the questions aimed to elicit the direct experiences of academics and their reflections and understandings of the phenomenon under study. This served to provide a framework, 'within which the respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms' (Patton, 1990:290) for the analysis of data and to ensure some consistency in the flow of information during the course of the interview. Although open-ended questions would most likely have generated greater breadth of ideas, a semi-structured approach helped to overcome the inherent danger that interviewees would become diverted from the focus of the study. Sufficient scope existed within the question structure to allow interviewees to present their own ideas without the researcher channelling their attention to a particular perspective or event.

6.4.3 Question foci

The interview questions were organised into three sections, each comprising a number of questions focused on a specific aspect of the topic. Questions within the first section *'Changes in Higher Education'* covered the broad changes in higher education and then focussed on the implications for the new University. The second section *'The University as an organisation'* aimed to ascertain academics' beliefs regarding the role of universities in general and their aspirations for the future development of the new university, its role in society, and those factors that might threaten its continuing development. The final

section *'Personal impact of the changes'* comprised questions relating to the personal impact of organisational change on academics at the new University, the changing nature of the University workplace, and the overall feelings of academics towards the changes.

The design of the research questions aimed to increase participant interaction and ease and ensure the discussion progressed smoothly. Through a process of funnelling, the specific structure of the question sequence was aimed primarily at encouraging the logical flow of ideas related to the focus of each question while providing a smooth transition between the flow of ideas from one question to the next. The structure of the question sequence was also designed to encourage participants to move progressively from a broad conceptualisation of the issues related to changes in higher education generally, through to an examination of those issues and concerns centred more directly on the organisational changes at the local level. Finally, the last series of questions aimed to elicit the level of impact the organisational changes had on the participants themselves. Specific follow-up probes were not developed for the interviews although both elaboration and clarification probes were used during the interview process, where appropriate, to extend meaning.

6.4.4   Interview questions

Part 1:   Changes in higher education

1. There have been considerable changes in the higher education system in the past five years. Could be provide me with a summary of what you perceive to be the most significant changes that have occurred?

2. What do you perceive as the major political or economic influences that have affected change in higher education?

3. In your view, have the changes that have taken place been driven by a particular ideology?

4. Why do you think the changes have occurred?

5. Do you think the changes have been beneficial?

6. What changes have taken place in the Australian Catholic University in the past 5 years?

7. Why do you think these changes have occurred?

8. Do you think the changes have been beneficial?

Part 2:   The University as an organisation

9. In what direction would you like to see the University heading in the future?

10. What role do you see yourself playing in that movement?

11. Do you believe the University can become one of the top universities in Australia? What reasons would you give to support your answer?

12. What role do universities play in society?

13. How can this University influence society?

14. What specific contributions can this University make to society?

15. What role is there for the University in the wider international Catholic community?

16. In your view are there any factors that might prevent or threaten its continuing development?

17. What do you perceive as the driving force behind the organisation?

18. How might the University ethos differ from other Australian universities?

19. If you were able to design your 'ideal' Australian Catholic University what would it be like?

Part 3:   Personal impact of the changes

20. What impact have the changes at the Australian Catholic University had on you personally?

21. Have you made changes to your work behaviour or style to cater for such changes?

22. How do you feel about the changes you have made?

23. What values do you regard as essential within the workplace?

24. What do you regard as the major contribution of your work to this faculty or department?

25. What gives you most satisfaction in your work?

26. What gives you least satisfaction in your work?

6.5   PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to provide insight, timing and direction for the later interviews.   The interview questions, designed to facilitate thinking and encourage a logical flow of ideas between each section of the interview guide, progressed smoothly. All interviews conducted during the pilot were successful in that the interviewees expressed confidence in the interview structure and the ease with which they were able to relate to the content of each section of the interview. Responses to specific questions flowed smoothly from the content area of one question to the next thus producing a substantial amount of data for analysis. The length of each interview allowed sufficient time and opportunity for in-depth comment on all areas of the interview while not taxing or stressing the interviewee during the process. At the conclusion of the interview, each interviewee was invited to contribute further information or elaborate on comments made during the interview. Very few interviewees offered further information except to add that they were generally satisfied they had dealt with the subject in sufficient depth to convey their thoughts. Some affirmed the value of the research project, believing an evaluation of any organisational change is essential. For these reasons, no changes were made to the sequence of the interview questions during the course of the study.

6.6   INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The interviews were conducted across the organisation before 'saturation' level appeared to be reached, i.e., that further information or viewpoints of significance were unlikely. At this stage, the interview responses provided by academics during the final interviews were sufficiently similar to those previously conducted as to indicate that continuance of the interview process with more academics would be unlikely to provide any further significant insights relevant to the research questions.

The details of the interview were explained to the participants and a Consent Form presented for completion before the commencement of the interview. Participants were free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation in the research project at any time without the need to provide a reason for so

doing. With the permission of the interviewees, the interview sessions were tape-recorded using a micro audiocassette, which facilitated smooth transcription of the raw data. Interviewees were free to stop the tape-recording at any time during the interview, modify their responses to clarify specific aspects, or abort the interview completely if necessary. In the majority of interviews, the presence of the tape-recorder had minimal impact and no requests to terminate the interview occurred during the interview process. The tape-recording of interviews facilitated greater interaction between the interviewee and interviewer as it eliminated the need for note-taking while attempting to actively listen to the interviewee. Tape-recording also ensured the interviewee responses were accurately documented rather than being left open to the risk of selective distortion. As raw data remain on record for analysis, any anecdotal information or ambiguity of response is still available to the researcher at a later date. Validity is enhanced through the preservation of authentic data. Before each interview, questions regarding the research project were answered and clarification provided where necessary. Signatures were obtained for the appropriate ethics documentation in keeping with the University's ethics protocol.

The interview questions were asked in the same sequence; however, interviewees were encouraged to extend or elaborate on their ideas where possible throughout the interview process. Occasionally, the researcher probed further through the use of secondary or extension questions if it appeared the direction of the discussion would provide new insights or useful elaboration of ideas. Participants were invited to add further comments or ideas at the conclusion of each interview.

Each interview was scheduled to last for sixty to ninety minutes although some time allowance was built into the beginning and end of the interview schedule to allow interviewees to engage in informal discussion with the interviewer, and to 'wind down' or 'debrief' after the interview. All interviews, except one, lasted for at least one hour, some extended for as long as two hours. By conducting the majority of the interviews at the interviewee's workplace, the researcher was introduced to some rich background information about the nature of the work

environment, including local operations, and historically relevant information about each campus.

6.6.1 Transcription

As previously mentioned, all interviews were recorded and the raw interview data transcribed verbatim into Word document files. Each interviewee was assigned a number to ensure their anonymity throughout the process of analysis and any resultant publications pertaining to the research. Interview tapes were stored in locked cabinets in a secure location.

6.7 RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Throughout this thesis, the interpretation of the interview data and other significant historical events has been informed by the collection of relevant documents produced either by the Colleges or Institutes of Education before the amalgamation process, or by the newly established University for internal or external use. The process of collection included any documents deemed to have some relevance to the focus of the research and included University Inauguration publications documenting this significant event for the new University, in-house communiqués, The ACU Chronicle, pamphlets, ACU Handbooks, campus specific booklets, newspaper articles, and other such materials. Through the process of interrogation, this substantial body of information assisted greatly in 'contextualising' the study and proved invaluable as a means through which to reconstruct the past 'in order to more validly interpret the present' (Wiseman, 1993:145). In this way, greater understanding of important elements of the change process, the sequence of events, the communication process, and general strategies adopted by management was made possible. The process enabled the researcher to gain fresh insights while assisting the substantiation of claims made by academics, particularly in the historical development of the new University.

6.8 PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

As highlighted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the extensive background gained by this researcher as an academic at one of the campuses of the new University, ensured the researcher experienced, first hand, the organisational

changes that occurred during the period of the inquiry. Consequently, the researcher experienced and observed the impact of those workplace changes and challenges that affected the personal and professional lives of other academics located at the various campuses of the new University. This places the researcher in the position of knowledgeable participant in and observer of the same group of organisational members participating in this inquiry; as such, the researcher is integral to and immersed in the experiences of the researched. The researcher is privileged to have been able to observe and participate in many aspects of organisational life at both the predecessor college and the new University. Finally, attendance at both formal and informal meetings, personal observations, note taking, spontaneous comments made by academics and ongoing discussions with staff at the various campuses of the University provided a rich source of relevant information that might not have emerged in the course of the interviews. As well, the timing of interview schedules with academics on all campuses allowed further time for informal discussions with other academics in staff rooms and 'around the corridors' as they went about their daily work routine. This time proved invaluable in providing opportunities for the researcher to learn more about the history of each campus and absorb and reflect upon the character of the buildings and ambience surrounding each campus. This process assisted the researcher gain a greater understanding of the participants' reality and enhanced the later interpretation of the interview data. Through the processes of observation and ongoing discussion, new ideas and questions emerged providing fresh insights and avenues for exploration not previously considered.

6.9   LIMITATIONS

Interviewees participating in qualitative research are made vulnerable by the nature of their participation, and especially so when the research focus directly relates to the organisation in which they work. In keeping with ethical requirements, all information gathered in the research was treated in absolute confidence and not revealed to anyone in a manner that identified the participants. The focus of the research, the participant's rights, and the researcher's responsibilities were clearly outlined at the commencement of each interview and all ethical procedures stringently adhered to during the entire research process.

The researcher was also sensitive towards insider/outsider considerations in the conduct of a research project of this kind. The researcher, as an 'insider', was cognisant of the need not to assume 'a taken-for-granted stance toward the informants' meanings, languages and conceptualisations' (Minichiello, et al., 1990) nor to reveal privileged information. The focus of this research centred primarily on the reactions of academics to change, their beliefs, their values and their interpretation of the events that occurred over a period of five years after the formation of the new University in 1991. While acknowledging the importance of high-level management personnel in the processes of organisational change, the purpose of this research is to ascertain the impact and level of acceptance of organisational changes as experienced and interpreted by academics working within the academic structures of the three faculties and related schools of the University. As such, no academic Deans or other members of the senior executive management team were interviewed for this study.

6.10   ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Gaining interpretations of a particular phenomena from individuals who work within the organisation under study, brings with it risks associated with the researcher's own interpretations of the constructs utilised by those individuals during discussion. In endeavouring to understand individual behaviour, it is therefore incumbent on the researcher to 'answer questions by producing an interpretation of how those people whose actions are being studied themselves interpret these actions' (Wiseman, 1993:104). In order to construct meaning from the data, the analytical process in this research drew upon the conceptual framework outlined in the earlier chapters, the primary data gathered from the in-depth interviews totalling 986 pages of transcribed text, and information gleaned from the many related documents collected during the period of the research project.

The systematic analysis of the data proceeded in accordance with a qualitative approach in which the researcher works inductively searching for emergent patterns, as represented by categories, dimensions and classification schemes (Patton, 1980:313; Bryman & Burgess, 1994). The natural creation of categories

occurred through 'the process of finding a focus for the analysis, and reading and annotating the data' (Dey, 1993:99), while maintaining some relevance to prior theoretical perspectives in order to facilitate interpretation. In this way, the meaning of a category is 'bound up on the one hand with the bits of data to which it is assigned, and on the other hand with the ideas it expresses' (Dey, 1993:102). This is a creative process that requires 'carefully considered judgements about what is really significant and meaningful in the data' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:406). It also encourages creative thinking and enables the researcher to formulate his/her own explanations or theories on the subject being researched.

The ongoing analysis of qualitative data can become 'a complicated business', as well as 'a time-consuming one' (Mason, 1996:89). Consequently, the researcher can easily become overwhelmed in the process of organising and attempting to bring order and meaning to the data. Given the significant quantity of data collected for this research project, the researcher was indeed under threat at times of being swamped by the data, although the advice from Dye et al. (2000) provided some comfort and direction. The act of categorising, they state, 'enables us to reduce the complexity of our environment, give direction for activity, identify the objects of the world, reduce the need for constant learning, and allow for ordering and relating classes of events' (p.2). As well as the process of categorisation and concept building, the generation of sixty-nine individual summaries of each academic interview transcript proved invaluable in assisting the researcher to maintain a holistic view and, in concert with other forms of analysis, added to the richness of the interpretation.

It was not until after much reading of the interview transcripts that the categorisation process began. This immersed the researcher in the 'lively world of academics' at the new University and resulted in the gradual formation of clusters of related ideas and content that became 'the organisation and conceptualisation of that data' (Dey, 1993:112). Engagement in a number of 'pilot categorising exercises' as described by Mason (1994:92) that involve 'trying out categories on batches of transcripts, developing new categories and refining existing ones in the light of these trials, and swapping ideas and assumptions' (p.92) was attempted in order to bring sense to the data. During this

process, lower-level categories began to emerge and by a process of constant comparison aimed at stimulating thinking 'that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:341), more refined categories were generated from the data and assigned numerous codes to capture their meaning. The adoption of a comparative approach to analysis can serve to 'ensure accurate evidence, to establish the generality of propositions, to specify concepts, to verify theory, or to generate theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:25).

As the analysis became progressively deeper, higher-level concepts and relationships began to emerge. The need for flexibility and open-mindedness during the analysis process was essential to ensure the accommodation of fresh observations and new directions; 'in defining the data we have to be both attentive and tentative, attentive to the data and tentative in our conceptualisations of them' (Dey, 1993:102). As Braben (1987:3) illustrates through the use of metaphor:

> 'There are not only more layers to the onion, but there will be new vegetables to explore; whose flavour we have not yet tasted or even suspect...The more strictly we tried to control the research enterprise, the fewer surprises it would hold and eventually the more sterile it would become'.

Throughout the process of categorisation and during the writing of the thesis, frequent movement back and forth between the interview transcripts, the conceptual literature and the emerging text was made to check and extend meaning, and to help define and guide 'what is significant and predict what might be happening and why' (Wiseman, 1993:152). In this way the researcher is challenged to 'attempt to find new ways of approaching reality, ...to be creative and receptive in order to improve one's understanding' (Gummesson, 1991:83).

A further analysis of the data sought to extend meaning through the quantification of various components of the qualitative analysis through the employment of simple quantitative methods such as tabulations and frequency counts. The results of the quantitative analysis have been woven into the text of the thesis to support assertions and strengthen comments made throughout the qualitative analysis. Wiseman (1993:161) alerts the researcher to the need for maintaining

an ongoing openness throughout the process of sorting and categorising data, and this is especially so when attempting to impose some form of quantification on to the data for analysis.

6.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research project has been conducted in accordance with normal ethical guidelines as determined by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Services Unit, ACU. The guidelines were stringently adhered to throughout the conduct of the research project.

CHAPTER 7: ACADEMICS' PERCEPTIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, an important element of the symbolic interactionist approach to understanding is that of 'perspective'; that is, individuals bring differing perspectives or 'points of view' to any given situation that will in turn influence the interpretation of that situation and help shape the various assumptions and value judgments made at that time. Each perspective provides 'a different approach to reality and each therefore tells us something, but cannot include everything' (Charon, 1979:4). When faced with changing circumstances, as during times of organisational change, individuals scan their environments in an endeavour to make sense of their world and construct meaning from the various sources of information available to them. As Lazarus (1985:162) highlights: 'the ongoing process of construing reality is a constantly changing one, depending on many variables within and outside of the person'. Throughout this process, individuals engage in selective information-processing to ensure their perceptions remain intact (Taylor, 1999) and thereby lessen the degree of uncertainty present in their environments. Robbins (1993) suggests that individuals will, through their personal frames of reference, determine what is problematic or an opportunity, and distinguish between that which is relevant and that which is irrelevant. This chapter provides an analysis of academics' views regarding the changes in higher education.

Chapter 2 of this thesis outlined the contextual framework surrounding this research project. Discussion identified a number of contemporary issues facing universities today, as articulated by Coaldrake and Stedman (1998) and others, and established links between these and historical perspectives regarding the radical changes that occurred within the higher education sector in Australia towards the late 1980s. This chapter extends that discussion through an exploration of the nature of and driving forces behind those changes as perceived by academics themselves. Following this, discussion centres on a consideration of academics' level of acceptance of the changes, as identified in their evaluations

as to whether the changes were either beneficial or non-beneficial. A discussion regarding the relationship between academic position and level of impact of the changes on academics' personal and professional lives is continued in Chapter 12 of this thesis.

As might be expected, academics differed in their understanding of and ability to identify the significant social, economic and political factors that impacted on the higher education sector in the early 90s during the time of the formation of the new University. The level of complexity and breadth of the responses also varied considerably between academics, as did their ability to position the changes within an international, national or local state context. However, all academics in this study did identify some significant changes within the higher education sector during the prescribed period and offered explanations regarding the driving forces responsible for the changes; none believed this to be outside their range of expertise. A considerable number of the sixty-nine academics interviewed spent little time discussing wider international issues, preferring to move directly into a discussion of those changes that had occurred within the local state or campus context.

7.1   FORCES AND CHANGES WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

7.1.1   Creating the new Unified National System

While a number of changes were identified by academics during the discussion, a high proportion, 46 of 69 (67%), of academics identified the creation of the *Unified National System* as the most significant change to have taken place in higher education over the past five years. Refer Table 7.1. This radical modification to the system had now, academics argued, clearly brought universities under the direct control of the Federal Ministry of Education and, as a consequence, universities were 'subject to whatever program, policy direction it (the Ministry) wishes to put in place' (Interviewee No.62). With the abolition of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, which had previously been the responsible statutory body and able to operate 'at arm's length' from the Government, academics considered that the operations of universities had now changed to reflect increased Government control 'that now operates directly on

the universities' (62). The pressure placed on universities to establish an appropriate educational profile to satisfy Government requirements in order to receive funding was regarded as effectively strengthening the link and level of control between the two systems. These changes, including the apportioning of funds by Government, had completely transformed the system academics believed 'not once but several times' (62). These reflections appear in stark contrast to the expectations expressed by academics entering the new unified national system, as reported by Meek and Goedegebuure (1989), buoyed by the promise from government of a new system characterised by greater autonomy and flexibility.

7.1.2   Artificiality of the two-tiered system

Meek and Goedegebuure (1989), Smart (1989), Bourke (1994), Smyth (1995) and others noted that the formation of the Unified National System brought opportunities for smaller institutions to move, through a process of amalgamation, into a new system accompanied by higher university status. The divide between the Colleges of Advanced Education and universities had become increasingly artificial over the years prior to the changes and many believed it desirable to correct this anomaly. Academics within the new University identified the pressure from Government, or more expressively 'John Dawkins and the public servants in his department' (25), and agitation by the Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology as strong forces for change. Academics expressed the view that for some time the CAEs had agitated against the continuance of this 'arbitrary division' as many were already offering specialised courses at a similar (university) level, while others offered similar full degree courses to those in universities. A point of difference often articulated was the type and greater amount of research conducted in the universities as compared with the CAEs. Yet, as the comments of respondent (25) show, there was not only a desire on the part of some college academics to participate in research but a belief that this was indeed necessary and integral to academic work and, as such, the divide had been a 'contradiction in terms'. Respondent (25) explains:

'The definition of a CAE was a place that taught at degree level, but where staff did not do research and were not expected to do research and had no time to do research. I think that was essentially a contradiction in terms, to have staff who have an enthusiasm for their subject, teach it at a full degree level, but then say to them, we expect you to teach all week, prepare your lectures all week, to mark all week, but not to do research, not deepen your reading, not write articles, not to make contributions to conferences; although this obviously wasn't forbidden it was certainly marginal and that was a contradiction in terms'.

Moses and Ramsden (1992), Nicholls and Allen (1993) and others have noted the perception that CAE academics were less qualified than their university counterparts, at least in regard to staff holding higher degrees. This perception worked effectively to intimidate some college academics at the new University into believing there now existed a need for them to 'bridge the gap' between their actual abilities and qualifications and those perceived to be expected in a university environment. Many academics in this study struggled in this pursuit and resented the lack of acceptance by management and others such as academics from the established universities. The abilities they brought to the system, especially their teaching abilities, were depreciated while they felt disapproval towards the abilities they did not possess, such as research activity. This had the undesirable effect of generating considerable tension within the workplace of the former colleges as academics endeavoured to retain their self-esteem and enthusiasm in their newly formed University environment. The acceptance of a deficit model by college academics worked effectively for management, providing ample justification for an increase in the pressure on academics to pursue higher qualifications, while already under pressure dealing with larger classes and the burden of administration. Consequently academics increased the length of their working day to accommodate the burgeoning workload and performance levels in accordance with University expectations. The significant rise in the work-related stress placed on academics, and the serious loss of workplace morale that occurred as a result of this, supports the findings of Noble (1994) who found that workplace stress and overload was one of the most intractable issues facing academics in the 1990s. As a result of these changes, many academics in this study were left floundering in their newfound

environments, especially in regard to the need for research activity, and this further exacerbated levels of workplace stress.

7.1.3 Economic rationalism

Morgan (1997a:280) notes that in times of change individuals are bound to search for 'villains' or that 'special cause' to help explain and provide meaning for significant events, and this is especially so when situations are complex. In this study, if a villain were to be found in the responses offered by academics, 'economic rationalism' must surely be regarded as the prime target. This ideological perspective was identified by academics as one of the most significant forces driving the radical restructuring process that had impacted on the higher education sector in recent years. As expressed by one academic, 'economic rationalism now reigns supreme and the economic rationalists must be well pleased with the results' (5): a reference by this academic to the predominance of economic values over human values now prevalent in the workplace. Generally, however, academics were reticent to expand the concept of economic rationalism, preferring to use it as a convenient aphorism after which no further explanation is needed. Used as a 'catch-all' for all things economic, it could be argued that academics found the concept of economic rationalism to be a convenient screen behind which to hide their real lack of understanding of the changes. This goes some way in providing an explanation for the acceptance by academics that the changes were driven, at least partly, by the need of government to make the sector more efficient, yet within their own organisation, many academics were experiencing considerable economic hardship and anything but improved levels of efficiency. Given the complexity of the changes that occurred at this time, these explanations are not altogether unreasonable, especially as the changes had such wide-ranging implications for the lives of academics. Further, common usage of the term 'economic rationalism' in the public arena brought some legitimacy and certainty to the process. As argued by Meek and Goedegebuure (1989) earlier in this thesis, the Government's use of an economic rationale to justify the changes worked effectively to quell disquiet towards the changes by members of the academic and broader community.

7.1.4 Increased Government control

Academics generally supported the view as expressed in Chapter 2 that the Dawkins initiatives, prior to the amalgamations, were in the interests of 'cost effectiveness and motivated by the desire to gain greater political control over the Government's spending on education' (8). As universities accounted for a substantial proportion of public spending, this provided an ideal avenue for government to effectively control spending, while simultaneously 'linking the universities more specifically to national goals' (25). The increasing pressure on the Labor Government in the 1980s to gain greater control over the allocation of public spending had become, some argued, 'integral to the plan to make the sector more economical' (7). Given that the funds for education, health and welfare must come directly from taxes, it was understandable, some academics argued, that these would be 'necessarily limited' (10). As respondent (61) explains:

> 'Economic efficiency is driving the trend to standardisation of university courses and products (the graduates). It is purely an economic approach without a political ideology. Competition between universities is now encouraged and performance measures and accountabilities have been introduced to demonstrate that taxpayers funds have been well spent. It is all part of overall economic reform. Education is costly and the funds available are limited. This is occurring at the same time as the drive to produce more graduates'.

Accompanying these changes had been the significant change within the health care system resulting in a changed emphasis from treating illness to an approach that encouraged health. This meant a stronger emphasis on assisting people to take responsibility for their health in order to avoid sickness and the need for treatment (49). 'Health for all' is the declaration from the World Health Organisation that has been driving health care, commented respondent (49) whereas the Government, it was argued, 'was probably driven more by the ideology of economic rationalism' (49). According to respondent (49), economically, 'the writing was on the wall going back 15 to 20 years', but the changes had been a long time in coming. The relatively high cost of the health care system (close to 8% of the GDP at the time of interview) was believed to be

an incentive for government to introduce cost reductions and the only way this could be achieved was to place 'the emphasis on health, rather than illness' (49).

Academics linked the need for greater cost effectiveness and the reduction of the 'availability of funds for government purposes' (4) to the recession of the 1980s. As a fundamental priority behind the Dawkins' changes was 'funds limitation' it was accepted that the changes within the higher education sector would have impacted on all universities 'irrespective of the impact on the formation of the new University and its former college-based system' (2). In essence, the Government sought to 'squeeze more from less' (2) and in order to accomplish this it was dependent on administrative processes, such as the use of quality assurance, to provide the necessary 'management information' (2). While the Government appeared to have been successful at achieving its economic objectives, some respondents believed it had given little credence 'to excellence in research, the quality of transmission of knowledge and development of theories' (61). While accepting the need for some reform, respondent (61) also points out that the changes brought a human cost as well.

> 'The changes forced the universities to look for waste and duplication. There has been human cost as people have been forced into work performance that can be quantified. Other areas that could not be readily measured may have been as important in education but are not supported. An example is the move toward applied research rather than pure research'.

As noted by Ramsden (1998) and others, the changes in higher education had, somewhat paradoxically, worked effectively to increase the Government's control of universities, while simultaneously increasing the pressure on universities to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to reduce dependency on government funding. Respondent (25) captures this need well:

> 'Government is now trying to get the universities to be more self-sufficient in terms of paying students (to be run like a business) with less handouts from the government and more income from the private sector, specifically industry paying to have particular courses run, benefactors, specific fund raising etc. As well, universities must now search for entrepreneurial opportunities to ensure alternative funding sources are channelled to the University'.

Or as Meek and Goedegebuure (1989:20) aptly comment, 'institutions are being given greater autonomy to do what (the) Government wants them to do'.

7.1.5   International influences

Smyth (1995) points to international influences as an important factor contributing to the changes within the higher education sector in Australia; a view supported by academics in this study. Yet while there existed general acceptance that the Australian changes 'tended to follow other countries that had implemented similar changes' (6), the rationale for such an approach was received less favourably, especially so, it was argued, when the chosen models mirrored those 'that had not been particularly effective' (6). Concern for the trend by Australia to follow practices adopted in England, rather than in America, was seen as reflective of differences in funding mechanisms; the American model being less central and including large private funds. Academics regarded the forces that had stimulated change in the UK, including the need for greater accountability and efficiency, had signalled the changes that followed in Australia.

7.1.6   Loss of confidence in the system

The changes to higher education had been, arguably, to improve Australia's international image and create the 'clever country', a significant change from that once known as the 'lucky country' (50). This change in rhetoric demonstrated a shift in emphasis for Australia from a position of isolation and insulation to one that sought to 'seek a place in international economics and power, particularly in the Asia Pacific area' (50). Previously there had been periods of change, as in the 1970s under the Labor Government when the universities were 'opened up and fees were abolished' (11).

> 'The Government wanted a clever country, wanted the working class
> to make good, introduce a big leap for people who did not otherwise
> have access to a university' (7).

While the Government had hoped through this approach to increase levels of participation by members of all social classes in higher education, it did little to solve issues of social equity and participation, as noted by Meek and

Goedegebuure (1989). Given time, excesses started to emerge, and, as one academic muses, while lifelong learning may be a desirable feature it was not the intention that some individuals remain at university 'as lifelong students' (11).

The changes introduced in the 1980s had continued and accelerated into the 1990s, and this, it was thought, had produced a 'loss of confidence in the value of education as an end in itself' (53). Yet to argue the 'clever country' rhetoric had been driven by purely utilitarian ideology that completely 'degrades universities' policy as creative cultural institutions' (25) was regarded as somewhat of an exaggeration. Despite the new bureaucratic controls, universities were still able to pursue these avenues as far as they desired, some considered, although 'the favourable bias towards research grant applications focused on high technology and high infrastructure disciplines' (25) was believed to be a significant element in the debate. Acceptance of a purely economic model for universities was a notion to be resisted. As respondent (25) explains:

'It seems to me that universities still have the same independence that they always had to put money and resources into humanities or cultural pursuits or ethical questions and so on. I don't think that the Government wants to stop that and certainly, just going on the Prime Minister's own views, he certainly is somewhat interested in cultural visions and ethical questions, so I don't sense that the Government is narrowly utilitarian in that sense. But...because of the crisis of public spending that so many western social democracies are facing there is I suppose a pressure on any attempt to provide resources for ...pursuits, cultural pursuits. In order to make that possible there is an attempt to look for resources from the private sector. Some elements of the private sector, being mainly...businesses, are less open to that than they would be to more economic related concerns. I don't think it is all gloom and doom in that sense, but I think there is a real pressure that we have to be very conscious of and have to work against'.

Some academics referred to the changes in the titles of government departments as offering a clue to a change in government direction. In the 1960s, the department responsible for higher education was situated under the title of Department of Education and Science (thus linking universities to science) but through a renaming process in which it became the Department of Education,

Employment and Training (DEET), had sent a clear message to the community that education was now to be 'tied to the economy and not aloof from it' (54).

7.1.7 Community pressure

As a result of worsening economic conditions and spiralling unemployment towards the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s, some sections of the Australian community adopted the attitude 'that higher education was a privileged enclave, largely irrelevant to the socio-economic problems facing the nation' (Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989). Academics agreed that while tertiary education in the past had been somewhat 'protected from outside influences' (66), the continuing pressure from the community for 'increased accountability' (16) had created another significant force for change in higher education. In keeping with the sentiments of Moses (1992), academics noted the pressure on universities to not only be more accountable but also more responsive to community requirements and readily engage in 'functions that the community now perceives as important' (48); this came, however, at the expense of traditional values.

Universities were now responding more readily to the needs of employers and this was regarded by academics as a necessary change that had resulted in positive outcomes for many community members. The notions of competency and observable outcomes, as a measure of accountability, and the significantly greater diversity in courses now offered by universities was also beneficial; for example, adult learners seeking higher qualifications for career purposes were now more readily accommodated than in the past, and the construction of specially tailored courses to meet community needs and varying circumstances had also been positive. Increased competition and the impact of technology had indeed contributed to the pressure from industry for a better-educated workforce and the changes in society regarding 'the type of work people do, the technology involved, and the qualifications expected' (2) as well as improvements in communications, personal computer ownership and ready access to the Internet and email, were all factors that had broadened perspectives and influenced change so that 'we are now aware of the rest of the world and are not so isolated' (65).

7.1.8 Union influences

Another change within the sector to occur around the same time, was the unionisation or registration of university academics before the industrial court; as a consequence, academics were subjected to national industrial awards. Enterprise bargaining became a major issue and this resulted in a change in 'the culture of working conditions for academics' (62). While this issue was not raised widely by academics, some regarded the process as important in that it brought 'a sense of cohesion to the workplace through the development of a uniform set of conditions and sense of identity' (56).

7.2 EVALUATION OF THE CHANGES

7.2.1 Threats to liberal education

Although the elevation in status for the newly formed institution was received positively, the changes in government direction to link higher education to national economic goals in ways that were fundamentally threatening to liberal education (i.e., the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake) was received less positively. The increasing pressure on universities to focus on economic goals had contributed significantly to the diminution of some traditional areas of study, such as the Humanities (25, 53) some argued. The Government's changes to tertiary education, particularly in the move to increase the numbers of students with degrees, had been premised on economic arguments, and this raised concerns that little consideration had been given to the development of individuals 'to become better persons'; a regrettable move some believed given that 'enhancing the individual serves to enhance society' (8). The irony is that education is regarded as being a social benefit, and, as respondent (4) explains:

> 'Funds spent on education, according to economists, detract from the economic rating of a state or country; conversely, less spending on education improves the economic rating of the state. Governments are highly sensitive to the rating agencies as it affects the nation's ability to attract funds for trade, the stock market, and value for dollar'.

The DEET implementation of the Dawkins' policies brought risks and the introduction of a whole set of new reporting mechanisms and quality assurance

procedures that academics believed had the potential to further limit spontaneity and creativity, and possibly undermine 'the independence of universities and their ability to contribute to long-term cultural goals rather than short term ones' (25). The increased financial accountability required by government had contributed significantly to workloads, particularly those of middle management, and this preoccupation was further believed to restrict those in management positions 'from more creative activities' (25). The need for such scrutiny by government had stemmed, in part, from a general perception that significant waste existed in the sector. Acceptance of a waste theory led some academics to believe the stringent measures introduced after the changes were necessary to control the problem. If the elimination of 'waste' could appear to be occurring then, it was believed, government had been successful in its quest to make the sector more efficient. Interviewee (25) opined: 'there is certainly no waste here now and people are saving money all over the place'. As noted by others in the literature (e.g., Harman & Meek, 1988; Smyth, 1995) there was some support for the view that change was needed and, in fact, long overdue. The comments of respondent (62) support this:

> 'the situation was that universities really did need to take a hard look at the way in which they operated but the trouble was that they didn't and others came in and did it for them. Even quality assurance has made the universities inspect themselves in a way they probably would not have done before'.

A possible explanation for this had been that although the universities of the 1980s were bigger they had remained much the same as in the 1930s, with a culture, status, type of training and values that, according to respondent (62) 'could not have lasted'. Whereas once there existed a perception that universities employed academics to sit in ivory towers, this had changed dramatically in recent years and the prevailing view offered by academics in this study was that they had now been 'taken over by management' (35); a condition apparently not improved in more recent years (Rhoades, 2000). Academics considered this change in conditions as a reduction in status that was accompanied by the feeling they were now 'only the middle person transferring a commodity to the students'. As a result of this process, academics believed they had 'lost autonomy on issues

such as course structure, financial viabilities, and pure research' (35). Further, the problem was exacerbated by the perception that there now appeared to be a 'new level of interference (the government) in the teaching process' (35).

7.2.2 Improved equity, diversity and access

As mentioned, some academics believed the changes were long overdue, especially in regard to the efficient operation of universities. Others pointed to the benefits of the changes in terms of the creation of a more equitable system through the elimination of elitism, the introduction of diversity in university traditions, and greater access to higher education for a broader range of people.

> '(There is) pressure now for higher degrees...but also the opportunities for new universities that are religious based or regional based and so available for many more people especially those in remote areas. In Sydney, the changes corrected the mistakes of the past; for example, there was a central university, an eastern suburbs university and then the next new one (Macquarie) was placed in the affluent north! So all the west missed out yet this is where the population growth has been. So this injustice has been corrected' (25).

Academics regarded the increase in the number of universities across Australia resulting from the numerous amalgamations as beneficial to the 'many more young people who now have access to higher education' (4). The changes had also created a diverse range of opportunities for students of all ages although some argued, rather more cynically, that the real motivation behind the changes had been to 'get kids off the dole queue' (15), and this was made possible without the need to build new universities, as 'they already existed' (7). By encouraging students to remain longer at university, academics contended, it became possible to delay the impact on the workforce for several years thereby effectively reducing the high unemployment rate. This was unfortunate, some thought, as it had the undesirable effect of producing 'a lot of unemployed people with university degrees' (63). The increase in access and opportunity for all students had certainly produced 'more students' and advantageously these were now 'from a broader base'. Yet although this was regarded as beneficial to students, the sliding TER cut-off produced as a result of the funding criteria had, according to some academics, 'definitely (negatively) affected outcomes' (48), providing

support for claims by others that the changes in the student body had resulted in a decline in educational standards in institutions of higher education. As respondent (15) explains:

> 'We have moved to a situation in Victoria, where something in the order of between 70-80% of students who commence high school will be looking to go to tertiary education or some post secondary education. ...I have been in tertiary systems of one kind or another since 1972 and my experience would be that there is a marked difference now, in respect to the sorts of students that you are dealing with. The preparedness of those (present day) students for higher education and the types of students that they (the universities) can attract, compared (poorly) with the students that would have gone to those sorts of courses we had 20 years ago, where a smaller cohort of students advanced into tertiary education and had a general higher ability.
>
> If you look at the tertiary entrance scores, education, nursing, arts and courses like that have been selecting students ...from the bottom quarter of distribution of TER scores. That makes life very difficult when you are dealing with kids like that as there is so much more that you have to address... 20 years ago one could assume students knew they had to study independently, knew how to write, knew how to spell, knew they had to get an argument together and put some words together and organise their thoughts; they are not so prepared anymore' (15).

For some academics, these changes left them little choice other than to 'spend more time helping struggling students across the pass line' (48) producing a 'flow on' effect that brought a significant change to the nature and quality of academics' work. As interviewee (15) laments:

> 'the better potential the student the more you are able to be inspired yourself and raise to greater heights with the developing experience that takes place, compared to what ends up being a drudge, when you are trying to see who has read their book this week and who has done this exercise. ...That sort of intrinsic motivation and interest and ...the thirst for knowledge, used to be much more the norm than it is now, although I have had that experience with a few students and that is always I suppose fulfilling and keeps you going'.

These observations support the reflections of Mandle (1995) who notes that:

> 'Students seemed once, through my now rheumy jaundiced eyes, to want to learn. Now they defy their teachers to teach them, tot up

their continuous assessment points, and achieve what is, just, satisfactory' (Canberra Times, Oct 29).

Although unsupportive of an elitist university model, the difficulties that had arisen as a result of the changes left some academics believing a place still existed for 'high entrance standards' and a continuing 'role for the TAFE system as another tier of study' (15).

Academics believed it unfortunate that the revised level of government funding available to universities was now insufficient to keep pace with the increasing number of students, as this had created tension and a reduction in the quality of service provided. Although the need by government to curtail rising costs and increase accountability might be understandable, some commented, the over-emphasis on an economic rationalist approach towards education had resulted in students now being treated as 'a commodity, a product' (53). This was believed to be the antithesis of sound educational practice. Nevertheless, the improvement in funding at the state level was viewed as beneficial by some who were appreciative (regardless of motivation) of now being able to gain access to funding for the improvement of facilities, for example:

> 'Certainly in Queensland there has been a sharp political battle to free up more places for tertiary studies and we have again been fortunate enough to have benefited from that so things, such as funding for these very buildings, would not have been affordable otherwise' (56).

7.2.3   Broadening research agendas

Another positive outcome of the changes as perceived by some academics had been the encouragement of scientific research on a wider scale, which had the potential to lead to improvements in 'broader social and cultural development, humanity and ethical insights' (25). The imbalance in research activity between old universities and former colleges had, however, not yet been corrected, as also noted in the literature in Chapter 2, and it was apparent the more established universities were 'still doing the blue-ribbon research while the areas of excellence in the new universities had yet to come to fruition' (25). Some academics argued for a balanced approach to research and the acceptance that universities now have dual roles in 'furthering knowledge as well as producing

practical outcomes' (44). As not all research is able to produce tangible results immediately, some academics believed there was still a role for universities to engage in practical research that is responsive to the 'needs of the time' (44).

7.2.4   Extending the network

The injection of teaching expertise and skills provided by academics from within the former colleges and institutes to the existing universities was regarded as a favourable outcome from the changes, although this was countered by 'the need for CAE lecturers to build on their research skills' (7) or 'bridge the gap' as noted earlier. The kick-start provided by government to the new universities was generally welcomed, although some expressed concerns the binary system might return in another form 'with the top universities as one layer and the others forming a de facto second tier' (62); a concern that has more recently been realised. Although Australia still had 'an excellent system of higher education', some considered, there was still the risk that this might not continue. A factor regarded as beneficial by some academics was the effect the impact of the changes had in slowing the growth of the major universities 'such as Monash and Sydney' (62).

For some, the changes had not been beneficial, in fact, quite 'detrimental' (53). While acknowledging that some value existed in being 'forced into re-evaluating the role of universities' (53), the economic priorities had overridden any benefits, these academics argued. The expansion of universities had led to an increase in student numbers and these had not been 'paralleled by staff increases' (46). This had generated 'a greater workload, increased stress and a change in the perception academics have of themselves' (46). These findings support the concerns expressed by Noble (1994) and others. For some academics the changes had resulted in a loss of quality and control, as respondent (2) expresses:

> 'The increase in pressure on academics had led to a loss (in quality) in the traditional work of academics such as teaching, research and scholarship. The changes that have taken place in this regard had not been beneficial to many academics, as they had 'lost control of the processes'.

As a result of the changes, the proliferation of CAEs had been curtailed by amalgamations to form universities. This had resulted in the convergence of general education with vocational education; yet although the new institutions had become universities, 'competency based education is still promoted' (14). Politically, the movement was regarded as 'performance-based structures operating more efficiently than before and this approach followed overseas trends towards solving problems of unemployment and the high cost of government departments' (14).

7.3 UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHANGES ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC LEVEL

This section builds on the previous discussion by extending the analysis to determine whether a relationship exists between academics' understanding of the changes that occurred within the higher education sector and academic position or level held within the University. The discussion is further developed in Chapter 12 which includes a discussion on academics' level of understanding of the changes and the degree of positivity or negativity displayed by them toward the changes overall.

7.3.1 Factors and definitions

Nine major factors were identified from the responses of academics as having impacted on decisions to bring about radical change within the higher education sector in Australia towards the late 1980s. These factors show similarities to those identified by Smart (1989), Bourke (1994), Miller (1995), Smyth (1995) and others in the theoretical considerations outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Consequently, the definition for each factor is constructed from those sources, and especially from the work of Smart (1989). The nine factors are as follows:

Factor 1: Economies of Scale

> The creation of a new Unified National System comprising a dramatically reduced number of tertiary institutions achieved through the amalgamation of smaller CAEs, either with each other or with universities (Smart, 1989). The assumption was that 'bigger is better' as the resultant amalgamations should result in fewer separate administrations.

This move effectively brought the binary system of universities and colleges of education to a close (Smart 1989).

Factor 2: Economic Efficiency

The creation of a higher education system in Australia more attuned to societal needs, especially the needs of the economy. Under Dawkins, the development of policy and practice that directed higher education to the service of the economy.

Points from the Green and White Papers include the need of the Australian economy to increase the annual output of graduates from 88,000 in 1986 to 125,000 by 2001 (Miller, 1995). As insufficient Government funds existed to resource this change, it therefore became necessary to seek supplementary funding. Institutions were required to implement substantial economies and improve efficiency (Smart, 1989).

Factor 3: Increased Accountability

Increase in the level of accountability within the higher education sector through the reform of institutional management by Government. Universities moved from a collegial model to a 'corporate' managerial mode of operation.

Whereas academic staff members were previously employed in tenured positions, enjoyed a high level of autonomy, and governance was via collegial committee structures, the changes to the higher education sector led to an increase in the number of casual or sessional staff.

Factor 4: Gains for Senior Management

Government encouraged amalgamations through financial and status incentives while sanctioning those institutions that remained below specified sizes.

Factor 5: Government Control

Government aimed to create a more centralist, regulated and federally controlled system.

Paradoxical tension created through advocacy of the deregulation of economic and academic activity on one hand with establishment of institutional autonomy through a more centralist, regulated and federally controlled system on the other (Smart 1989).

Individual institutions negotiate directly with Ministry for funding in terms of 'institutional teaching and research profiles' (Smart 1989).

Factor 6: Greater Access and Equity

To cater for the increasing demands on the system generated by the desire of Government to increase the number of graduates by the year 2001.

Factor 7: International Forces

Changes to bring Australia in line with other countries in the world. Desire for change associated with national shame due to lack of competitiveness when compared with other countries.

Factor 8: Unemployment Reduction

Change precipitated by the need of Government to reduce the unemployment rate in Australia.

Factor 9: College Agitation

Agitation for change by the Colleges of Advanced Education and teaching institutes, due to perceived artificiality of the system and desire for equal status with universities.

7.3.2 Strength of response

Table 7.1 provides an overview of the strength of response in regards to the nine factors considered instrumental in influencing change within the higher education sector. Responses are grouped according to academic level within the University. A few additional minor reasons were highlighted during the discussion. This simple calculation does not attempt to measure academics' depth of understanding for each dimension; that is, if an academic chose to discuss one element of the changes in considerable depth but did not identify further reasons for the changes impacting on higher education. The table merely records that the academic articulated an explanation during discussion in keeping with the definition of the factor.

Table 7.1: Understanding of the changes in higher education

Factors influencing changes in higher education	Number of responses					
	Level D	% (n=17)	Level C	% (n=24)	Level B	% (n=28)
F1: Economies of Scale	15	88	18	75	13	46
F2: Economic Efficiency	16	94	17	71	21	75
F3: Increased Accountability	7	41	10	42	11	39
F4: Gains for Senior Management	1	6	1	4	3	1
F5: Government Control	9	53	10	42	8	29
F6: Greater Access and Equity	3	18	4	17	9	32
F7: International Forces	12	71	4	17	4	14
F8: Solve Unemployment	4	24	6	25	6	21
F9: College Agitation	2	12	2	8	1	3

The qualitative analysis in this Chapter noted that academics generally regarded economic policies, under the umbrella of economic rationalism, as the most pervasive element affecting the higher education sector at the time. As shown in Table 7.1, the vast majority of academics identified Economies of Scale and Economic Efficiency as strong determinants of change, e.g., 16 of 17 academics (94%) at level D described the latter. Approximately 40% at each level (41% for D, 42% for C and 39% for B) identified Increased Accountability as providing an explanation for the changes, again emphasising the underlying financial incentive pervading discussion about the changes in higher education. Direct influence of government (Government Control) was a well represented factor, identified by about half of the level D and C interviewees, although less so by the level B academics (29%). An obvious distinction to emerge from this analysis is the extension of the discussion by level D academics into the international arena. A high proportion of level Ds (71%) were able to identify relevant changes that had occurred within higher education at the international level and were further able to extrapolate those developments to the Australian context; they were able to form links with wider international events and thereby were able to position the changes within the broader global context.

Table 7.2: Number of factors identified per academic

Total number of factors per academic	Level D (n=17)	Level C (n=24)	Level B (n=28)
7	2	0	1
6	1	1	0
5	4	4	1
4	4	4	6
3	3	4	6
2	2	7	8
1	1	4	6
Totals (factors x academics)	70	72	76

Table 7.2 totals the factors identified at each level. Only a relatively small (3 of 69) number of academics identified seven (of nine) factors, obviously a very high level response to the issue. All other academics identified a lesser number of factors. It could be assumed that those in higher positions would have more knowledge of the changes as a result of their position and length of service and greater opportunities to become involved in the management of the changes. Table 7.2 shows that there is indeed a higher degree of knowledge and willingness to articulate the changes amongst those at this level; with few exceptions the proportion of level D academics providing the answer at each line is greater than at other levels. Table 7.2 shows that there were 70 responses for 17 level D academics, 4.1 per academic; 72 responses for 24 level C academics, 3.0 per academic; and 76 responses for 28 level B academics, 2.7 per academic.

Reflective note

This chapter reports on the investigation into the nature of change in higher education as perceived by academics at the time of this study. The explanations provided by the academics in this research project support the observations of authors such as Smart (1989), Bourke (1994), Smyth (1995) and others in the identification of the significant changes that occurred during the period of radical change within higher education in Australia towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, while also advancing the discussion by uncovering the intricacies of those changes as perceived by academics themselves; a relatively neglected area of investigation in the research literature.

Academics identified the creation of the Unified National System as the most significant change to have occurred during the prescribed period under study in this research, a not unexpected result given its strategic importance to the organisational changes that impacted on those academics as a result of the processes of amalgamation and subsequent formation of the Australian Catholic University. Of importance also was the perception of academics that there had been an increase, rather than a decrease, in government control as a result of the changes, leaving little doubt that for them the autonomy and greater flexibility alluded to by government before the changes had not become a reality, at least within their workplace. Academics supported the findings presented by such authors as Meek and Goedegeburre (1989:22) that the deficiencies of the binary system were a contributing force driving the changes to the higher education sector. As noted previously, the Australian binary system had become a system 'at war with itself' and as such was made more 'conducive to dramatic change'. The prevalence of internal contradictions and inconsistencies within the system had created an environment for change well before the late 1980s. The challenges to the system emanated both from the college sector seeking to broaden horizons and gain higher status, and from a community, more generally, agitating for greater relevancy and sensitivity to its needs.

The desire of the Government to increase control over the affairs of universities through tighter management of public funding and to accommodate its economic and social goals was identified by academics as another force for change. Although economic rationalism was targeted as the 'villain of the piece' and regarded as the most pervasive ideological force underpinning the changes, few academics expanded this discussion, preferring to use the term more conveniently in the form of an aphorism. A possible explanation for this might be found in the lack of significant understanding by academics of the machinations behind the drive for change within the higher education sector, more particularly, those aspects related to economic priorities. Academics accepted the rhetoric prevalent at the time that considerable wastage existed within the sector, and that needed to be trimmed if higher education were to become more efficient.

In evaluating the changes, academics acknowledged that there had been specific gains from the changes to both staff and students, citing the now improved status of the predecessor institutions, certification of degrees, greater access for students and enhanced opportunities for research as a few of the perceived benefits. Conversely, there had been considerable loss. These included the loss of autonomy, increase in student numbers accompanied by a decline in quality and service due to insufficient staffing, and the dehumanising effect brought about by an overemphasis on economic imperatives; a trend that raised considerable concern. Given the religious orientation of the new University, the increased pressure from Government to link educative goals to economic outcomes to the detriment of disciplines within the humanities and social sciences was a worrying trend that needed to be challenged, especially if the University were to remain true to its mission.

The Government's desire to gain greater control over universities to bring them more in line with the expectations and economic needs of the nation, while simultaneously exerting pressure on universities to lessen their dependency on the public purse, generated considerable concern about the eventual outcome and future direction of higher education. Given the significant differences between the ability of the established and newly formed universities within the Unified National System to attract significant private funds, some academics speculated that, as the binary system had emerged from a challenged system, so might another new form of system stratification eventually emerge that reflects these differences between institutions.

Although all academics offered views regarding the impact of the changes at the national level few, except those in higher positions within the organisation, extended this discussion to include broader issues related to change at the international level. Those at level D identified a greater number of factors than those academics at levels C and B. A number of academics progressed quickly through the discussion of the general changes within higher education to focus more specifically on changes within the local context. It came as no surprise therefore to find that these academics had somewhat stronger opinions about the

impact of change at the new University where they were employed. These views are discussed later in this thesis.

CHAPTER 8: FORGING AN IDENTITY FOR THE NEW UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Chapter 7 outlined academics' perceptions and evaluations of the changes that occurred within the higher education sector towards the late 1980s. This chapter extends the discussion to focus more specifically on those academics' perceptions of the nature and impact of the organisational changes that occurred as a result of the amalgamation process, subsequent formation of the new University, and throughout the first five years of its operation. Further, it discusses the implications of these for the future direction of the institution.

With the changes came a firm commitment by academics in this study to the concept of the new University which, in turn, needed to forge a distinctive identity representative of the hopes and aspirations of its participating members. As highlighted in Chapter 3, individuals draw upon different models when creating their ideal images of organisation and, as Morgan (1997a) and others contend, the models selected will have implications for the approaches adopted by individuals when implementing or responding to organisational change. Further, the level of congruence between the preferred models of organisation adopted by those responsible for the management of the change, and those held by organisational members, will play an important role in the eventual achievement of successful organisational change, while also influencing the nature and level of intensity of the impact of those changes on individuals.

8.1 THE AMALGAMATION

Academics identified the amalgamation of the various colleges and institutes of education to form the Australian Catholic University as the most significant change to have occurred in their work environment over the past five years. Given the extent of the organisational changes required for this event, this result might well be expected. The amalgamation process linking eight campuses together over the three states and a territory could only be described as 'radical' and 'transformative' (Hage, 1980; Kanter et al., 1992; Nadler et al., 1995). This process required not only a complete overhaul of organisational structures and

internal mechanisms for the daily administration of its functions, but also created a need for academics to reconceptualise their professional roles and work to align with the emerging cultural shifts characteristic of the new University environment.

While academics differed in their acceptance of the manner in which the changes had been implemented (refer Chapter 9), there was general agreement that the formation of the University had been a positive outcome and, as expressed by respondent (46), the University now existed 'as an identity, a single coherent institution' and, more generally, this had 'benefits for Australia' (52).

Academics were of the view that the process of amalgamation remained the only realistic mechanism available for survival; had the colleges not proceeded to join with other Catholic institutions at the time, they probably would not have survived. As expressed by interviewee (11), this was clearly a case of 'become a University, follow directions or disintegrate and close down'. While alternative routes to achieve integration had been explored prior to the amalgamation, such as possible amalgamations with other existing universities, the decision to become a distinct Australian Catholic University was the final choice. As noted by Gascoigne (1993) and supported by senior academics at the University, the process appeared not to have occurred as a result of 'any groundswell within the Catholic Church', although clearly it was believed 'the need was there in modern intellectual debate, as a balance to the post modern movement and intellectual pluralism by providing traditional views in regard to reasoning and values, and so on' (25). As respondent (25) reflects, the new University:

> 'had only developed because of that pressure from the government, because there were a few individuals (names excluded)...felt the time had come, that the window of opportunity was there, because they were able to persuade the bishops that this was viable and worthwhile and because, particularly in the case of ACU, the existing infrastructure of well developed, well organised, efficient and hard working colleges of education were there, which could be brought together to form a strong base if you like and, probably more than that, for the development of a Catholic University'.

Academics argued that had the colleges been left to fend for themselves, they ran the risk of being completely absorbed into existing universities within the same state or territory and so losing their identities. Therefore the decision to amalgamate was as much pragmatic as ideological, a point highlighted by Gascoigne (1993), and of necessity to satisfy the government's criteria regarding size. The failure of each individual college to meet the required student population size, and the lack of surety that student numbers would increase dramatically in the near future, had left the colleges with no alternative but to amalgamate if they hoped to remain operational. Thus, although the strong desire to maintain a Catholic perspective in the higher education sector was a driving force in the surge to establish a Catholic university, the need to fulfil the student numbers requirement provided the impetus for change. As respondents (56) and (7) highlight:

> 'We were really guided or moved by higher forces...universities were amalgamating right across the board. We barely met the criteria of having 5000 students to become a university even if we amalgamated all of the eight campuses' (56).

> 'I think the Catholic Church was desperate to have a tertiary Catholic institution. The campus infrastructure was there and in order for it to be perceived as a university it only needed the numbers. So the numbers came from combining all those different campuses; they got about 9000 students' (7).

(Note: The student numbers were 7500 in Year 1 (1991) and 8285 in 1992).

The importance of enhanced institutional status was also a consideration in the decision to amalgamate, and essential if the Catholic colleges were to remain competitive in the future. As respondent (24) reflects: 'anything now that carries the name of Teacher Training College would not attract any students. In order to attract students, one needs to be called a university'.

Previously, the colleges outside each state and territory had little call to work together organisationally, and had rarely done so, but through the process of amalgamation the four colleges, comprising eight campuses with distinctly different histories and cultures, collided 'like stepchildren brought together in a family' (11), each with its own ideological framework. Yet the initial

amalgamation to form the University proceeded relatively smoothly with a 'minimum of bloodletting' (14). The differences between state-based structures created some difficulties, however, especially in regard to departmental structures, as respondent (14) highlights:

> 'A problem in Victoria is that there are three campuses with departments introduced under the university structure. These departments are across all campuses and therefore comprised many people who had not met before'.

Further changes including the introduction of faculties, appointment of deans and professors, the enterprise bargaining process, the impact of new technology, the development of a research culture and the need for each individual to develop expertise as a lecturer 'rather than being a general dog's body' (56); all proved to be liberating for some academics, while frightening for others as will be shown later in this thesis. As expressed by interviewee (4), the transformation of the colleges into the University had, after the 'initial honeymoon period' actually 'introduced much uncertainty and anxiety into the workplace: uncertainty about justice, equity and human rights; uncertainties about positions such as the newly created Head of Department positions; and uncertainties about selecting the most suitable department in which to work'. As a result of the amalgamation process 'eight little groups of people who had probably never worked together and may only have met occasionally at conferences' (11) suddenly found they were required to do so. This, interviewee (11) suggests, 'may or may not work'.

8.2   SETTING THE DIRECTION

> 'What the future of the university will be, as with all questions about the future, is unknown. While historical forces will dramatically change the current university, there are still choices to be made as to the shape of future universities' (Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000:13).

In his Inaugural address at the Sydney Town Hall, April 23, 1992, Cardinal Clancy, posed two important questions to those present at the ceremony: What is the role and the justification of a Catholic university in Australia in these closing years of the second millennium? (and) What can it hope to contribute, and how? (ACU Chronicle, 1992).

In response to these questions, Cardinal Clancy highlighted, among other matters, the legitimacy of the Church's involvement with universities, citing its historical interest and participation in the foundation and work of universities, including the founding of the first great universities in the Middle Ages: Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Bologna and others (Hesburgh, 1994:1). The enthusiasm to recreate the great Catholic universities and influence of the past stems from a desire to see the twentieth century, and the next millennium, recover from the losses experienced during the violent rupture that occurred in the years following the Reformation and, especially the French Revolution.

Hesburgh (1994) argues that while the comeback in Australia may have begun with Notre Dame, (WA), Catholic universities are now being born into a much different environment than applied in the Middle Ages and 'the university as an institution has developed in modern times into a different reality from what it was, even a century ago, when Cardinal Newman wrote the classic The Idea of a University' (p.2). Although there are important fundamental principles in Newman's Idea, his writings are about 'a completely different kind of university in a completely different kind of world' (p.3).

Some might regard the idea of a Catholic University as a contradiction in terms (George Bernard Shaw cited in Hesburgh, 1994:4). Cardinal Clancy, however, in his Inauguration address, argues that while 'every Catholic University should be identified by its Catholic ideals, principles and attitudes and its commitment to the Catholic tradition' the Apostolic Constitution of Catholic Universities clearly states:

> 'A Catholic University possesses the autonomy necessary to develop its distinct identity, and pursue its proper mission. Freedom in research and teaching is recognised and respected according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good' (General Norms, 2,5 in ACU Chronicle 1992:2).

The Catholic University framework in which academic endeavours should be pursued will necessarily comprise one that teaches and conducts research in an open manner in any or all of the human disciplines, but this is done with the

'discreet guidance of divine revelation' (Clancy, 1992). As such, it therefore has at least a 'qualitative contribution to make in every branch of learning and in all cultural progress' (ibid., p.2).

In addition, the University's commitment to the service of humankind and its role in contributing to the betterment of a new world order, and improving social justice for all were essential elements in the ethos and direction of the new University. In the study of serious contemporary problems, Cardinal Clancy argues the University should focus on:

> 'the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing of the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community'(Clancy, 1992:2).

Cardinal Clancy refutes the claim that 'the establishment of a Catholic university reflects a ghetto mentality and is designed to entrench a Catholic sub-culture in the community', arguing instead that ideas and Catholic convictions must be able to stand the rigor of public scrutiny by 'scholars of every academic and ideological background' (ibid., p.2).

The message and direction of the University is made clear in the words and emphasis of the ACU Mission Statement which emphasises 'its commitment to foster teaching, research, and scholarship in its widest and richest sense in accordance with Christian principles and traditions, to value the human person as an individual of inestimable worth and dignity, and to enrich the Australian culture by serving the local and world community by making scholarly and creative contributions to the arts and sciences, technology, the professions, commerce and public service. Its doors were to be open to persons of other churches and beliefs so comprising a community characterised by a spirit of freedom, charity and ecumenism' (adapted from ACU Faculty Education Handbook, 1999).

While the service offered at ACU is open to all without exception, it is the Christian vision and values according to the Catholic tradition that underpin the

philosophy and orientation of this new University. This emphasis is further made clear in the first object of the University:

> To establish, operate, maintain and promote as part of the mission of the Roman Catholic Church, the Australian Catholic University ("the university") in accordance with the beliefs, traditions, practices and canonical legislation of the Roman Catholic Church, and by doing so to promote culture and the development of the human person' (ACU 1 Quality Portfolio, 1994).

Graduates formed in such an atmosphere, Archbishop Little (1992) argues, should serve Australian society well.

8.3   THE ROLE OF A UNIVERSITY

Academics' primary responses regarding the nature and role of a university are set out in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1:   The role of universities in society

Primary response	No.	%
Centre of learning directed toward betterment of society	16	23
Repository of knowledge	15	22
Critique society	14	20
Career training	10	14
Centre of research	9	13
Instrument of social change	1	2
Other	4	6
Total	**69**	**100**

The results reveal some similarities to those categories identified by Trowler (1998) as outlined in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Some 22% (15 of 69) of academics interviewed in this study believed universities have an important role to play as repositories of knowledge in and through which individuals are able to pursue knowledge for knowledge sake. From this perspective, universities are about 'pursuing, sharing, extending and passing on knowledge to others' (62). The business of universities is to generate 'thinking, reasoning, discovering' in order to 'improve humankind' (62); the role therefore is 'incredibly important' (62).

> 'Universities provide the great liberal education, and the expansion
> of the mind, not necessarily linked to a job. And they carry out
> research that contributes to society's knowledge base' (54).

From this traditionalist perspective, academics believed universities to be distinguishable by their idea-generating capacity or as 'idea creating places'. Colleges of Advanced Education, on the other hand, are distinguishable by their concern with 'idea delivery'. Traditional universities should be places where 'students think, evaluate and assess ideas for the benefit of society' academic (69) argued, and as such should be 'centres for research' (69); a traditionalist sentiment supported by 13% (9 of 69) of those academics interviewed.

From a progressivist perspective, a significant number of academics (23%, 16 of 69) believed universities should be centres of learning with the expressed purpose being the 'betterment of society'. In this environment, universities should aim to:

> 'bring humans to their full potential by creating opportunities for
> learning. We must nurture and develop that potential, recognise that
> individuals are unique and have spiritual needs (not necessarily
> religious)' (49).

Academics holding this perspective believed these to be the needs that should be addressed by universities. The university should be a place of learning, of 'excellence', and developed on egalitarian principles in which it is open to all, rather than only for an elite percentage of the population; 'people on pensions should be able to attend, not just scholars' argued respondent (50).

> 'Universities are places of learning. We provide resources to
> facilitate learning in an open way. The students (of all ages) are
> allowed to think through the issues that affect their future life, to sit
> in the library and study books (not just photocopy a few pages and
> disappear), to join clubs and societies to discuss major issues in life'
> (67).

A further 21% (14 of 69) of academics held the view that the role of a university should be to critique society; or as respondent (56) explains, the university: 'should be a bit of a leaven, ...be able to critique society, ...be the conscience of society' or as described by another 'to be an irritant ...to irritate people into thinking as opposed to just accepting the status quo'. These academics believed

that through this critique, society is able 'to develop a sense of balance and direction' (56).

Only 14% (10 of 69) of academics regarded the role of the university to be that of a training institution with the specific purpose of offering courses that are clearly linked to vocational outcomes, that is, in Trowler's terms, the adoption of an Enterprise perspective. Some academics did believe, however, that universities should be responsible for the professional education of those moving into 'key roles in society such as nursing, teaching and medicine' (54). Universities should be 'places for critical learning, for learning about life and about a particular profession' (48), and given that workplace demands on professionals had increased dramatically over recent years, there was an ever-increasing development, as highlighted by respondent (48), that necessitated 'even nurses to be critical thinkers now'.

Whereas once the concern of universities was to produce educated gentlemen, some academics believed the continuing pressure to align universities more closely with the economy of the country, had led to a modification in the role of universities to a position where they were now required to 'assist in research, and to help develop new products' (1). This was a more pragmatic approach than before, but inevitable, some academics argued, due to the processes of 'globalisation and the comparisons that are made from one country to another' (1). A number of other minor categories were identified. Only 2% of academics identified universities as instruments of social change as conceptualised by Trowler (1998).

8.4   THE ROLE OF THE NEW UNIVERSITY

Symbolic interactionism holds that individuals bring to any situation differing perspectives that guide their perceptions and interpretations of that situation or event, including views about the nature and development of organisations. Accompanying these perspectives are certain biases, assumptions, value judgements and ideas that both limit the individuals' ability to 'capture the whole of physical reality' (Charon, 2001:5) yet are still highly important in that they create an opportunity for individuals to order and make sense of their world.

Difficulties arise in the comparison of perspectives and when individuals become overly wedded to the view that 'my perspective is better than yours' (ibid., p.9).

While the preceding section of this chapter outlined academics' perspectives regarding the nature and role of universities more generally, this section provides an analysis of academics' perspectives regarding the specific nature, role and future direction of the new University. Refer Table 8.2 which summarises the primary responses; a wide range of responses was given. The differences identified provide a framework through which to interpret academics' personal visions for the growth and development of the new University and how it might best realise its mission in the local, national and international community. Academics' perspectives differed in their hopes and aspirations for the new University, the manner in which the University might contribute to society, the means through which the University ethos might best become recognisable, and how it might establish itself as a reputable institution.

Table 8.2: Future direction of the University

Primary Response	No.	%
Niche market, specialisation, promote difference	14	21
Promote Catholic identity	14	21
Nurturing ACU reputation of personal support, i.e., staff- student focus	6	9
Promote national and international identity	6	9
Research scholarship focus	5	8
Flatter organisational structures	3	5
Community service orientation	3	5
Increased use of information technology	3	4
Promote Christian perspective on social justice issues	3	4
Continue as is, consolidate and limit expansion	3	4
Teaching excellence	3	4
Less conservatism	2	2
Traditional faculties	1	1
Greater equality, i.e., gender issues such as promotions for women	1	1
Emphasis on growth, expansion, outreach	1	1
Balance between teaching and research priorities	1	1
Total	**69**	**100**

8.4.1 Maintaining links to the past

The need for the newly formed organisation to be securely rooted in the successful practices of the past was a common thread to emerge from the responses of many academics within the University. From this perspective, the new University should be built upon the excellent work established over the years in nursing and education from the time when historically the 'nuns introduced nursing to this country' (60) and there existed strong links between the Catholic Church and schools. Any new development, it was generally considered, should be seen as a continuance and strengthening of those practices and emphases that had been highly valued in the previous model of organisation, that is, the teachers' college model. From this perspective, the strength of the new University emerges from its 'special history of being a small institution providing relatively high quality teaching, links with the schools, personal attention to students, and an informed Christian or Catholic perspective and service to the community' (4). This sentiment was expressed by six academics (9%).

This 'special history' emanated from the Schools of Education at the campuses of the former constituent colleges of the University and similarly in Nursing, with its relationship to the hospitals, and also through social welfare programs with links to counselling and welfare agencies. Academics holding to this historical view argued for a University that not only continued to develop along similar lines to the predecessor college model, but one that also readily acknowledged these areas of activity as highly worthwhile. This was in preference to a model that pursued 'excursions into becoming either an ivory tower university (bookish, academic, research, scholarship, publishing) or an entrepreneurial university' (4). Maintenance of the 'core areas of teaching, nursing and theology' (11) was essential, these academics believed, especially as the new University is 'full of dedicated staff who are good at teaching' (5).

8.4.2 Strengthening the service orientation

In keeping with the espoused values and ethos of the previous colleges where the reputation for service and care were clearly well established, many academics held the view that the new University should remain distinguishable for its strong

Christian or humanist orientation in which service to others affords a high priority. From this perspective, the University should be known for not only its ability to provide a service to the community, but also for the quality of that service. In achieving this, the University would be contributing substantially to the betterment of society. As an integral part of the society in which it resides, these academics believed the University should aim to strengthen its presence and contribution in the community and, in effect, to be able to 'give back the public's money' (4). This approach would assist in breaking down barriers between the work of the University and the community, and, effectively help to 'break us out from the ivory tower and back into serving the community' (8). The service orientation is covered by several of the responses listed in Table 8.2.

While maintaining the focus on nursing and education, other service-oriented areas for consideration in the new University included social work, Christian anthropology (which is regarded as diametrically opposed to economic rationalism) and the implementation of social justice goals and principles. This was regarded as a logical step, given the highly developed history of the Catholic Church's involvement in the area of social justice, and therefore a key element of Catholic teaching. These were worthy considerations and the Church, it was argued, should strive to 'challenge society and to make a real contribution, rather than concentrating on itself as an image-maker' (20).

> 'The role should be in the area of social change. This is a unique university if it offers a spiritual base, a caring base, so we can pass on these values not only to the students but to the wider society' (64).

From this perspective, the University's contribution is in its ability to 'challenge society to show concern and compassion for the disadvantaged' (45) and the value of its research endeavours would be evidenced in its focus on social justice issues, helping underdeveloped countries, and through work aimed at achieving harmony and cooperation in society. The University should work diligently to cater for those individuals for whom the mainstream system has not been kind, and should offer assistance to 'those experiencing learning difficulties, not just those with a high TER score' (47) and 'we should offer opportunities to

aboriginals, to refugees and others who would not otherwise get to university' (32). The University should aim to become the 'university of the oppressed or the disadvantaged' (53), encouraging 'underprivileged students, refugees and aboriginals' (32), while also acknowledging it has 'obligations to the multi-cultural society in Australia', argues respondent (43). The new University should demonstrate that it cares about people as individuals, particularly those who are going to educate children in schools or care for patients in hospitals; a philosophy, one academic argued, 'not greatly in evidence at the time of the changes' (4).

The power of education therefore becomes the tool through which to assist in 'creating tolerance, compassion, confidence, in developing self-esteem, in creating opportunities, solving unemployment, providing healing for those finding living in society difficult so they are more productive economically and socially and in their personal relationships' (45). Courses could be offered in community education some suggested; for example, 'helping with classes in prisons, hospitals, social welfare centres' (13), and through the provision of a 'caring environment, a good education and a grounding in community and moral values' (45), the newly formed University could hope to influence the development of a better society; without such morals, it is argued, 'society becomes disorganised' (45).

8.4.3   Extending the ethical dimension

Some five academics (8%, refer Table 8.2) believed the University could play a role in 'presenting a Christian ethos to research areas that directly affect society; for example, in psychology, sociology and the social sciences; but not religion and theology' (69). Focusing on the development of courses with a strong emphasis on ethics, the University had the potential, these academics believed, to become well known and credible, especially in the areas of business, legal and health ethics. Although the inclusion of medical ethics was regarded as a possibility, some believed the 'very conservative interpretation of medical ethics by the Church' (18) would create barriers to future development in this area. Any new developments must not be 'handled from a doctrinal perspective but through

questioning and continuing the dialogue' (16) to ensure the University does not lapse into becoming 'a sectarian group operating remotely from the reality of the world' (16). Through engagement in areas such as social ethics, and by working with 'minority interest groups such as aboriginal education or in ethnic music' (27), the University could make a real difference to society. It was unfortunate, some believed, that the University appeared reticent to address or speak publicly on issues such as improvements in justice and human rights for refugees, as evidenced in the specific example of the detention centre at Port Hedland 'where a local priest had been advocating change for some years' (18). Society must first acknowledge human suffering and then respond to it, and from this perspective the new University was in an ideal position to contribute in this manner; it should be demonstrating to the public 'what social justice is all about' (6).

8.4.4   Promoting the religious dimension

For others, the essential distinguishing characteristic that would ensure the new University stood apart from others resided in its ability to create an image as a strong academic institution committed to the pursuit of truth and development of the spiritual aspects of life. From this perspective, the new University should aim to make an impact 'as a Catholic University, promoting a Christian outlook on life and ... to do certain things well' (44); without a spiritual dimension to its ongoing life, these academics argued, the University lacked a 'reason to be' as students are able to obtain a degree 'at other universities' (12).

> 'I think a Catholic University can provide a very important contribution, together with the great liberal secular tradition, in so far as it is drawing on a concrete tradition of meaning and value in the Christian Gospel ...and attempting to enlighten human reason and human responses as much as it can on the basis of that tradition. So I think that the Catholic tradition has that kind of openness, which can do that and make a great basis for a university' (25).

For some fourteen academics (21% of 69) interviewed, the development of a specific Catholic identity was an essential element in the future growth of the new University and its special qualities would be evidenced in the way it operates and in the manner in which it treats students, staff, and the person in the street, as each is important as a unique individual. The University should stand for the

values behind the label Catholic, some argued, and in order to achieve this, it was imperative that both 'the staff and students respect these values' (25). In contrast to this view, some believed the University might have greater influence in the community 'without the Catholic emphasis' (47), given the public scandals associated with the Catholic Church at the time of interviews. Unfortunately, the lack of adequate public relations to dispel the myths had exacerbated difficulties, and the inclusion of the word Catholic in the name of the University was problematic for some as the public perception is that 'we only train priests and nuns' (50).

By shaping the new University towards the development of a distinctly Catholic emphasis its 'uniqueness' would be guaranteed, as other universities would be unlikely to 'pursue that line' (41). Although some believed the University could not hope to have a major impact on the world scene, it could, however, make a contribution 'to a great tradition of Catholic universities, particularly in Italy and the USA as well as elsewhere' (69). This would allow the University to access the Catholic worldwide network while ensuring it 'does not ally itself only with them' (51). Enhanced communication with the wider, international, Catholic community of scholars would allow opportunities for the University to present the 'human face' of Catholicism rather than the 'traditional institutional face' (56). Indeed, some academics felt sufficiently confident to suggest that a high level of scholarship already existed at the University in the areas of theology, philosophy, and educational leadership; this was not only recognised internationally but also provided the leadership necessary for the University to develop internationally. Academics believed it essential the University continue to improve its international academic performance through publications and the development of expertise in particular fields. This process could be assisted, some academics believed, by importing international scholars to the University to assume a mentoring role while working on research projects alongside local staff, so that they might become better and more widely known for their publications.

Some academics believed the new University had a significant role to play through its contributions to contemporary theology, given most of the recent writing in theology emanates from the USA. An Australian contribution was

needed, it was argued, 'to help enrich the whole' (24). Through the excellence of its programs, especially those that followed the principles of social justice, and by providing leadership in the areas of theology and religious studies, academics believed the new University could hope to bring a particular perspective to the Church and Australian society. It could offer 'a vision of life based on Christian faith and Catholic tradition' (58).

The new University had the potential to maximise 'fascinating opportunities' for growth and development in the South Pacific area, and in SE Asian countries, where it is not taken for granted that universities should be secular. From a Catholic perspective, the University was thought to have a possible competitive edge in offering theology and religious education in the Philippines or Indonesia, as essentially, commented respondent (25), 'these countries are religious cultures' and, for the new University, 'that is significant'. From this perspective, religious education becomes the ideal niche, along with contributions from the areas of theology and scripture. With the establishment of a Faculty of Theology, communication with colleagues in the national and international context would be facilitated.

Others believed the new University 'should have its unique values recognised in the school system; values such as family life are important to society' (17). The new University should contribute something based on the uniqueness of Christianity and the 'Christian ethos should be apparent in behaviours and in the work done by the campuses' (26). By ensuring that a Christian perspective permeated all matters related to 'going about one's business' (23), including the development of courses, the new University would be distinctive among universities and differ significantly from them. Respondent (23) believed it should 'contribute to the dialogue between the secular and the sacred, between Christian beliefs and other faiths, other practices, and other happenings in the world' (23). The attraction and uniqueness of the new University should come from its regard for 'all things spiritual', through the development of its 'spirituality' and acknowledgement of the 'spiritual in the person' (6). The mere fact that a student might choose to enrol at the new University was sufficient reason, argued some, to offer courses in religion.

'If they have chosen to come to a Catholic University, we shouldn't be shy about presenting them with religious issues, perhaps a compulsory course in Religion and Philosophy. This need not be specifically Catholic, as that is only part of the Christian tradition' (44).

Some academics held concerns the University did not appear to be moving strongly enough in this direction, to which it was naturally suited they argued, and was in fact losing opportunities to be different in this way.

'Even nursing is handled no differently to what QUT or Sydney University are doing. ...Yet it could reflect the presence of Christ. The schools, not the parishes, are the most evident expression of the Catholic Church. Therefore teaching is a special ministry and a mission; if it is not seen in this way it will only duplicate the State school system' (38).

Some academics believed a small contribution to encouraging or strengthening the religious dimension of the University might be dealt with through the expectation that all students engage in a 'reflective type of unit, focused on philosophy, ethics, theology or religion studies and something similar' (16); this would be something unique to this University.

Distinctions were also drawn between the application of care and concern and that of a Catholic orientation towards the work of the University. As respondent (67) highlights, the University does not differ from other universities in regard to areas such as care and concern; 'to think otherwise is to denigrate the other universities' (67). The difference, it is argued, emanates from its Catholic orientation and is evidenced through the way in which the University addresses issues, in its emphasis on the Humanities such as the arts, teaching, theology, nursing, in its service role nationally with aboriginal communities and internationally with communities less well off' (67).

The service role is reflected in Table 8.2 in a number of items, including community service orientation (3 academics, 5%), a Christian perspective on social justice issues (3, 4%) and gender issues (1, 1%).

8.5   GAINING THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Facing an increasingly competitive environment in higher education, many academics expressed the view that the new University must work diligently to develop specialised areas that provide opportunities to promote its 'difference' if it hopes to survive and prosper; 'trying to be a traditional university is a major misdirection...as it does not have the size, experience or finances. It is trying to play in the game with the rules laid down by the established universities' (26). The University must be different from the traditional universities, it was argued, as it cannot compete against them nor can it match their experience, and indeed, the traditional universities are themselves 'now evolving into more flexible institutions' (42). Obtaining the competitive edge on other universities would come through the University's decision to pursue 'what it is good at' (67) and, if not distracted from this goal, it could 'leave the rest behind' (67).

8.5.1   Developing niche markets

The new University can only hope to be viable, some argued, 'if it offers courses that differ significantly from other universities' (3). Specialisation was believed to be essential for the future development of the University as this should work to 'encourage quality' (18). Of those academics interviewed, 21% (14 of 69, refer Table 8.2) argued that the new University should strenuously pursue opportunities to create niche markets; in particular, the development of special courses that provide a service to the community and strengthen the service orientation of the University. As the University has 'good teachers, nurses and social workers' (7) it should seriously consider offering courses in such areas as community education, health care and social work, or in 'palliative care and rehabilitation' (29). Locally, the University could 'lead the way in areas such as family studies as the community is looking for answers about the relevance of families to society at large and to the crime rate' (15). In this way, the University would be able to set itself apart from others, provide a service to the community and add value to its uniqueness.

Although the establishment of niche markets was readily accepted as a means to ensure the ongoing development of the University, some academics cautioned at

pursuing this direction at the expense of the traditionally recognised 'bread and butter' courses such as teaching, which had served the University well in the past. As respondent (12) highlights, it still remains 'critically important that we educate teachers properly'. In order to 'maintain our viability we need to stop proliferating courses and rather consolidate the courses we have got already' (20), or as respondent (43) urges, no matter what the direction, 'the University should build slowly and consolidate its strengths' (43).

8.5.2 Maintaining strengths

The University should concentrate seriously on its traditional core areas of teaching and nursing (and possibly theology), it was argued, and not attempt to emulate nor compete with the more established universities in research or other new fields of endeavour (highlighted by 3 staff, 4%). Academics cited, as reasons for this view, insufficient resources, faculties, staff and lack of research experience and expertise accumulated over fifty years or more. Describing the proposal to move into clinical psychology as an example, respondent (21) explains that while a considerable number of academic staff held qualifications in the area of psychology, only one is qualified in clinical psychology. As a consequence, questions arise regarding resources, the construction of laboratories, accreditation from the governing society (Aust. Psychological Society) and, more importantly, the possible necessity for staff reductions, 'as half of the other staff must be removed in order to fund it' (21). Continuing this argument, respondent (21) believed the University would be better served by utilising already highly qualified educational psychologists on staff to develop excellent programs for schools in such areas as counselling; this, it was argued, would constitute a far more productive use of resources.

The move to pursue courses in areas such as Business provided further evidence of inappropriate decisions regarding the future direction of the University, as there appeared a proliferation of similar courses 'being offered in many other universities' (13). Some argued that the inclusion of business ethics in any such development would signify a different approach and work effectively to rectify this problem. Others were less supportive in their comments, however, and

considered business ethics to be irrelevant. While the new University should contribute in the areas of education, philosophy, the arts, business and religion, some believed that business ethics would be 'taught better elsewhere' (12).

By concentrating on the already established areas of excellence, such as Education and Nursing, and by readily accepting that the University cannot 'do everything properly', it could well develop to become recognised as 'a boutique university' (67). The enthusiasm of some academics was somewhat tempered by concerns the University had missed opportunities to develop its own individuality by merely copying or mimicking other traditional universities; it had apparently 'fallen into the mould of saying a traditional university is the only way to go' (28). Respondent (34) laments:

> 'We have squandered our right to be different in the rush to walk like an established university; whereas we should have looked at what we were good at, especially education and nursing, and encouraged that' (34).

There were few strong arguments for the creation of traditional faculties, such as engineering, medicine and possibly theology, found in the more established universities. Arguments for such developments saw merit in the provision of increased student options, and an enhanced image for the new University to attract 'many potential students who would want to come and study' (52). Theology, although obviously important to this University, 'should not be established as a separate faculty, in competition with other theological institutions, but should be available as elective subjects in course curricula perhaps within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences' (25).

For those academics less patient, more radical measures were needed. Rather than attempting to emulate the more established universities in Australia, the University would be better placed if it aimed to develop its undergraduate programs, and possibly a number of post-graduate programs, along the lines of a high quality, small, liberal arts university, similar to the American model. By following this approach, the University would be able to concentrate its resources more fully on achieving that which it does well, as well as acting as a 'feeder university to the larger universities for research doctorates' (21). This point was

well illustrated by reference to the small Catholic universities in the USA, including several Jesuit universities, that are well recognised for their impact on the local community yet are not known internationally like the large universities; namely, Stanford, Berkeley, and Harvard. These universities were regarded as comprising part of a 'different league altogether' (21).

8.5.3 Reflecting quality through students

While acknowledging the importance of both the traditional teaching and research roles in the future development of the University, some academics believed the most significant impact would be reflected in the 'quality' of the graduates it produces. These should be 'high quality graduates, leaders in religious development and in services to the community within the various dioceses that it services' (28). From this perspective, specialisation in a few well-chosen areas should lead to an increase in the number of 'quality' programs available at the University and this, in turn, would lead to the development of 'quality' students. These graduates would then be well equipped to contribute to, and influence, the community in which they work, and ultimately assist in improving society. While the level of influence might vary, it could be expected that some graduates might even rise to form part of the international community where they would 'take their place as scholars in that wider community' (62) and, more specifically, may move into positions where they might even be able to 'influence the Church' (62).

8.6 DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE: THE WAY AHEAD

Academics expressed mixed feelings regarding the ability of the University to eventually achieve 'top' status among other universities and presented differing views on how this might be achieved. Further, the word 'top' proved somewhat problematic and open to numerous interpretations. Optimistically, some academics argued that the new University was already a top university and cited its ability to fulfil its full-time student rate as a worthy achievement. The ability to read Greek, Hebrew and Latin languages placed the University in the 'top' category for a few specific areas, and this was supported, some argued, by the presence of some top staff and top students. The Faculties of Education and Nursing were also 'praiseworthy' and the 'student employment rate higher in

these areas than any other university in Australia' (63). The important question, one academic argued, was not to be critical of others, but rather to ask 'How do I make this place a top university?' (56). This necessitated a proactive stance on the part of academics and an attitude that called for an acceptance that: 'I can't change you (organisation or others) I can only change myself' (56).

Building on its history, the new University could become a top teaching university, it was believed, as this was its strength. Yet while the current University promotional material emphasised the small, intimate campuses, small group teaching, and personal caring, the reality appeared somewhat different in that 'the class sizes are now ridiculously large, the personal contact is less than before and casual staff do most of the teaching' (42). This had produced an unfortunate outcome where the new University was now offering 'the same as in the other universities but done poorly' (42). In this regard, it had lost an opportunity to capitalise on its main advantage. From a more positive stance, the small size of the University ensured it provided 'a personal service' (33), and, at least, respondent (33) explains, 'the students are well known to each other and receive a well-rounded education. These are quality students' (33).

To achieve the status of a 'top' university, others argued, the new University needed to grow in expertise, in the quality of its staff and courses, and its research base must develop into one that is world renowned, as 'research is so central to the profile of a university' (58). If the University begins to attract top researchers, it could arguably 'become a top university in time, perhaps in twenty years' (23). A lack of funding was a serious difficulty confronting the University and this had implications for staffing and the numbers available to engage in research activities; as respondent (23) highlights:

> 'At Sydney University there are sixty research mathematicians but our University has only two. Perhaps there is more hope in theology, but theology is not going to place the University in the top few Australian universities'.

A massive injection of funding was needed if the University were to become a top university, but this would not occur with the current funding based on an approach described by respondent (69) 'like cake stalls on Saturday morning'.

Academics believed there was a need for better strategies to increase funding in order to attract better staff. The comments of respondent (33) highlight this need and point to a growing acceptance of the need for increased private funding to supplement government funds.

> 'There has to be a more sensible approach to raising money. Yes, you will get some from the government, but relying on charity and donations is not going to work now. We will have to be entrepreneurial and raise the money in commercial ways. Otherwise the place will grind to a halt' (33).

For these reasons, there appeared a strong need for the University to further improve the quality it possessed, especially in its courses and reputation. Rather than offering a 'supermarket of courses' (63), the University must move to specialise. Centres of excellence at other universities develop over decades and as yet, some argued the University did not have the brilliant staff needed to improve the University's status. At present, the foundation of the new University comprised many individuals 'who were hired as teachers rather than researchers' (25). In order to develop this expertise, some believed the University would need to look outside its boundaries for 'top' people in their respective fields in order to become a 'top' university. This would help to place the University 'on the map' (47). Others argued that the concept of becoming a 'top' university was not an essential element in the future development of the University; for these academics, the University should concentrate on becoming 'excellent in terms of our own history. We are good but in infancy (25).

> 'We are developing a name for ourselves, we are creating an identity but there needs to be much more nurturing of the academic staff. We need the time to develop the student research profile. We won't become a top university while we are so small, although we do have some excellent academic staff' (64).

Academics expressed strong support for the establishment of international links to other Catholic universities as a means to lift the status of the University (refer also 8.6.1); however, some expressed reservations, perhaps somewhat unkindly, that this would not occur 'while we have leaders who were only deputy principals at a primary school 25 years ago' (55). Others saw possibilities on a different level, arguing that links might be better established through the presence of high-

level academics, such as professors, at important meetings such as 'the Federation of Catholic Universities' (58). Establishing links such as these would ensure the new University 'does not become a backwater university tucked away in the eastern part of Australia' (63).

Although some argued the current University programs were too narrow to enable it to become a top university, it could still 'provide a unique service, be very person oriented and establish an international reputation through academics attending and presenting papers at major international conferences. Its views are those of the western Church and therefore are important internationally, as are its views on ethical behaviour' (39). More pessimistically, some academics believed the University could not become a top university while it continued to adopt a narrow interpretation of Catholicism, one that does not provide for 'diversity or student radicals, e.g., gay rights movements that are a normal group at other universities; in fact, such student groupings are discouraged at the University', argued respondent (4).

For others, the administration was a factor impeding the University's development as a 'top' university, and 'changes in attitude and restructuring would need to take place before we are to have a top university' (56). The University cannot become a top university it was argued, with the current lack of support for staff. 'Our strengths have been weakened, progress is slow and the length of time for decisions to be made is very frustrating. So the changes that need to be made aren't happening' (66).

Some saw opportunities for development as a 'top' university in the areas of 'open learning and community education with public workshops, especially in drama, and shows on television' (50). The University should be 'visible in shopping centres, and to run special interest summer schools and weekend workshops' (50). However, funding remained an issue, and unless addressed in the future, such programs would 'flounder for want of funds' (50).

The University had the potential to become a top university if it 'defined itself, and stuck to its strengths and national appeal' (42), but as it is only new this had

not yet happened. But the potential is there 'if it does define itself through research and intellectual leadership and public audience. ...The whole notion of definition is crucial' (54). The strength of the feeling towards the University developing its own niche and distinctive character was evidenced in the responses of many academics, and particularly in that of interviewee (51). As stated, the University should:

> 'dare to be different, to go against the tide of economic rationalism, to promote the humanities, to provide the interface between religion and other disciplines. These are our strengths. We should capitalise on them. Only by being selective can the University hope to be a top university in its field' (51).

8.6.1   Expanding horizons: Developing an international presence

Although only 9% (6 of 69, refer Table 8.2) of academics identified the establishment of an international profile as of major importance for the University, this need was generally regarded as important by most academics. Some believed the extent of this development would be dependent upon the University's ability to create a greater impact on the local environment first; until that time, they argued, its influence in the international arena would be minimal. Further, for the impact at the local level to be effective it would need to be well structured, carefully researched, useful and be accompanied by wisdom; only then 'might its influence radiate out into the wider community' (18). Academics expressed a strong belief that the University must be 'quite clear about its own role and where it is going before it can hope to share that in the international community' (28). The idea that the University could suddenly 'bound into the international realm' (18) was unrealistic, and the 'push to become part of international activities would only deplete the efficiency of what is being done well at the local level' (21).

For others, the potential for developing international links lies not through its scholarly endeavours, but in the maintenance of already established international projects, and through the contribution or service the University could offer to developing countries by providing assistance to those in need of specialist services. The links should not only exist to 'simply hand out degrees or

diplomas' (47), but to provide the type of assistance that enables the less developed countries 'to become independent' (47).

Another means by which the University might have an impact on the international arena was in accepting and catering for the educational needs of international students, especially in the provision of language assistance. International students from as far a field as Malaysia, Hong Kong, India and the Philippines sought enrolment at the University for a number of reasons, most notably because 'they had either met University staff and/or were aware of their reputation' (30). Students already enrolled at the University might also contribute to the development of an international presence, especially those who developed in their careers and rose to influential positions in society, such as the 'world champion athletes who are studying at ACU' (30). So the extension of the University into the international community would be enhanced, not only by the movement of students away from the University but also by those attracted to it.

A strong belief in the value of international experiences for staff and students to broaden their experience of the world had already resulted in the establishment of exchange programs with other universities such as Notre Dame in Western Australia, the nursing program in Hong Kong, links to Catholic universities in Japan, excursions to China, exchanges with Canadian students every year, and student field experiences in a range of diverse settings such as the Solomon Islands, the Sudan, and the UK. These programs were regarded as essential to the future development of the University and, from a service orientation, provided a practical means through which to impact the international scene rather than through more traditional endeavours, such as 'hoping someone will come along who will discover a new comet or write earth shattering work in Theology' (26). In this regard, the University was more likely to make a 'valued impact on a small, rather than large scale' (26) in the future.

8.7   EXPRESSING THE DISTINCTIVE SPIRIT OF PEOPLE AND PLACE

In earlier theoretical chapters it was noted that organisations become recognisable over time by the distinctive character, spirit or tone they develop and this creates

the framework through which organisational operations and individual endeavours are conducted (Senge, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Schein, 1992). As the new University works to establish itself, decisions become vital regarding the development of its uniqueness and characteristic ethos, and the image it hopes to portray to the wider community. This chapter section presents the findings of academics' responses to the question: 'How might the ethos of the new University differ from other universities?'

8.7.1 Links to the past

In an organisation that forms through the amalgamation of various constituent parts it is only natural that each will bring to the partnership its own traditions and cultural understandings. In the formation of the new University, the traditions that had developed from the distinctive campus histories cannot be discounted as the new form gradually takes shape. For some academics, the uniqueness of the University ethos could be traced back to its origins, that is, clusters of smaller groups based on religious orders that had led to the emphasis on individual contact and Christian values of caring and sharing. 'The Christian tradition is part of the ethos, Catholic second. That tradition is one of service to everyone. And openness. It is not a rigid, dogmatic institution' (14). The ethos must 'speak of values such as care, concern, putting others first, tolerance, support and understanding' (6); or, more succinctly: 'a University of integrity' (6).

Others believed the relevance of 'Catholic' could not be discounted in any consideration of the ethos of the University as it formed part of its name, but of importance was that the University aim to be Christian on 'a day to day basis in terms of the caring and kindness for students' (24). By strengthening this form of service, the new University would be distinguished from others through its endeavours to be more interested in helping students within an academic climate characterised by a friendliness and 'a sense of community' (44).

8.7.2 Ethos as community

As Kouzes and Posner (1993:129) stress, 'creating community requires promoting shared values and developing an appreciation for the value of working cooperatively and caring about one another'. Adopting this perspective, the

distinctive ethos comes through the 'respect for the students' (44), while respondent (66) expands the concept to embrace staff and students:

> 'The ethos is in support for the students and their problems. There have been instances where students have broken down in the class but the staff, or the overworked counsellor, have been able to help them. Amongst staff, spouses and other loved ones die and there is support; the other staff help cover the classes so the issue can be resolved. So the individual student or staff member is valued'.

In accepting the metaphor of organisations as community, individuals must be ready to take on the problems of others as their own and share responsibility for solving them cooperatively (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). In this way, the distinctive ethos should be apparent in the behaviours and the work done on the University campuses where it should be seen to be operating along Christian principles as evidenced in regard for the integrity of individuals, respect for clients and concern for people in the community. The need for a spiritual dimension to the life of the University was expressed strongly by academics and the Christian perspective must be 'nourished and nurtured' (23) at all times; it should be 'looked at seriously as much more can be done here' commented respondent (23).

Christian ideals should be integral to the developing ethos along with 'tolerance and honesty' commented respondent (42). The ethos should be manifested in issues such as justice, which should be regarded as a right 'not an issue to be fought over' (38). Unfortunately, argued some academics, there is now tension between academics and the administrative staff; Christian values are not apparent and 'the atmosphere is confrontational' (38). The essential characteristics of the ethos could be found in the Vatican statements, which emphasise ethical issues such as justice, the need for community, both participation and relational; that is, 'that we relate to others as people even though their views are different. People with different views should not be seen as opponents; they may be dissidents but not enemies' (38). This should be the approach in evidence at the new University, these academics believed, but unfortunately experiences in the development of policy and procedures had not followed these principles. An example is provided by interviewee (38) who highlights the difficulties

experienced while working on the development of the University's Mission Statement.

> 'The statement was handed down without consultation and therefore staff do not feel as though they own it; there was no participation. To effectively engage all in the process, there should be a contribution by stakeholders at all levels; and this should be the starting point for future directions' (38).

Furthermore, the University placed 'so much pressure on people, the opportunity for time and space is taken away' argued respondent (23). 'There is such a thing as the Sabbath. People need it for wholeness and therefore holiness' (23). The ethos is not Christian at the moment, respondent (29) commented, as the prevailing climate does not appear to place a high value on individuals, and 'the sense that people can be trusted' is lacking.

Some academics raised concerns the University was only trying to mimic other universities, rather than develop its own unique ethos. This was disappointing as the University had the opportunity to have an ideal ethos, it was argued, but this 'does not seem to be matched by the practice' (10). 'The caring ethos, associated with each campus when it existed as a teachers' college, seems to be diminishing' respondent (38) complained and this was largely due to the fact that 'it is now so much larger, and there is less time to be with the students' (38). Academics believed the caring side should be promoted, as students from other universities were envious of this environment. The 'counsellors are very supportive and caring and that comes through in the graduates' (66). 'Students come from other universities saying that they were just a number or a face but now people know who I am' (66). Yet, while some academics believed this form of caring was unique to the University, it was only prevalent at the 'lower levels' of the organisation, with little of the caring ethos 'coming from the hierarchy' (66). More cynically, one academic argued that not only was the system too hierarchical, but the University appeared to have an extra dimension imposed, 'a type of monastic ethos with God-given authority' (26). More positively,

> 'The University could have an ethos built around social issues, scholarship in religion and theology, around excellence in what it

does, around the notion of care for each other and a strong ethical base' (54).

8.7.3   Ethos as Catholic

The loss of a distinctive 'Catholic ethos' was regarded as a real possibility by some academics who feared it could 'easily be watered down' (44), although this concern was not widely shared as only three academics believed the new University would lose its Catholic identity in the future. Of concern, however, was that the University did not articulate or make sufficiently clear that it does have a stated ethos, which is closely allied to a particular Church tradition; it is this, some argued, that distinguishes it from other universities. From this perspective, the distinctive nature of the ethos is found in the subjects and disciplines accorded preference at the University, and, accordingly, these should reach back into the Catholic tradition, that is, 'it needs to be true to that tradition' (51). Yet accepting the tradition should not preclude the University's ability (via its academics) 'to critique the Catholic Church' (51).

The significant change in the power relationships brought about by the transfer of leadership from the religious orders, who had previously held responsibility for the sound management of the predecessor colleges, to 'lay hands' (29), had produced a 'subtle change that was going to make a big difference' (29) to the distinctive character of the University. The implicit authority afforded the nuns and priests in the previous culture would not readily be projected on to those coming in to the University from a lay background, as interviewee (29) explains:

> 'They will never have the authority that the Nuns had, simply because they are religious...somehow when a religious order runs a place in a Catholic world, they have the power that other people don't have'.

8.8   TOWARDS THE IDEAL UNIVERSITY

> 'All the world's a mirror, if you're ready to peer honestly at your own reflection'.
>
> Caroline Jones (1998:259)

By conceptualising the ideal, individuals become acutely aware of the deficiencies of their reality. Academics responded to the opportunity to create

their 'ideal' new University with considerable vigour and, in the process, provided insights into those aspects of organisation most highly valued.

Of those academics interviewed, a strong 42% of academics indicated a clear preference for three major organisational elements they believed to be integral to the concept of an ideal university, namely the elements of collegiality, improved resources, and strong religious orientation. Refer Table 8.3. Only 3% of academics responded that they would like the University to continue 'as is', providing a clear message to management that the majority of academics found the current organisational changes to be far from the 'ideal'. 6% of academics argued there was a need for stronger leadership. A number of other minor suggestions were offered to describe the characteristics of the ideal University including the need to retain traditional strengths and smallness of size.

Table 8.3:   The ideal university

Primary response	No. (n=69)	%
Collegial matters	12	17
Improved resources: staff, funding, computers	9	13
Religious orientation	8	12
Decentralised	7	10
Humanitarian focus: caring, social justice	5	7
Research establishment	5	7
Promotes learning	4	6
Stronger leadership	4	6
Small, specialised institution (niche market)	3	4
Maintain traditional strengths	2	3
Continue as is	2	3
Better gender balance	2	3
Other	6	9
Total	**69**	**100**

8.8.1   Spirit of collegiality

For 12 academics (17%) the importance of an organisational environment that encouraged full cooperation was essential and evidenced in 'open communication, mutual trust and sharing between staff' (14). This organisational model would be based on principles of collegiality with 'enthused and energetic

staff delivering through personal contact; a quality of university life appreciated and noticed by students' (34).

> 'The ideal university is one that facilitates open communication especially with people recognised as 'top' minds in the university in their respective fields. These 'top' minds would be people searching for the truth while at the same time being exemplars and leaders, both in their private lives as well as their public lives. In the ideal university there would be a spirit of debate and a spirit of community where the staff work together' (14).

In contrast to examples of previous mergers (e.g., Batt, 1975) the process of amalgamation was regarded as advantageous by many academics as it brought together colleagues from both within and across the various faculties of the University, and there now existed a larger pool of expertise available for collaborative enterprises, such as planning new courses and research. This was regarded as an improvement over the previous system where some campuses competed against, rather than cooperated with, each other. These changes had effectively worked to 'break down some of the divisionary, non-helpful, competitive type attitudes that existed previously' (16). The hope was that the disciplinary networks would strengthen and facilitate links with colleagues across all the states and territory, thus increasing 'the forum for dialogue' (16). Academics believed that as the University became more aware of participation within the higher education sector in terms of collaboration with other universities, which had been minimal in the past, opportunities would be created for academics to establish 'a sense of identity with others' (56).

This opportunity to form networks with colleagues, both within and across universities, and to engage in higher study was regarded as beneficial. As respondents (11) and (59) highlight:

> 'It is really nice to be able to go to Sydney (from Melbourne) for meetings and being able to say, 'Oh, I am pleased to meet you. I have read your books and now we are part of the same committee'. It is nice to be able to contribute, to find other enthusiastic people. I love that sort of scholarly relationship we have with our colleagues' (11).

> 'I feel that if I were to work in a Catholic university in America I would be quite accepted as a colleague coming from another

Catholic university, where I could share my ideas and they would be fed back' (59).

Others conceptualised the ideal collegial model as comprising a number of academic community groups where staff work in teams across the organisation, rather than in the hierarchical administrative structure that exists at present. Maximum flexibility would be the key enabling the teaching to be taken to where the students are, i.e., away from the campus, in regional centres. This approach would allow first year students to 'test the water' before commencing study at the various campuses to complete the remainder of the course.

As highlighted previously in this thesis, the need to forge strong community links was again seen as essential to the concept of an ideal university and, with the assistance of the church network, this would assist 'to break down the present remoteness of the institution' (32). Further, 'it would be caring, and would reach out into the community networks, possibly through the parishes' (34).

Maintenance of the 'smallness' characteristic of the predecessor colleges was believed to be an essential element of the ideal university for some academics as expressed in the view that the 'smallness of the university campus is an asset in attracting students who may be intimidated by the larger universities, and this provides the opportunity for a sense of caring and being supportive' (13). Accepting the need to retain the concept of 'smallness', these academics argued for a University structure based on local autonomy while still loosely tied to the overall. Recent trends, which had seen enrolments and reenrolments in one state handled through one campus were perceived as a trend away from this ideal, with the result that students were now being treated 'just as numbers' (13). This had increased the tension felt by staff towards the large, 'imposed' centralised structure, and strengthened their belief in the value of a small, caring environment. As a result of these changes, some academics believed the University was 'becoming a less personal type of institution' (32). For many academics, the concept of 'smallness' articulated to 'genuine involvement', and the existence of a working environment in which staff trusted each other, and worked in teams that would be involved in the decision-making processes.

Some 10% of academics expressed a preference to move away from the current centralised administrative structures towards 'a structure in which the campuses had a greater degree of local autonomy, although still meeting the demands of a single university structure' (45). A reduction in the number of campuses per state was mooted with a possible reduction from the eight campuses to four. While some expressed the view that their ideal model would comprise a single campus, this was not believed to be a realistic option and, in any case, such a model would lose the advantages of being able to 'tap into regional interests' (30). An argument presented against the present model focused on the heavy demands placed on senior people who were required to travel regularly to the various campuses. Although video-conferencing provided an answer to 'the extensive travel required to maintain a multi-campus operation' (30), some academics believed this facility had not been used effectively in the past and could not hope to replace 'the person to person contact' (32).

8.8.2   Developing a community of scholars

Only 7% of academics regarded their ideal University to be related to becoming a top research establishment. For those who did, the ideal would comprise a community of scholars who would possess the freedom to be different. This would entail lively debate about life issues, standards and beliefs, as well as continuing the close contact with the community. This would ensure students would graduate as 'mature, free thinkers, not robots' (59). In an ideal university, students would be presented with challenging issues that 'developed their minds and experience based on true excellence' (54).

The tension generated by the expectation that staff engage in research as well as maintain teaching commitments led one academic to suggest the ideal University could be distinguished by an academic structure that comprised separate strands for teaching and research; one in which individual's strengths would be encouraged. Through the adoption of this approach, the two major areas of teaching and research could be organised under a Dean of Teaching and a Dean of Research, it was argued, and there would be no departments. Postgraduate, undergraduate and vocational areas would sit under Teaching while under

Research a further divide would include a Head of Pure Research and a Head of Applied Research. This, respondent (28) argued, would provide the way to attract funding from business interests and allow greater opportunities for action research in the classroom.

The ideal University must be 'a human organisation' and one that is always learning if it is to be successful, some 6% of academics believed, rather than one where the staff are preoccupied with their research and individual concerns. The environment should be characteristic of one 'where the wisdom that results from research is shared around' (35). Some academics would be 'expert teachers, others expert researchers; but all talking to each other at a human level and at an academic level' (35). From this perspective people would be valued and, as not all academics are ambitious and aspire to 'rise to the top' (35), all must be supported. In utilising the analogy of the school classroom, respondent (35) elaborates: 'it is the same principle as in teaching a school class: all the pupils need support not just the high flyers'.

8.8.3   Promoting Christian ideals

Some 12% of academics believed the religious orientation should be strong and this should be evidenced in the way staff and students related to each other and in the nature of the programs offered. As respondent (44) describes, there would be a 'flavour following Christian ideals' that would be enacted through students in areas such as education and nursing as they work with children and patients. A further five academics (7%) expressed the importance of encouraging a humanitarian focus, specifically related to social justice issues and caring attitudes.

8.8.4   Resourcing the ideal

Some 13% of academics regarded improved resourcing as essential in their ideal University, arguing that the inadequacy of present resources had militated against effectively carrying out their work. The ideal University would be well funded, have more room and open spaces, and be able to provide more variety in its courses. The ideal new University would be characterised by an environment where all lecturers would have 'manageable workloads', be afforded greater

respect by their managers, provided with a time allowance for research, (so giving it respect), and have fewer committee meetings to attend while at the same time, exude a greater sense of community' (50). Greater use of information technology was regarded as essential to the development of the University, and this should take the form of authentic engagement rather than just a 'dabble around the edges' (65). This would improve links between campuses and student access to on-line resources.

8.8.5   Recognition of women

Gilligan (1993) and Helgesen (1990) noted that organisations operating along predominantly traditional lines, as in the case of the new University, tend to be shaped by male attitudes and values. As a consequence, Schein (1992) argues, organisations deny the contributions of women in solving a whole range of problems. While a significant change emanating from the transition to University status had been an improvement in the 'awareness of gender issues' (56); or as described, 'a falling apart in terms of meeting gender equity conditions' (56), academics expressed some disappointment at the lack of recognition given to the potential contributions of women to the future development of the University. Greater gender balance was essential to encourage a different perspective to be brought to the management process some argued. Others believed women should be allowed to more readily contribute to the overall work and development of the University program. This would ensure female-oriented values became an integral part of the University ethos based on 'a greater sense of community, of awareness, of compassion and improved relationships, and of justice issues' (45). Such an environment would be conducive to the expression of female-oriented values that, as Morgan (1997a) suggests, are more likely to emerge through the use of networks and community building. Rather optimistically, one academic muses, the ideal University would comprise 'a female VC and a balance of genders in the management positions' (64).

Reflective note

A major difficulty in creating a new University involves arguments regarding the nature of universities and their role more generally. Johnson (1994), Currie and

Woock (1995) Marginson (1995) and Luke (1997) have all argued that universities should be more than just responsive to the market forces driven by the economy as they comprise individuals who bring with them individual beliefs, attitudes and values about numerous aspects that relate to the life and continuing development of the organisation. As Trowler (1998) notes, academics do not come empty headed to the change process. Differing conceptions of the nature and role of the new University will be instrumental in guiding the processes of organisational change while the approach adopted towards the management of the changes will, as Taylor (1999) highlights, either build resistance or encourage an acceptance of the changes.

Academics aspirations for the future development of the new University included the belief that it could rise to become a top university given less emphasis on administrative duties and more on staff support. In fact, there already existed some indications to suggest it was adopting a leadership role in some fields. The strong desire to build on the strengths accrued in the past particularly regards teaching excellence and the ethos of caring, emanated from the special histories of the predecessor colleges and was based on the foundation work of the religious orders. Many academics argued for the continuation and encouragement of these strengths in the development of the new University as these, it was believed, could make a substantial contribution to the distinctive character of the new University, and might, in the future, work to separate it from other institutions. As noted in this chapter, academics expressed strong support for the concept of a new Catholic University yet the strong commitment to the maintenance of a service orientation, characteristic of the culture of the predecessor colleges, suggests some academics retain some hope the new University will change little in the future, except in name.

In accepting the ethos of community as an important element in the new University, the formation of the new University brought a unique opportunity to demonstrate the importance of academics in the formulation of policy. A major disappointment for staff was that this degree of involvement had not occurred; one academic noted that even the mission statement was handed down without consultation. The top-down approach and lack of participation by academics in

the processes of organisational change was, as mentioned previously, felt deeply by many academics willing to contribute to the development of the new University; unfortunately many believed they were being overly stretched while also not being trusted by senior management.

Similarities in the ideological stance of academics, as identified by Trowler (1998), toward the nature and role of a university were noted in this study. The strong inclination toward a progressivist stance was not unexpected given that the majority of academics interviewed in this study had made the transition into the new University from a teaching background in education. The promotion of learning through numerous means as a specialised field was highlighted as worthy of pursuit to improve the chances of survival and growth of the University. Indeed, the power of education to solve social problems was regarded by these academics as an essential ingredient in any future policy formation. Education programs that focused on family studies, palliative care, community education, health education and the like would fulfil the aim of many academics to not only provide a caring learning environment within the University but to also extend the notion of service further in the community. Some cautioned however of the danger of assuming the University was superior to others on this dimension; its difference resided in its Catholic orientation and was expressed through the manner in which it addresses issues, its focus on specific forms of academic pursuit, such as the humanities, and in its willingness to offer service both nationally and internationally to communities less well off.

The new emphasis on research activities as essential attributes required by government for funding allocations, as noted by Bourke (1994), Smyth (1995) and others, proved to be a major irritation for many staff. Academics challenged the view that the new University was sufficiently resourced to support the developing research profile. Deficiencies such as the lack of specialist expertise and associated accreditations were a few difficulties highlighted by staff that militated against serious research work other than those of a scholarly nature. At this stage in the development of the new University, conceptualisations of the ideal may be far removed from the reality. The continuing search for the ideal University will no doubt take some time to be realised and the underlying

tensions that emerge as a result of the competing perspectives of academics and management will need to be resolved to allow the University to move forward effectively.

CHAPTER 9:   EMERGING TENSIONS

Introduction

As noted in the earlier theoretical chapters, organisations are characteristically rife with paradoxes and contradictions (Hall, 1999). From a dialectical perspective, potential new futures always create oppositions with the status quo, and therefore new initiatives or new directions become entangled in paradoxical tensions that can undermine the desired change (Morgan, 1997a:292-3). Further, Morgan argues, any system development 'always contains elements of a counter development, because each position tends to generate its opposite' (p.292-3). If managed effectively, however, these contradictions have the potential to become a major force for change.

This chapter discusses academics' perceptions of the forces driving the new University and identifies academics' views regarding the potential threats to the continuing development of the University. Finally, a number of emerging tensions are identified.

9.1   LOCATING THE DRIVING FORCE

9.1.1   People power

Academics clearly perceive the organisation to be 'people driven' with a substantial 17 of 69 academics (25%) believing they are the main driving force behind the organisation. See Table 9.1. In this people driven organisation, the visions of individuals and smaller groupings such as departments or networks provide the impetus to move the organisation forward. These people have the 'professionalism, the creativity, the integrity to keep the institution going' (31), and 'without the dedicated academic and support staff there would be no university' (63). The driving force comes from the ordinary staff and their commitment, the 'hardworking staff at the grassroots' who hold a vision about 'the development of learning in students' (50). Given this, some argued, it was disappointing that central management did not readily accept staff projects and initiatives, thereby creating the impression that management was 'distrustful of staff ideas' (65).

Table 9.1: Main driving force behind University

Response	No. (n=69) academics	%
1. Individual academic staff	17	25
2. Top management	16	23
3. Economic priorities, government financial control	10	14
4. Catholic Church	9	13
5. None, i.e., lacks direction	7	10
6. Competitiveness	5	7
7. Organisational structures	2	3
8. Other	3	5
Total	**69**	**100**

Another 16 staff (23%) of academics still identified the driving force of the organisation as 'people driven', but located the source of the organisational energy at the higher rather than lower levels within the organisation. For these academics the driving force emanated from the personal visions of a few key people occupying top management positions in the organisation. In particular, the Vice Chancellor's vision and his interpretation of government expectations were regarded as key elements responsible for driving the growth and academic development of the University. Some academics believed that strong leadership situated at the top of the University would be the key to its growth and prosperity. Continued progress and growth would not come easily and would 'probably be in spite of the government' (30) it was argued. For these reasons, the University needed strong leadership and its leaders should be adequately supported and encouraged due to the importance of the 'impression they give' (4). Effective leadership is needed to 'provide the direction for the future' (30) and, through the established networks of effective leaders, the University would be in a better position to anticipate 'what threats are coming' (30). On the other hand, many academics complained of the lack of effective leadership throughout the changes while others believed the low sense of staff morale evident throughout the organisation was due mainly 'to poor leadership' (4). What is needed, it was argued, is a 'forward thinking person at the top' who could offer strong leadership and motivation to staff. This was lacking at the present time, some bemoaned, due to insufficient planning or follow through on the campus mergers.

More pragmatically, some academics believed it only natural that the driving force should be located at the top of the organisation, for the simple reason that the 'top people in the organisation have the purse strings' (50). This legitimised their position of control and entitled them to make the decisions regarding the future direction of the organisation.

9.1.2   Quest for power

As noted by Bolman and Deal (1991), Lee and Lawrence (1991), Pfeffer (1992) and others, organisational change creates shifts and struggles in the quest for power within any new organisation. The resultant shifts in power brought about by the organisational changes necessary to form the new University intensified state rivalries; a problem exacerbated by the location of the various Faculty Deans, who held national responsibilities yet were positioned in one location. Greater access to these powerful members of the University was regarded as an advantage for those working at the same site while also conferring special privileges and power to a specific group or campus; a factor with ramifications for the maintenance of organisational coherence.

The 'Victorian push', or more precisely, the ideology and influences stemming from high-level academics within Victoria was also identified as a force driving the University. As the three faculty deans were from Victoria (Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing), this led some academics to believe that as a consequence, they brought with them their experience, perceptions, and, perhaps unkindly, their 'baggage as Victorians' (28). This powerful set of factors from 'south of the border' (28) had become a source of irritation and frustration for some academics who regarded the Victorian view as different from that of NSW: 'they have a Dip Ed focus and even want to reintroduce a Dip Ed for secondary teachers' argued one respondent. As one academic explains, there had been a 'shift in power from forward thinking NSW to conservative Victoria' (65).

The belief that the 'power base in terms of the Church' (34) appeared to be located in Victoria, had resulted in the other states, especially NSW, 'being done like a dinner all the time' (34). The Victorians were 'wagging the dog', and this had resulted in the situation where 'whatever goes there, is what we have to put

up with' (34). The rivalry between the two states as evidenced in the interview responses appeared partially to emanate from the unique histories and development of the campuses in each state. The situation in NSW was unique in that 'we have also had to restructure in terms of our divisions' (34) and that 'despite comments about how similar we all are, we really are quite dissimilar in some ways and are driven by different agendas' (34). The perception or 'real feeling' that existed in some of the divisions that Victoria was driving NSW had generated active resentment. This had resulted, 'because people in other states believe they were teaching in very forward thinking ways and we have been pushed back to more conservative ways of doing things' commented respondent (34). This was particularly the case in NSW, it was argued. Respondent (34) further explains:

> 'We did pride ourselves as being relevant and contemporary and our courses, we thought, reflected what was contemporary practice. A lot of those things are being debated now and there has been a retreat to more traditional ways'.

9.1.3   Corporate will

Another force driving the University came from the combined efforts or 'pooled energy from those stakeholders interested in the development of the University' (30). This eclectic view created the 'corporate will' and comprised those stakeholders 'wanting it to happen' (30); for example, the Catholic Church through involvement of the Cardinal as Chairman of the Senate, the business community, the many bishops and leaders of Religious Orders, and the individual staff. This desire to see things happen is supported by the belief 'that we can do certain things and that they will be good things and we can make a contribution' (16). The strong sense of service to others provided another source of energy for the new University as evidenced in the 'objective to help people who come to the University; this is an 'apostolic objective' and one aimed at developing students as thinking people well educated for a future career' (44). However, credibility and standing were necessary for this to occur.

9.1.4 Church

Only nine academics (13%) saw the Catholic Church as a force behind the organisation despite the University's title and obvious presence of the Church at the level of governance. For those who regarded this as a substantial force, and not necessarily a desirable one, discussion centred on the visibility of the Church in the paperwork that crossed the desk, the publications, the decisions of Senate and the power of the Bishops. One respondent exclaimed: 'The University Chronicle is screaming Church not University' (34). However, given that the provision of new University graduates for vocations in Catholic schools and hospitals was 'an essential community function for the University' (13), it could only be expected that the Catholic community, including Catholic religious and lay people, would have a substantial interest in the survival and success of the University, another argued. Another highlighted that while the Church at present was not believed to be a driving force behind the organisation, it was certainly 'how they would like to see themselves' (49).

9.1.5 Inertia

For some seven academics (10%) the University was, rather worryingly, without a driving force, and would be more aptly described as 'self-propelled' (49), where things appear 'ad hoc' (49) and its operations coordinated by 'crisis management' (38). Part of the blame, it was argued, related directly to the very nature of 'bureaucratic systems' and the move away from the 'very open caring forms of leadership' (49) characteristic of the past. Others believed the driving force should be stronger than it is and bemoaned the fact that many more initiatives should have taken place since the time of the University's formation; for example, the appointment of a prominent Aboriginal leader as Director of Aboriginal Education or a research professor to lead in that area, but 'unfortunately none of these will probably eventuate' (32). Some believed the staff should be the driving force, but 'many are intimidated' (8), and although the union had played a substantial role in ensuring equity for staff at the local level, the formation of the new University had brought many changes and a reorganisation of power. As respondent (8) explains:

'Yet staff should be the driving force, should voice their opinions. Even membership of the union has fallen considerably. Under the old federation of separate college campuses in Victoria the union played an important role in ensuring equity for staff across the three campuses as a type of safety net. But now the larger University sets the rules for all and union influence has waned'.

9.1.6 Economic imperatives

The need to address economic priorities was regarded, by 14% of academics, as a significant force driving the University. Over-reliance on government funding and a fear of further modifications to the University's allocation from government had resulted in the University being prepared to 'paint the building purple if requested by government' (35) to ensure the flow of funding. This was unfortunate, argued some, as it meant the money provided by government 'would dictate directions' (37).

9.2 FACTORS THREATENING THE UNIVERSITY

Table 9.2: Factors threatening University development

(117 responses from 69 staff)

Response	No. responses	% 69 staff	% total responses
1. Financial concerns	35	50	30
2. Inefficient administrative structures	15	22	13
3. Lack of strong leadership	14	20	12
4. Dictates of the Catholic Church	12	17	10
5. Inadequate forward planning	10	15	8
6. Low staff morale, excessive workloads	10	15	8
7. Geographic dispersal	7	10	6
8. Loss of Catholic identity	6	9	5
9. Lack of academic freedom	2	3	2
10. Other	6	9	1
Total	117	-	100

9.2.1 Financial concerns

An emerging tension, and paradox, for the University was concern regarding the impact of funding limitations, and dependence on the Government for that funding. These financial concerns hindered the ongoing operation of the University and its need to forge a unique identity in keeping with the distinct nature of its mission and goals. Pressing concerns regarding the potential for

further changes in government policy left many important questions unanswered, as expressed by one academic: 'Will it support growth at universities, will it let the uncompetitive languish, what will be the level of funding and on what terms, and will there be a trend by potential students away from universities if, for example, there is over-employment of teachers in the schools' (62).

Table 9.2 sets out responses to the discussion about threats to the development of the new University. Multiple responses are listed in this table. The factor 'Financial concerns' was seen as posing the greatest threat as it was mentioned by 35 academics; that is, 50% of all those interviewed; and 30% of the full list of responses.

It was imperative, some argued, that the pre-occupation with financial matters should not lead the University to succumb to the temptation to 'take short cuts to meet financial pressures' (45), thereby generating even more unrest among staff. Provided the University is able to 'raise funding from industry as well as government' (45), and set systems in place to handle these pressures, then it should not only survive but also grow. The opportunity to access state-based funding also provided a potential resource, as respondent (56) highlights:

> 'Certainly in Queensland there has been a sharp political battle to free up more places for tertiary studies and we have been again fortunate enough to have benefited from that, so (for example) funding for these very buildings; we could not have afforded these'.

The picture presented across the other states was not as positive and the difficulties of operating on a 'shoe-string' budget had created considerable hardship for some academics left coping with only limited funding in their area. This, they argued, was not even sufficient 'for the everyday consumables, let alone the larger capital equipment purchases' (9). The need for the University's top administrators to be 'open minded and lateral thinkers' (33) was essential, and, of necessity, should be 'entrepreneurial about raising funds in commercial ways, not just by church donations to supplement the government funding' (33).

Some argued that the University's total dependence on government funding created a form of pressure that worked against the development of a Catholic

University 'worthy of its name' and, as such, had the potential to force a compromise between the University pursuing those endeavours it 'should be engaged in...in that they are not really extras' (25) in terms of its own mission, but 'may not be possible given the economic pressure' (25). As a consequence, the University may in the future 'be forced, more and more, to simply do its daily 'bread and butter' activities...rather than developing the riches of the Christian tradition' (25).

A potential danger for the University would be in the adoption of a pragmatic approach; that is, while the institution, as Catholic, has been formed and accepted, in reality, 'what goes on inside it is much the same as anywhere else' (25). This was a real possibility, some argued, if the University 'is bereft of ideas and does not have a clear vision' (25). A significant threat to the University, respondent (38) believed, was that of management operating from a 'materialistic money-based model like the other universities' and 'drifting ahead without a vision'. The University needs a vision, and that vision needs to be shared, so thereby improving relationships between staff and clients and improving participation. Therefore decisions should not only be based on financial viability but also cognisant of 'what needs to be done for the Church, the poor and the marginalised...these are the areas of work that the University should choose. This should be a place where people look after you' (38).

For some academics, the close link between the need to develop a research profile and the need to obtain funding from government could lead the University, if not careful, to lose track of what is significant (refer Table 12.3). Concerns were raised that the areas of expertise currently present in the new University were not those traditionally known to generate substantial funds. In terms of research grants or student numbers the new University was significantly disadvantaged and could not possibly hope to compete with the more established universities. Its ability to provide student satisfaction and a caring environment were exemplary and worthy of any competition; these are 'real outcomes' (48) some argued, although unfortunately not part of the criteria applied for funding. Having said this, respondent (62) cautions that while it is important the new University be recognised for its caring and service qualities, it should resist the temptation to

believe the University held 'any monopoly on values such as ethics or care' (62). In the end the University can only turn out graduates who are committed to their work, will know what they are doing, will do it well, and will have values that are similar to the University or the Church' (62).

Although an intense centralisation of the control of financial matters and personnel had taken place, theoretically for reasons of efficiency, this had not been matched, academics believed, with 'a systematic approach to the achievement of excellence' (61) across the University. The enormous amount of energy that had been directed into the business of running the University and the restructuring process had generated its own problems.

9.2.2 Maintenance of the centre

The costs associated with the establishment of the Vice Chancellery and administrative centre added a new financial burden to campus budgets. This provided a source of considerable resentment by some academics, concerned at apparent inequities across the University in regard to access to funding. The greater the amount of funding needed to maintain the operations of the Vice Chancellery, academics complained, the less funding available to support the ongoing work at the campus level in regard to projects and services. As a consequence, some academics believed the University was now not 'doing as good a job' and conditions were less favourable than in the past. As respondent (15) explains:

> 'It is quite clear there is less money available for things like staff development. It was an expectation from the campus I came from...after 4 or 5 years for most staff there was opportunity to take periods of time off for outside study anything from 3 to 6 months. The funding regime for that per staff member and then the support money for travel was much greater than is now available'.

The costs incurred in establishing University-wide nomenclature and documentation created further discontent among academics who were of the belief that administration was 'preoccupied with the trappings of office, e.g., glossy letterheads and costly renovations to the Vice Chancellery' (4) while at the same time, staff on the ground were struggling to obtain adequate funds 'for

essential resources for staff and students' (4). Respondent (27) provides an account of the difficulties experienced at the time:

> 'In music the University lacks musical instruments so this greatly inhibits what can be done. And there are no practice rooms. In the computer area, many students must complete assignments on computer technology but can only complete them at home as there are no computer laboratories to do the assignments'.

The problem, it was suggested, was two-fold: 'not only are funds limited but they are being spent in an unimaginative way, and the people making funding decisions are too far away from the action' (4). The lack of transparency of the governing structures was also of concern (62) as were the apparent 'discrepancies in the financial restrictions placed on academic staff at the lower levels of the organisation as compared with those in higher management positions'. This caused considerable unease among academics often struggling to maintain quality in their daily work. The comments of respondent (11) express this well:

> 'While the faceless people at the top, whoever they are, waste funds travelling around Australia, we are instructed not to photocopy anything for the rest of the year (about 6 months) as funds are not available. Library books cannot be purchased due to cost'.

According to respondent (7), the formation of the University with 'all its campuses' was too idealistic and although it was now working 'to a degree', the changes had not been properly funded and this had created a backlash of resentment. In spite of all the hard work by academics and the 'cost-cutting' that had been implemented, many academics appeared alarmed that the 'debt seemed to be growing', due partly to the inefficiencies of the multi-campus arrangement which was regarded as 'a real money chewer' (13). Coupled with the loss of local autonomy had been the need to apportion a significant amount of funding to service the central administration including travel costs for administrators such as the Vice Chancellor and the Senate members. This had resulted in a reduction in funding for use at the campus level.

More positively, the amalgamations had resulted in improved access to international programs, once regarded as the 'domain' of a particular campus but now more readily available to staff at all campuses (9); a change not so readily

welcomed by the initiators of the programs who cited the loss of program control and profits as another example of the loss of local autonomy (13). Academics also expressed strong feelings regarding the absorption of funds by the centralised body of the University for professional development activities conducted at the local level. This policy, described by one academic as the 'leech mentality', had the unfortunate effect of creating a disincentive for staff to expend extra effort given they were not benefitting from the profits.

For other interviewees, the University had gone astray in accepting the geographical dispersal of the campuses and this had resulted in higher operating costs. Seven staff (10%, see Table 9.2) believed that the geographic dispersal was a serious threat to the development of the University. As a result, the course offerings were now inferior. While most accepted the changes as necessary for survival, as already noted, many questioned the true economic efficiency of the changes, and the increased travel necessary to lecture at several campuses had created an unreasonable and unnecessary burden. The present model also placed heavy demands on senior staff who were required to travel to the various campuses, and although video-conferencing provided a partial solution to the extensive travel requirements needed to 'maintain a multi-campus operation' (30), some academics believed it had not been used effectively in the past and could not hope to replace 'the person to person contact' (32).

For some academics, the future lay in consolidation rather than expansion to ensure financial viability, while in the interim, they argued, the use of information technology should be utilised to a greater extent to handle the problems presented by separation and distance.

> 'I don't think they (management) realised how much the travel would cost. As a result there are a couple of campuses under stress. Once they (management) start closing down campuses and threatening jobs a domino effect is started with other staff worried, stressed, under emotional pressure, and having to do well while still keeping up with all the extra work load. The people up above probably don't realise what is going on with their staff. So this notion of a multi-campus university is unrealistic. The extra cost of people travelling between states for meetings means we struggle with inadequate resources in other things. Perhaps we should make

better use of technology for our campuses and to serve the large (geographic) areas of the eastern states with off-campus programs, e.g., for rural nursing. It is much cheaper to have students off campus. We have to get our courses going on the Internet. We need a single, central campus with off-campus education' (7).

9.2.3 Viability of the organisational model

Organisations form from a process of deliberate decision-making and strategic choices rather than from serendipitous events (refer Chapter 3; Hall, 1999). Throughout this process, organisational members draw upon images or metaphors of organisation and these help determine the approaches adopted when implementing organisational changes (Morgan, 1997a). From the responses of academics in this study, there is little doubt that the images and perspectives held by those implementing the changes differed significantly from those held by academics. The decision to adopt an hierarchical, rational model of organisation for the new University was not well received by many academics who lamented the fact that the University had relinquished an important opportunity 'to do something new and exciting' (49). Yet, given the high aspirations expressed at the Inauguration of the new University coupled with the rich traditions and history associated with hierarchical organisational structures within the Catholic community, it should come as no surprise that a traditional model was that preferred. As highlighted by Meek and Goedegebuure (1989:17), those at the lower levels of the status structure aspire to emulate those at the top, and in the case of the new University, there appears little doubt that those implementing the changes looked to the established universities, including Catholic universities, as their preferred model. Academics, however, were of a different persuasion and, while they differed in their conceptualisations of their ideal University, few aligned with the traditional model being promulgated by those implementing the changes.

While the formation of the University and the creation of the structures to support the work of the Vice Chancellery, and Faculty Deans, were generally regarded as a remarkable achievement, some believed that 'too much change had occurred too quickly, and the structure had become excessively bureaucratic and autocratic' (12). This was particularly so for nurses, it was argued, as they had come from a

tradition that was 'very much into consultation and autonomy and other feminine concepts' (49). The imbalance between male and female representation in management positions also was regarded as problematic.

In keeping with an hierarchical model of organisation, the imposition of a centralised administrative structure operated from Sydney was not well received by academics who regarded the move as merely paving the way for the potential dominance of a particular state orientation and the control of operations at the national level. While this perception persisted, establishing a national focus remained problematic for management, especially while academics had the perception that there were significant differences between the existing cultures of each campus. This was evidenced in the comments of respondent (10) who laments that 'directions are now being sent from Sydney headquarters where the operating culture is different from that of Melbourne'. From a corporate perspective, some academics expressed concern that the change in organisational structures had led to a situation where the new University now operated as a Sydney-based company with the authority centred at that location. This approach was regarded as in contrast to the more effective operation of the previous institutes where the authority resided at the local level and the management and decision-making processes had allowed more academic involvement. The sense of remoteness from the core operational unit of the University and lack of connectedness and involvement in its management as experienced by some academics, is made clear in the comment:

> 'But now we are an appendage to the Sydney conglomerate. It is a corporation with shareholders such as large bank owners. The students are not shareholders. The staff are not shareholders. The shareholders have nothing to do with the staff or students' (10).

As one academic explains, the need to centralise the administrative functions in Sydney had arisen from increasing international competitiveness and the desire of government to seek the best product for the least price; the quality assurance process implemented by government had then facilitated performance comparisons of universities (1). The reaction to this by the University was to

centralise many functions to save costs rather than retain autonomous campuses that were regarded as less cost effective.

Many academics regarded the process of centralisation as tiresome, overly bureaucratic, and creating unnecessary work for little reward. Even within the states of NSW and Victoria, the existence of multi-campuses resulted in some functions being distributed across the state with an added frustration that 'often much time was spent hunting people and chasing them all around the place' (11). Others questioned the validity and logic of 'an incredible passion...that everything has to be the same...to be done at the same time...through one central place' (13); an approach that had the potential to create a major problem experienced in larger universities, where students are not known individually but become 'just numbers'. Academics complained the structures had not led to more efficient outcomes within each organisational unit, bringing the 'big is better' rhetoric espoused at the time of the changes (see Meek & Goedegebuure, 1989; Smart, 1989 and others) into some disrepute, at least within this new multi-campus University.

The centralisation of administration and the imposition of uniformity had, according to some academics, gone far enough: 'so far in fact that there was a danger of precipitating strong regional reactions' (58). The pressure to bring the faculties together across the various boundaries 'to think together...to think globally as one faculty rather than separate campuses' (68) was regarded as a source of continuing tension, yet a return to state-based enterprises would only be 'detrimental' (68). At present, 'we are working towards a centralised model and if it disintegrates into state-driven enterprises, that will be the end of it' (68); as such, this possibility posed a real threat to the University. The reluctance by some state campuses to relinquish their power for a centralised model of national control had occurred as a result of 'historical reasons' (68) during which time the previous colleges and institutes had operated autonomously and successfully for many years before the formation of the University.

The centralisation of administrative power to control national operations effectively created an equal desire for greater flexibility at the local level so that

state-based needs could be more adequately addressed. This created considerable tension amongst academics who felt 'bound by the centre' (57). As interviewee (57) explains: 'We seem to be constantly reaching, or waiting in expectation for instructions from the centre' (57). As a result, this had had a detrimental impact on many academics who were placed in the position of not being able to 'own the growth of this University' (57). Five years after the amalgamation, at the time of interview, some academics were 'still grappling with (the problems presented by) the need for uniform conditions across the various campuses' (56).

While many staff resented the centralisation of functions, and regarded them as overly excessive, others saw benefits in the new organisational structures, as in the establishment of the three Faculties and the opportunity for overall leadership across the University. The lack of strong leadership was, however, viewed as a serious threat to the development of the University by 14 staff (20%, see Table 9.2).

9.2.4   Administrative inefficiencies

Strong views on the new administrative rearrangements were held by most of those academics interviewed. Some 15 academics (22%) were of the view that the inefficient administrative structure was a threat to the development of the new University (see Table 9.2). With the increasing burden of managing the bureaucratic demands made by government at that time, as highlighted by Bourke, 1994; Miller, 1995; Smyth, 1995 and others, the University increased its administrative structures at the centralised level, as mentioned, and the number of administrative staff increased significantly. For many academics the rapid growth in size of the administration of the University, was paralleled by the growth in perceived level of 'self-importance' of the administrative staff, as reflected in the comments of respondent (18) who states that 'many administrative staff now seem to think they are on the way to becoming the Registrar of a top university'. Conversely, no less than 17 (25%, see Table 12.3) of academic staff felt strongly that their role had been devalued, and that the administration was now in control. From Bridges' (1980, 1988) perspective this might be described as a considerable

'loss of turf', intensified by feelings of insecurity in the process. As respondent (57) highlights:

> 'Within ACU the amalgamation and subsequent centralisation of functions, had destabilised the normal educational processes and people's securities. Consequently, many academic staff now felt devalued by the changes while others had risen to powerful positions in the hierarchy even though they were not seen to be very effective within the campus community they came from'.

The changing emphasis and growth in power of the administration exacerbated by the ongoing difficulties experienced by academics left many believing the administration was now more concerned with 'controlling academics rather than in facilitating the good work they do' (2). As a result, academics were left lamenting the loss of 'the services, resources, and tools they need to do their work' (2). Or more precisely, respondent (2) states: 'the administration now owns the work of the university'.

The inefficiency of the administrative structure generated considerable frustration for many staff and now provided 'less student services than five years previously' (13). Lack of support and the provision of incorrect information such as starting dates for courses, and overcrowded classes did not assist the smooth functioning of the University (35). The reduction in course offerings, and units within courses, available for students further increased the pressure on staff left to be 'the bearer of bad news' (13) when informing students that specific units were now not offered. Such reductions in choice and variety, some academics believed, would impact negatively in the future thereby leading to a loss in the previously good reputation of the campuses.

Gradually over time, even many of those academics who had reacted positively toward the changes began to hold reservations, as in the case of respondent (12) who had initially felt positive about being part of the University, but soon lost enthusiasm as a result of the frustrations resulting from the efficiencies of the administration. Academics believed the continuing uncertainty regarding administrative arrangements gave the impression the University did not have a clear idea of 'where it was headed' (61); nor had it clearly defined 'its ultimate

objective or introduced mechanisms to achieve quality teaching or quality research' (61). More positively, the centralised administrative model was believed to provide a more effective means of coordinating some administrative areas and a more efficient model than one comprised of a loose confederation of separate bodies, each with its own administration. Further, the improved monitoring of administrative and academic regulations and heightened awareness of eligibility for entrance into courses, granting of credits, and cross-crediting between institutions 'that had not existed before' (56) was viewed as a positive development.

While the initial exhilaration brought about by the changes was regarded as positive, this gradually faded as many academics struggled to make sense of their changing environment and the accompanying feeling that the University 'had lost direction' (12). As respondent (34) highlights:

> 'ACU has a group of conservative church people at the top who make decisions without consultation. The structure is a traditional one imposed without planning and probably the top people are still trying to figure out where we are going'.

9.2.5   Management of change

Turner and Crawford (1998) note that organisational change is more likely to be effective when individuals display strong commitment to the change, clearly understand why and how the change is being made, have confidence in the collective ability of the organisation to achieve its goals, and feel a sense of mutual trust. With the formation of the new University, wide-ranging changes were needed across the organisation. Throughout the implementation of these changes, academics became increasingly disillusioned by the style adopted by management. There was a surprisingly high degree of consensus that the changes were not implemented in a manner cognisant of the expectations of staff; top management, it was argued, was out of touch with what was happening at the ground level. Although positive about the opportunities brought about by the changes, the comments of respondent (49) highlight the frustrations:

> 'I have been fortunate with promotions within ACU and confidence has grown too. I have had the pleasure of taking a curriculum and

reshaping it from a traditional style to one that is student-centred. So there are satisfactions as well as frustrations, most notably a structure imposed without consultation'.

As previously noted, many academics expressed concerns regarding the University administration and held reservations about the adequacy of existing structures for future development. Fifteen academics, i.e., 22% of staff and 13% of total responses in Table 9.2 (multiple responses), regarded the inadequacy of the decision-making process, lack of prior consultation and an effective, functional decision-making structure, which 'strikes a balance between getting the job done and allowing those people who should be involved to have sufficient input' (45) as in need of attention.

The centralisation of control was regarded as a major issue and had resulted in some staff losing control of roles and functions they had previously performed and, consequently, left not knowing whether their future was assured. Concerns were raised that the administrative structures had been constructed without consideration of the impact on academic functions, and the University structure had been designed 'from the top down rather than from the bottom up with little regard for the needs of academics' (3).

For some academics the approach adopted towards the implementation of the changes ran contrary to Christian values and this was of considerable concern. The operating model tended to be hierarchical, autocratic and non-democratic they believed and the lack of participation by women in the decision-making processes again generated further unease for some.

> 'ACU has become a top-heavy structure and its people have been put further and further down. At the top are the men and the other people are predominantly women. These female members of staff are never involved in decision-making. They are basically told what to do and if that is questioned are told not to ask questions; that is not Christian' (29).

Of concern was the perceived change in management-to-staff relationships. Whereas staff members were well known to management in the college environment, they had come to believe that management did not appear to have developed 'a deep understanding about the special talents of staff, how to develop

staff, nor even who staff are' (11). This was believed to be a serious oversight as the 'staff are the link between the client and the institution' (11) and essential to the future of the University.

The strong belief that the centralised administration had lost sight of the importance of individuals, (which was seen as a special characteristic of the previous colleges), resulted in the 'depersonalisation' of the institution, and sense that: 'you deal with the institution, not a person now' (12). This approach was considered as being against all sound management principles, and, in attempting to deal with the issue, comparisons were made with the public service practices, where 'even the ideas just don't come from the top now, as in a pyramid type structure, but the staff themselves are involved in change' (12). Staff are committed to making the University successful through creating community, yet some believed top management 'tries to create community by decree, by dictating it and by using the terminology. That won't work' (58).

Under the college model, staff members assumed active involvement in the decision-making process. They exercised a greater sense of control over their environment and generally felt they were able to have their say. The move away from a community-oriented and personal approach to management at the campus level resulted in increased feelings of alienation and isolation from the decision-making processes. Respondent (12) suggests:

> 'Many staff experienced a sense of powerlessness to participate productively in the changes and this had led to a reduction in motivation: I feel helpless, powerless and alienated by the changes now taking place. I don't feel as ready to do things for the University as I did at the beginning, even at Faculty Board level'.

Many staff expressed the view that the changes should have been handled 'more sensitively' than had been the case to date (5). One staff member, who wanted to be identified as a Catholic and who felt called to be Christlike, had found the changes painful to experience. After working for many years in the government system, where s/he found the working environment characterised by humane behaviour and principled people all around, s/he was saddened to find the Catholic system the opposite and this was distressing, especially given the

University's rhetoric that would suggest otherwise. Some of the recent dealings with staff had caused great sorrow.

> 'When you pretend to be something, to have higher values, then the dealings seem to be dirtier. If the University values justice, and purports to do so, then it must be more just with staff than other universities. We must treat people with respect and dignity and lead them from where they are so they grow. And we must nurture the climate that allows this to happen' (11).

For many academics, the continuing development of the University was dependent on its 'loyal and committed staff', and, if academics felt more valued, they would then more readily support the changes being implemented by management and this would be beneficial for the University's progress. As O'Toole (1995) observes, effective leaders need followers and while management can decide to implement many things, 'if the people down at the grass roots are not consulted then the changes are not going to happen' (59).

The dramatic reduction in motivation for some academics was further exacerbated by the frustration created when work requirements 'are changed ten times before the project is finished' (34) or as a result of a lack of encouragement to contribute to the ongoing development of the University. While it was not an unusual practice in the college system for a majority of staff members to make contributions towards the ongoing management of the campus, under the new style of management, many academics felt that their contributions were not readily accepted and they were unable to satisfactorily participate in the development of the new University. Respondent (34) provides this example:

> 'When the amalgamations occurred, we formed a group of staff called a vision committee that comprised about fifteen people who cared. But when we presented our deliberations for consideration by management, we were told we were not an official group of the University and our thoughts were irrelevant'.

The strong sense of isolation by some academics from top management was a theme repeated throughout the interviews and the constant lack of affirmation regarding new ideas or innovations, that 'are not even considered or written proposals even acknowledged at times' (17) ensured staff occupying positions at the lower levels within the University remained isolated. In this situation,

academics sought affirmation from colleagues and students, while regarding their leaders as 'very negative and un-affirming' (4). Although the visits of the Faculty Deans to the local campuses were appreciated, many academics were unable to identify other members of the administrative team. Further, this 'faceless group of people' (33), as described by one academic, were responsible for making policies that were unsuited to the local scene (38). The depth of feeling is shown in the comments of respondent (26) who complains: 'I feel the management would be happy if the place could run without its staff; and even happier if it could run without the students' (26).

The lack of effective communication intensified the sense of isolation for many academics attempting to function effectively within newly created University structures. Respondent (45) sums up in a succinct manner:

> 'By way of reflection on change and its management, the new University is struggling. The pace is too fast and communication a problem issue. We haven't got it right yet. But it isn't easy with all the separate campuses. Change always creates instability and therefore some stress ... but we need to move on and good communication is an essential part of that'.

9.2.6 Communication barriers

The literature chapters describe the strong relationship that exists between effective communication processes and organisational success. Effective communication can lead to the development of a positive, motivated workplace while ineffective communication processes can result in powerful negative influences such as the 'distortion of goals and objectives, conflict, misuse of resources and inefficiency in performance of duties' (Wood et al., 1998:553).

As implemented, the organisational changes at the new University generated considerable dissatisfaction accompanied by a perception that the new structures were too unwieldy, creating unnecessary barriers to the efficient flow of information throughout the various departments of the organisation. Although communication between colleagues increased during this time, poor communication at the next level of organisation created undue delays precipitated by the need for agreement between the 'Heads of Departments across all faculties

before the Heads of Schools saw the information' (11). As respondent (11) further explains: 'we must follow protocol and deal first with the Head of Department in another campus before reaching the Head of School somewhere else. This is difficult and time wasting'. From the perspective of communication within the academic discipline, matters had improved and the opportunity to enter into dialogue with fellow colleagues at the other campuses to share ideas was 'much appreciated' (11). A serious deficiency within the system was the time consumed handling administrative tasks while the 'paper war' (11) was regarded as tedious and very difficult.

The depth of feeling regarding the inadequacy of the communication and decision-making processes was evidenced in the responses offered by staff. Far more input from academics was required, it was argued, to ensure decisions were made with due consideration for all concerned or, at the very minimum, to ensure staff expected to implement the changes, are at least informed 'before it all takes place'. Lack of effective communication from the upper level of the University was considered a serious deficiency, and this became a source of much unrest. The disregard by management for the impact of their decisions on academics contributed to a reduction in staff motivation and confidence. The deficiency of the communication process throughout the University led to the generation of an active 'rumour system' (10) through which academics gained both information and misinformation; this was not regarded as 'good management practice' (10).

Ten staff (15%, see Table 9.2) identified low staff morale and excessive workloads as being a factor threatening the development of the University. Other threats identified included the lack of academic freedom (2 staff, 3%). One academic identified the possibility of unemployment for graduating students as a possible threat, and a few individuals identified several other threats.

One of the most significant concerns to emerge from the interview discussion on the centralisation of the administration was the separation of top management from the rest, resulting in increased levels of staff isolation and mistrust. When the decision-making processes become more divorced from those affected by the decisions, there is increased breakdown in communication and trust. As Turner

and Crawford (1998) highlight, organisations must achieve their purposes as social entities utilising the collective ideas and intents of individuals within the organisation if they are to deliver the economic benefits. Yet academics in this study frequently complained they were given increasingly less opportunity to participate in the major decision-making process and this had resulted in panic management at the lower level. The lack of clarity in 'who is making the decision' or 'who to see to obtain decisions' created further frustration.

Poor strategic planning and the inability to establish an effective decision-making structure were believed to be hampering the continuing development of the University. Of the academics interviewed, ten (15% of 69) expressed concerns regarding the forward planning carried out by the University administration and held reservations about the adequacy of existing structures for future development. Poor communication, adhoc decision-making and the reversal of decisions created unnecessary frustration. Insufficient forward planning resulted in staff perceptions that the University was constantly working against its own potential. For many staff, the management approach appeared to be 'from crisis to crisis rather than from a considered system of organisation' (15) and as a result the organisation was just managing to survive. Of those interviewed, 46 academics expressed their 'frustration at poor management' (67% of 69 interviewees) while a total of 23 academics (33%) stated the changes had led to an increased administrative burden for them. Refer Table 12.3.

The inadequacy of the decision-making process, lack of prior consultation and effective, functional decision-making structures were all identified as problematic, resulting in staff feeling 'peripheral to the decision-making process' (67) and frustrated at the 'slowness of obtaining responses to proposals' (32). Although there appeared a strong commitment to the concept of a new University, as 'the place is worthwhile, in spite of all these concerns' (26), a major concern to emerge was the reluctance of management to listen to staff, and this had a deleterious effect in 'seeing good ideas ignored' (26) and 'a lot of creativity around the place going to waste' (32). Others believed the 'biggest threat is attitude...as there is presently only short-term decision-making with no long-term planning' (33). These findings are reflected in the research work of Martin

(1999) who also notes the frustrations of academics occupying non-leadership positions within the organisation. As Martin's study shows, 75% commented on the lack of consultation in the decision-making process. Of further interest, however, is that 70% of those academics occupying leadership positions within the organisation believed that consultation could slow down the decision-making process.

Decisions were made in Sydney without staff involvement, even from that State, some argued, and management 'just ploughs ahead with its plans' (10). Although it was recognised that open discussion with the academic staff might create excessive talk-back there was a perception that the present management approach was out-of-step with current management thinking for the late 1990s, and not as people-oriented as hoped. The disappointment at the lack of interest in the individuals who comprise the University was evident in the comments of many academics, especially those drawn from professions with characteristic working environments in which the care of the individual is a core element. As respondent (10) laments: 'I would like to see University management consider people; this is their biggest crime right now'.

Effective procedures were needed to restore the balance between 'getting the job done while allowing those people who should be involved to have sufficient input' (33). The perception that those in executive management positions were 'disengaged from staff at the coal face' (9) was regarded as an undesirable characteristic for an organisation to possess, especially given current thinking and research on organisational change (refer Senge, 1990; Morgan, 1997a). It is a matter of growing in 'the way we want' and that 'necessitates good management' (45) and that equates to 'greater involvement of staff' (9). Hort (1999:1) makes the same observation and argues that when senior academics, although successful as teachers and researchers, were suddenly placed in positions of management and staff supervision they resisted, and consequently the work environment deteriorated modifying the context of academic work.

The emphasis on organic rather than mechanistic characteristics in the new University was believed to be essential, and as some academics strongly argued,

the organisation should be 'human' if it is to be successful and not one where academics are preoccupied with their research and individual concerns, but one 'where the wisdom that results from research is shared around' (35). Some academics would be 'expert teachers, others expert researchers; but all talking to each other at a human level and at an academic level' (35). From this perspective people would be valued and, as not all academics are ambitious and aspire to 'rise to the top' (35), all must be supported. In utilising the analogy of the school classroom, respondent (35) elaborates: 'it is the same principle as in teaching a school class: all the pupils need support not just the high flyers'.

9.2.7 Catholic conservatism

For some 12 academics (17%), the excessive intrusion of the Catholic Church in the running of the University was perceived as a possible future threat, although not a particularly strong one. On the other hand, only six academics (9%, refer Table 9.2) regarded the loss of a strong Catholic identity as a real potential concern for the future. Some academics took comfort in the fact that, as a University, the institution now received its funding from DEET (now Dept. of Education and Training). This provided a built-in safeguard against Church control in the form of a 'watchdog dimension' (56), in that the University was now bound to follow the AVCC and DEET guidelines and these, among other things, were essential to 'keep us on the straight and narrow' (56). And again:

> 'As part of the Catholic intelligentsia, we have to realise that the Church for a long time has been about power, control and authority and I believe that those are the antithesis to the Gospel message. The Gospel message is about liberation, about freedom, about self-identity'.

Indeed, interviewee (56) regards the tensions inherent in the Catholic ownership of the University mirror those in the wider Catholic Church:

> 'One of the problems with Catholic again, is the fact that the very nature and notion of being a Catholic is traditionally determined by the leadership at the top. So it is the mind sense and the political frame of reference, out of which a bag of documents come out about euthanasia, abortion, ethical issues, social issues, women or whatever, that are in sense informing the community about the Catholic official policy. I think we are a kind of counter

revolutionary Catholic force and I think we present the human face of Catholicism, not the institutional face. I am pro women, pro married priests, for intellectual challenges of doctrines and I feel that is what an academic should be. There is always going to be a tension, but I hope it would be a creative tension'.

Some, however, did believe that the entrenched ideas, adherence to an overly rigid tradition, and the increasing conservatism in the Catholic world were cause for concern for a University purported to be committed to academic freedom and expression. Respondent (56) continues:

'A problem for the Catholic world is that it is retreating from the vision and hope of Vatican 2 which opened new avenues to ecumenism, gender equity and is becoming increasing right wing and conservative. It is in reverse gear. These are the changes that the Catholic University has to resist. In fact the Gospel message itself is about liberation, freedom, passion and self-identity. It is not about power, control and authority. The mono-dimensional, mono-cultural, monochromatic understanding of what it is to be Catholic must be thrown out and replaced with a kaleidoscopic view. It really has different facets, dimensions, richness that has to be tapped into; these aspects cannot be controlled'.

While many academics believed a strong religious orientation was essential to the developing University, the increasing conservatism in the management of the University left some academics believing the University was 'reverting to the past in handling the future, instead of facing up to the tough questions...and the past is dogmatic Catholicity' (34). Respondent (34) provides a vivid example:

'the board tried to introduce Catholic education as a compulsory subject, not even Christian education. So it is becoming increasingly conservative Catholic in its policies and this is offensive even to non-Catholic Christians. Even the nuns have only Catholic dogma to follow and are struggling with the issues presented by now being a university. The conservatives are frightened of change, of criticism, of decision- making, of the future, of insecurity, of women's movements, or women's ordination'.

The tensions generated by the Catholicity issue are a potential threat to the continuing development of the University, according to interviewee (8): 'even some staff view the University as an institution struggling for the faith against the evils of society...The way forward should include involvement, meetings, engagement and, at least, contact with that society' (8). A significant tension for

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some female academics arose as a result of not fully being able to participate in the life of the Church and the University's system of governance and control due to its patriarchal nature. As interviewee (56) explains:

> 'Our imperative is to educate people to realise that they are the Church, so I am the Church, you are the Church, they are the Church and if we can operate an alternative mode that is not about power, control and authority, but is about liberation, personal integrity, the realisation that we are people of power, passion and possibility which can change the world in a very positive sense. That means that we give not just lip service to Gospel values, but truly lift them out by recognising the integrity of women, recognition of the fact that if God gives vocations then it is not based on gender and the right of women to become priests or whatever must be recognised'.

Some academics argued that, as a fundamental notion of a university is 'to encourage students to think for themselves, then issues such as gay/lesbian associations, provision of condom dispensing machines etc should be discussed in open debate' (64). Whereas discussion 'is either closed or limited and the students led to believe that they have enrolled at just another Catholic school; they want to be told what to think' (8). Respondent (34) provides an example of the existence of a 'high school mentality' and the exertion of power and control by management, when 'student posters are removed when the VC visits the campus and notices must be pinned inside a locked notice board...controlled by the campus administrator who has the key and must approve the contents' (34).

As a precautionary measure against growing conservatism, some academics believed the University should aim to return to Gospel values; the dictatorial nature of the Catholic Church must be challenged:

> 'I think we are now beginning to realise that the mono-dimensional, mono-cultural, mono-chromatic understanding of what it is to be a Catholic must be jettisoned. So this understanding that there is only one mono-chromatic, one monolithic understanding of what it is to be a Catholic is passé, it is no longer applicable; Catholic must be seen as kaleidoscopic, that is continuously changing. It has different facets, it had different dimensions and it has different riches that have to be tapped into and in order for that to happen, it can't be controlled. Unfortunately, I have to return back to the notion that to be a Catholic in the past meant to buckle down to the system, which is patriarchal, hierarchical, magisterial, canonically and legalistically

driven, it was ritualistic and it was bound by ethical conformity, and all those things are challenged today. They have to be challenged' (56).

Further, interviewee (56) stresses, the most important thing that we can teach our students is that 'I will not accept that just because you tell me; you show me where it is relevant to my life and you show me where that is really in accord with Gospel values', because there is a lot in Catholic which is quite unchristian, because it is about power, control, and authority'.

9.3   PARADOXES OR CONTRADICTIONS

Throughout the discussion outlined in this chapter, academics' responses across all questions highlighted the existence of differing emphases and competing perspectives regarding the future development of the new University. The strength of commitment by both academics and management to these perspectives will help determine the extent to which such contradictions become a major force for change or produce barriers or resistance to the change process. Emerging from the analysis of academics' responses outlined in this chapter, these differing perspectives or competing views on the nature and role of the University might be conveniently summarised in terms of the following eight contradictory or paradoxical tensions present within the new institution: Pragmatism vs Independent Vision; Centralised Control vs Local Autonomy; Academic Freedom vs Catholic Conservatism; Teaching and Learning vs Research and Scholarship; Equality of Women vs Patriarchal Control; Consolidation vs Diversity; Autocratic Managerialism vs Democratic Collegiality; and Academic Workloads vs Quality Maintenance.

These tensions provide the challenge for those responsible for the ongoing management of organisational changes and for those empowered to take an active role in implementing individual and minor change throughout the University to ensure it continues to grow and develop. Morgan (1997a) presents the view that the successful management of paradox lies in the ability to 'create contexts that can minimise the negative dimensions while retaining desirable qualities on both sides' (Morgan, 1997a: 294).

In managing change, such contradictions need to be reframed in a positive way. Small changes that facilitate large effects while creating positive outcomes for both sides of the paradox are essential elements in this process; for example, to improve research outcomes and so lift the University's profile while maintaining the integrity of teaching as a valued pursuit. Or in the University's ability to remain faithful to the need for the development of an independent identity that reflects the visions and aspirations of its members while ever mindful of the need for pragmatism in satisfying the Government's expectations regarding funding and profile. Essential also is the maintenance of a fine balance between the commitment to a centralised model of management and administration by the University and the strong desire by some for greater local autonomy at the campus level, especially in relation to decision-making processes and more particularly where they impact on the local educational community. Considerable work is needed to increase the sense of equality and acceptance of the views expressed by women throughout the new University, especially regarding the teaching of the Church and Catholic traditions, as opposed to the male domination of University management.

Reflective note

This chapter has highlighted academics' perceptions of the significant changes to occur as a result of the formation of the new University. The ready acceptance by academics of the formation of the new University as a worthwhile achievement both in gaining improved status and in providing a national presence for Catholic education and associated pursuits supports the observations of Meek and Goedegebuure (1989) that a quiet acquiescence existed toward the changes in higher education, especially from those within the college sector. The Government's proposals for change provided a 'window of opportunity' through which members of the Catholic educational community were able to realise their ambition to create a national Catholic institution. This was in keeping with the directives of government regarding institutional size, while simultaneously providing an opportunity for the realisation of the aspirations of protagonists from within the Catholic community.

The level of commitment to the concept of the University and its formation was strong, yet academics expressed the need for a more active role in the changes being implemented at the new University. As Schein (1980), Senge et al. (1994), Fullan (1999) and others have noted, successful organisations encourage individuals to feel that they are able to make a contribution, thereby facilitating organisational growth and learning, whereby visions and creativity can emerge from all levels within the organisation. Clearly this did not occur in the early stages of the amalgamation and change process brought about by the formation of the new University.

The initial enthusiasm displayed by academics and their motivation to assist in the development of the University became frustrated by the lack of recognition from management of the value of their contributions. This led to increasing disappointment and frustration towards the implementation of the changes. This was especially noticeable for this group of academics accustomed to active participation in the ongoing life and management of local campus affairs in the predecessor colleges.

Accepting a balance is of course essential, given the needs of management to activate a smooth operational plan within a relatively short time frame in order to complete the amalgamation process. While this study has not sought the views of management in this regard, it is accepted that the magnitude of the organisational changes required at the time necessitated wide-range planning involving senior management at all state-based campuses of the University. This does preclude the argument, however, that had the changes been implemented through a more democratic model they may have been less costly to the organisation and more sensitive to the needs of staff.

Taylor (1999) noted that the predominant approaches to management in higher education tend to be based on leadership that is both patriarchal and paternalistic thereby generating dissent and risking alienation rather than commitment to the new order (p.76). Academics in this study had hoped for a participatory process of organisational change and decision-making; one that mirrored the best of Christian traditions and showed concern and compassion for individuals within

the University. As Mintzberg (1979) and Morgan (1997a) and others have highlighted, bureaucratic principles and centralised modes of control have regularly been shown to be ineffective in dealing with ongoing change. New approaches challenge traditional assumptions that stress the importance of strong central leadership and control, the role of hierarchy, and the wisdom of trying to develop and impose systems from the top down (Morgan, 1997a:116). The top-down approach to change as implemented at the new University, left many academics feeling alienated, disillusioned and rejected by senior management. A major problem emanated from the lack of adequate communication processes throughout the University; a relatively minor problem for the predecessor colleges given communication tended to remain, for normal operations, within state boundaries and there had been ready access to campus principals. As well, most had taken an active role in discussions regarding policy and other matters. Centralisation of the administration in the new structure impeded communication through lengthy delays and inadequate information flow, thus allowing the 'rumour system' to flourish. This lowered academic morale and fostered uncertainties about the future.

Academics expressed concerns about such inefficiencies. They had entered the change process with the high expectation that a new professionalism would characterise the new University. Contrary to this they experienced inefficiencies, perceived excessive funds expenditure in unnecessary functions, and bureaucratic demands. The experiences of academics at the new University were not indicative of a more efficient system as promulgated by government before the introduction of its new strategies (see Smyth, 1995; Ramsden, 1998).

The changes within the University created shifts in the balance of power between academics and administrators, leaving some academics believing they were now controlled by the administration; a change not well received by academics. The perceived discrepancies between the availability of funds for those positioned at the top, rather than at the bottom, of the University also created considerable angst for academics, especially given the difficulties of attaining essential resources for daily operations. For academics, this was a time of considerable pressure; a condition not assisted by the emergence of a new layer of corporate

managers at the higher levels of the University and the overt display of numerous forms of 'corporate posturing' reflective of a new business orientation towards the affairs of the University. Marginson (2001) notes that while overall funding to universities declined throughout the 90s, and student funding declined considerably following a change in federal government in 1996, adjustments to student funding in the early 1990s actually increased slightly, albeit for a short period. This raises some questions regarding the severity of stringency measures imposed by management on academics at this time.

As a result of the changes at the University, academics within the Faculty of Education believed that education had been downgraded in the new institution, a common condition as highlighted by Bourke (1994), while those in the Health Sciences, in particular Nursing, were appreciative of the improved professional status now available to nurses and the replacement of certification from nursing schools to that of degrees, even though they were experiencing large administrative workloads. Of all academics interviewed, the changes for nurses had been the most significant and the most beneficial, but had also created considerable ambivalence.

As highlighted by numerous authors (refer Stacey, 1996; Morgan, 1997a), the management of organisations ultimately involves the need to cope with paradoxes or contradictory forces. Traditional approaches to management theory stress the ability to organise, predict and control. Given the rapidity of changing realities now confronted by complex systems, this approach is no longer possible. The need for ongoing research is essential in order to better address the tensions and ambiguities that arise between the personal visions of individuals within this new University and the shared organisational vision for its future. Opportunities for academic staff to benefit are created through improved professionalism and leadership, more focused scholarship and incentives for research initiatives.

At issue here is the manner and nature in which the new University should develop in the future in order to etch out its own identity. Academics in this study had previously sought to be excellent in their work and in their efforts to foster learning in the student population. While this excellence may have existed

in the predecessor colleges, the change to University status brought with it new challenges regarding the nature of excellence required and questions regarding the means through which this might be encouraged and further developed in the future. The next chapter explores the coping strategies adopted by academics in relation to the changing nature of their work.

CHAPTER 10: THE CHANGING NATURE OF ACADEMICS' WORK

Introduction

New organisations form for many reasons that may include political, economic and social factors, and in the process of their growth and development natural tensions emerge as a result of differing individual perceptions regarding the potential gains and possible losses inherent in the change (Morgan, 1997a). With the formation of the new University, tensions emerged as a result of academics' perceptions of the positive outcomes of the emerging form (the university model), the perceived losses from the changes in organisational form, and their desire to retain elements of the previous organisational model that had worked effectively in the past (in this study, the teachers' college model). The strength of the attraction for one form above the other is largely dependent on the perspectives and level of acceptance held by individuals towards the emerging shape and direction of the new form. As established in the theoretical chapters, the values individuals hold and the decisions they make, one way or the other, will impact significantly on the level of engagement and commitment displayed towards the development of the new organisation, the manner in which individuals conduct their business, and the level of tension or dissonance experienced in the workplace (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997a; Hall, 1999; Jackson, 2000). Given that the new form of organisation, with its accompanying mission, goals, and newly established rewards, will be the form that controls the future direction of the University and the individuals within it, the decisions made by academics are vital to their future professional and personal development; failure to embrace the goals and direction of the new form may see some academics committed to a directional path out of keeping with new organisational thinking.

With the abolition of the binary system and formation of the new University came new challenges and changes to the nature of academics' work as outlined in the literature in Chapter 5 of this thesis. The changing emphasis in the organisational culture at the new University from a predominantly teaching orientation (teachers' college model) to one where research endeavours were more highly

valued and rewarded (as in the university model), remained a source of continuing tension for many of the academics, as also noted in the work of Moses (1992), Moses and Ramsden (1992), and in the review by Adams (1998).

The overall changes to Nursing are discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis while specific issues related to the changing nature of nurses' work are dealt with in 10.1.3 of this chapter. Differences between academics of all disciplines became more pronounced when taken in the context of their academic level within the University. These differences are discussed in Chapter 12.

10.1 PERCEIVED GAINS AND LOSSES

10.1.1 Improved networks

In contrast to examples of previous mergers (e.g., Batt, 1975) the process of amalgamation was regarded as advantageous by many academics as it brought together colleagues from both within and across the various faculties of the University, and there now existed a larger pool of expertise available for collaborative enterprises, such as planning new courses and research. This was regarded as an improvement over the previous system where some campuses competed against, rather than cooperated with, each other. These changes had effectively worked to 'break down some of the divisionary, non-helpful, competitive type attitudes that existed previously' (16). The hope was that the disciplinary networks would strengthen and facilitate links with colleagues across all the states and territory, thus increasing 'the forum for dialogue' (16). Academics believed that as the University became more aware of participation within the higher education sector in terms of collaboration with other universities, which had been minimal in the past, opportunities would be created for academics to establish 'a sense of identity with others' (56).

This opportunity to form networks with colleagues, both within and across universities, and to engage in higher study was regarded as beneficial. As respondents (11) and (59) highlight:

> 'It is really nice to be able to go to Sydney (from Melbourne) for meetings and being able to say, 'Oh, I am pleased to meet you. I have read your books and now we are part of the same committee'. It

is nice to be able to contribute, to find other enthusiastic people. I love that sort of scholarly relationship we have with our colleagues' (11).

'I feel that if I were to work in a Catholic university in America I would be quite accepted as a colleague coming from another Catholic university, where I could share my ideas and they would be fed back' (59).

The change to university status for the colleges and institutes of education proved highly beneficial for some academics, and especially for those with aspirations to pursue a career focussed on research. Respondent (25) explains:

'My view is very much influenced by being originally a CAE lecturer who would much prefer to be a university lecturer from my own background and my family background and what I had done and therefore the changes whereby our colleges which were CAEs became a university was something that I wholeheartedly welcomed. All the changes are in line with my own personal interests'.

The broader 'network of staff contacts' and improved collegiality especially 'amongst staff of similar background' (9) was believed to be a positive outcome of the changes as it helped to ameliorate the intellectual isolation of academics. On the other hand, it effectively heightened the sense of inadequacy and stress for those academics burdened by the responsibility 'to improve academically and become visible among peers' (62).

A further difficulty for the new University and other newly formed universities was that while the abolition of the binary system had resulted in improved institutional status for the new University, it seemed there were still some 'very real differences' (25) between institutions within the higher education sector. The carry over of attitudes from the binary system left some academics believing their work was not as highly regarded as work completed by academics from the more established universities.

10.1.2   Emergence of the Faculties

As highlighted in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the organisational changes brought about by the formation of the new University saw the establishment of three Faculties and the beginnings of a somewhat lengthy process of course review and

development. Decisions regarding membership of the Faculties were generally straight-forward for most academics. Those entering the Faculty of Health Sciences moved smoothly from the nurse education programs that had been in operation before the amalgamation. Those electing to remain within the Faculty of Education did so with the expectation that they would continue to engage in activities similar to those conducted before. Those moving into the Faculty of Arts and Sciences transferred from education locations within the schools or departments that had comprised the operational structures of the predecessor colleges. Later in the development of the University, and as opportunities to teach in programs across Faculties became more complex, some academics struggled with the difficulties experienced as a result of the elected transfer.

Whereas previous expectations in the predecessor colleges had seen academics teach across a broad range of subjects, or as respondent (56) points out, 'required to act as 'dogs bodies' stepping in and doing all sorts of things when not qualified to do so', these same academics now believed they should focus more closely on a narrow field of study in a specific discipline otherwise they would not be able to 'develop the expertise needed to participate in research and write for publication' (23). Reflecting on the broad skills required in the past, respondent (56) recalls: 'I think over 20 years I have taught something like twelve or thirteen different areas, most of which I wasn't expert in, and I just stayed one step ahead of the students' (56) and further:

> 'Because you had a funny name you became an instant expert in multi-culturalism and I can remember teaching multi-culturalism. Because I had an interest in computing, I therefore was dragooned into giving computer classes, but thanks to God, those days are gone and I think we can focus on our specific discipline areas' (56).

While few differences emerged between those academics within the Faculties of Education and those within Arts and Sciences, perhaps not surprising given their similar backgrounds in education, academics within the Faculty of Health Sciences provided a significantly different perspective that was coloured by the series of transitional events leading up to amalgamation.

10.1.3 Professionalisation of nursing

Academics within the Faculty of Health Sciences regarded the previous model as inadequate in providing the most suitable form of education, and this created high expectations that the University framework would be more appropriate than that provided by schools attached to hospitals. The change was generally regarded as beneficial for nurses as they were 'now students rather than cheaply paid workers' (52). None of the academic nursing staff interviewed sought to return to the previous era and it was generally regarded that, as a result of the changes, nurses had improved their qualifications and gained recognition from the move from an apprenticeship system to a profession. As respondent (63) comments:

> 'Lectures were adhoc: just an hour here and there in between work at the hospital which included mopping floors, cooking meals, cleaning the patients' laundry. But today such work is not done by nurses who are able to concentrate on the more technological aspects of nursing'.

As a consequence of the changes, nurses believed they were now identified as professionals and could more readily engage in research. This was necessary given the need to remain abreast of changes being driven by overseas practice, especially from the USA, and the introduction of more advanced and complex technology. Nurses were now required to be conversant in the use of technology, as well as changes to patient care and pharmacology and the like. Yet while the professional status of nurses was now higher, the heavy emotional cost brought about by the need for lecturers 'to upgrade their qualifications' (47) was regarded as considerable.

The development of professional status had been most beneficial to nurses who suffered from 'the attitudes of doctors who considered that nurses only fluffed pillows and changed bed pans' (59). Historically, nurses had developed under the 'auspices of the medical profession and we did what the doctors told us' (49). Over the years, however, the nursing profession gradually developed its own body of knowledge, and this has resulted in a change in the working relationships between doctors and nurses, where nurses no longer work under the doctor, but rather work beside them.

'In the hospitals, nurses are directed by nurses and work with doctors as a team. Some doctors try to boss you around but most nurses now don't take that. They are taught to be more assertive because you have to be the patient's advocate as well. When the doctor advises a patient, the patient may object to the advice but feel reluctant to go against the doctor's wishes. So you (nurse) tell the doctor you don't want that. You need to be assertive to be an advocate for the patient' (33).

The process of change for nurses has not been without its critics from other fields as well, and some outside health professionals still remain opposed to the concept of nurses in the tertiary system. This has presented difficulties for some academic staff, even to the point where they are reluctantly considering leaving the University.

'ACU needs to be involved more closely with the community. It is especially hard in nursing as many in the industry and the community want a return to the hospital-based system of training. They see our graduates and us as not credible. These battles are very frustrating...I am thinking of returning to the clinical field' (66).

The reticence of the 'public' to accept the changes was also a difficulty and a reflection of the public's perception of nurses as 'just those little girls who hold your hand when you are sick' (49).

Overall, academics believed the changes were resoundingly beneficial for nurses although there were still some within the medical profession who 'resented the loss of control over the nursing profession' (49).

'Within Nursing the restructuring was difficult because this discipline was previously operating at a state level, i.e., the Health Care systems are totally different across the states. Registration requirements differed considerably. So we had to get to know the differences very quickly and move to break down set ideas in order to create uniform courses. Changes were taking place in the whole Health Care industry at the same time, which has increased the problems we had to face. An example is in Mental Disability which was a certificate by itself in some states but it is now included in a general course. It was never even a Nursing responsibility in one state and was perceived by government totally differently in another' (66).

With the formation of the University, there came the imposition of uniform courses in nursing across all campuses and this process was identified as

extremely difficult given the 'different registration requirements in each state' (63). On the other hand, the formation of the University had led to affiliations and staff exchange programs with other countries such as Sweden and Hong Kong, and this was regarded as beneficial for staff. As the boundaries between states continued to blur regarding registration requirements, opportunities for course 'portability' increased, allowing greater flexibility for students. As respondent (59) highlights, there was already a move by the Nursing Registration Board to eventually create an international register of nurses' (59).

Other benefits were mixed. The gains in higher status were regarded as beneficial for students, but disadvantageous for those who were less scholastically inclined and did not want the rigour of a degree course, and the (certificate) option was now 'no longer available' (47). Further benefits to be gained by students included the increased opportunities to intermingle with 'students from other faculties, and gain access to libraries and other resources' (52). Participation in a properly recognised educational system was regarded by academics as beneficial for students as they were now able to enter the profession 'fully qualified' (52). Counter to this, however, had been the increase in costs and 'as the courses are now fee paying under HECS' (33) it had become more expensive to be a student. In a simple summary of the changes, interviewee (33) reflects: 'So there have been some good things and some bad things from the move to a university education for nurses' (33).

Although it was generally accepted that the upgrade was inevitable, some academics expressed the view that the changes had probably not been adequately thought through, especially in regard to the support implications, either for the nurses themselves or for the discipline.

The strong desire for recognition, and an equally strong need not to be seen as second class, were identified as major forces behind the changes within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Yet while the changes had brought about significant change for nurses, this was generally regarded as only the beginning in the University's development; as such it was only a 'fledgling University' with still 'a long way to go' (59).

10.1.4   Education devalued

During the years following the amalgamation the changes that occurred created the general perception that the importance of education, particularly teacher education, had been seriously downgraded and its strength eroded in favour of other academic disciplines and development. This was especially distressing for many academics within the Faculty of Education, as teacher education had previously formed the core activity of the earlier colleges. Education had now become 'a non-growth area' (3) requiring only maintenance of 'existing programs' argued respondent (3).

The devaluing of education was not unique to the new University, as noted by Bourke (1994), Smyth (1995) and others, and universities across Australia were downsizing their faculties of education while building new courses in areas that were more likely to attract community interest, such as business and management. While these changes had 'come later to this University because we have had a stronger base in teacher education' (28), nonetheless, a number of academics found the constraints brought about by the changes not only personally devastating, but also affecting the 'whole nature of primary education' (28) which resulted in a deterioration in the quality of the student teachers now exiting the course (41). Concerns that the changes would continue and possibly get worse were premised on the belief that primary education had now succumbed to the influence of a secondary BA/DipEd model guided by the discourses of academics who had experienced similar models in their own educational backgrounds. As respondent (28) explains:

> 'The people making the decisions are now coming from that background...so they bring those experiences and those ideologies...to their perception of where primary education should be'.

10.2   CHANGING THE PROFILE

10.2.1   Balancing teaching and research

Across all Faculties, the increasing pressure on academics to direct their energies away from those aspects of their work that had previously provided high levels of satisfaction, and to incorporate research activities into their already heavy

workload, was generally not well received. For many academics, teaching and student learning formed an essential element in the foundation and strength of the predecessor colleges and, as such, they believed the new University would err badly by not continuing to develop this strength.

For some academics, the strong commitment to the teaching and learning process and the high level of satisfaction gained from their interaction with students produced an equally strong reaction against the need to participate in research. Further, the perception by some academics that the approach by management was authoritative, in that 'research must be carried out' and that individuals 'must do it for free or seek funds separately' (13), left academics feeling they had 'little choice in the matter' (13), strengthening their resolve to actively avoid engaging in research activities. This relatively rapid change in emphasis from a predominantly teaching orientation to that of research contributed to the loss of confidence experienced by those academics who regarded themselves as lacking in sufficient expertise to become successful researchers. Refer also Table 12.3.1 for quantitative data.

The heightened emphasis on research had increased the pressure on academics to upgrade qualifications and strengthen or develop their research profiles while maintaining their teaching programs. For some, this process appeared never ending, especially when there appeared little tangible assistance from the University. As respondent (60) explains:

> 'Personally it has been a long history of teachers certificates, teaching guild, technical courses in intensive care, health commission qualifications, bachelor degree in science, then a Masters degree, and now we are being asked to study for a Ph D but there is little OSP leave available now for it'.

The pressure to engage in consultancies and apply for research grants left some academics feeling inadequate and insufficiently qualified for the task, as expressed by one academic, when 'one doesn't even have a higher degree, ...this is mind boggling and terrifying' (8). The sense of hopelessness in ever achieving the desired outcome is evidenced in the response of respondent (50):

> 'you can't have funding for conference attendance unless you are presenting a paper. And you can't present a paper until you have peer group credibility and have made your name. 'So it is Catch 22'.

On the positive side, thirteen (19%) academics interviewed appreciated the new opportunities to carry out research (refer Table 12.3), although nine (13%) of total) of these were in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; only two (3%) were in Education and two (3%) were in Health Sciences (Nursing). For many staff, research was not seen as a priority nor even as a desirable feature of their working lives, ten academics (15%) stating they felt the role ambiguity in being trained to teach or lecture, seeing this as a life-long career choice, but now being pressured to de-emphasise their teaching skills in order to improve their research profile. Although reflecting on more recent trends, Taylor (1999:47) also notes academics' dissatisfaction with the widening discrepancy between the 'emergent job demands' of universities and those implied in original 'job descriptions' for which academics were originally employed, and had originally attracted them to the position. Similar observations have been made in the research conducted by Trowler (1998) and Martin (1999).

Others believed the research emphasis should ultimately improve the quality of teaching; however, the change had 'come with a price' (17) resulting in 'a loss of the morale that once existed amongst staff' (17). While some argued the strength of the University should come from the expertise found in teaching rather than research, others countered this view arguing the best model is one 'where teaching is based on research which expands the body of knowledge' (60). Further encouragement to engage in research in speciality areas was needed, some argued, especially among students, 'to facilitate special areas of expertise and assist in building the body of knowledge' (65). Some argued strongly for a different approach to the organisation of work where academics proficient at teaching should be able to focus on the development of their expertise, rather than attempt to develop a research profile at this stage in their careers.

> 'Some staff should be encouraged to do research but others will always be teachers first. At the moment all are being compelled to do everything. We should be able to choose which stream we want to follow' (41).

While some academics did regard the increased focus on research and establishment of research networks as positive, the heavy lecturing workloads mitigated against the maintenance of a sustained research effort (58). As respondents (2) and (44) highlight:

> 'The major concern now is that academics have little input into the best use of available funds and in re-creating the university. Academics have little freedom in how they operate; for example, the large class sizes and lecturing hours mean they are preoccupied with the workload. When a lecturer is teaching 14 hours each week there is no time to develop a research profile' (2).

> 'Personally, there has been an increase in workload, more administration, work as a coordinator, and committee work while still being able to meet students and help them. Research is another area attempted but it is difficult as there is no time allowance; the normal workload means working late at night' (44).

10.2.2   Redefining workloads

The increased workload and diversification away from the preferred teaching areas generated considerable concern and intensified speculation and insecurity about the future. The heavy teaching hours prevalent in the former colleges remained, further increasing the pressure on academics facing the prospect of developing a research profile while endeavouring to maintain the quality of their teaching commitments. The failure by management to adjust academic workloads to reflect the changing culture and emphasis of academic work was perceived as a lost opportunity to create a more positive working environment characterised by less stress and negativity. As a consequence, the new University was believed to be 'out-of-step' with the more established universities that 'traditionally have a much lighter teaching load' (25), and this had increased the level of discontent. The increased workload as now imposed on staff was highlighted by 35 academics and a further 15 academics responded that they were now working harder, although for these academics, this was not necessarily regarded as an imposition. In total, this represented 72% of those academics interviewed (Refer Table 12.3). Academics approaches to coping with these changes are discussed in Chapter 11 of this thesis.

The increased expectations and workload on academics resulted in reduced preparation time and this now meant that lectures were 'thrown together at the last minute, often because they followed immediately after a meeting or teleconference' (3). The over-use of readily available resources and lack of time to update 'old overheads' provided further frustration and embarrassment, especially when 'apologies' were required to be given to students' (3), an observation also noted in the work of Trowler (1998). As student numbers increased, the relationship between student and lecturer changed and the personal approach characteristic of the previous colleges became less feasible. As respondent (16) explains:

> 'Whereas once you always contacted a student if an assignment was not submitted at the due date, now the students must assume responsibility in managing their own course. With the larger numbers there is no time for following up and so the 'immediacy of contact' has gone although the tutorials attempt to replace it'.

Academics more eager to adopt the rhetoric of the 'self-directed' learner believed this form of student dependency was precisely that which needed to be discouraged in a university culture.

Lecturing across campuses (some 110km apart in Victoria) created additional hardships for those academics required to teach at more than one campus during any given week. Due to inadequate supply of vehicles, a number of academics travelled in private vehicles often without adequate means of contact while travelling.

10.3 ACHIEVING CREDIBILITY

The perceived overemphasis by management on the development of a University research profile contrasted strongly with the belief in the importance of retaining a strong teaching profile. For these academics, the pride that accompanied their ability to provide exemplary teaching and learning experiences for students had been lost in a less favourable model that had 'done more harm than good' (18). Universities should be places of learning they argued. Unfortunately, with the sweeping changes to higher education more generally, some academics believed universities had now become 'degree factories' (7), and this had led to a change

in role where universities are 'now seen by the public to be turning out cars, and only 'black Fords' at that' (5). The change in emphasis had, consequently, created a situation where students no longer received the individual attention once enjoyed. Although the importance of research was recognised and acknowledgement given that some staff will always be keen researchers, some academics expressed concern this should not override the importance of the relationship between staff and students. As expressed by respondent (57), 'the main factor is the interaction staff-to-staff and staff-to student'. Further:

> 'Academics now spend an excessive amount of time recording details for accreditation purposes; this has greatly increased the workload. We have lost our close working relationships with each other and with the students, which was a significant feature of the older campuses. Now we have to add a research load to the heavy workload' (57).

With little or no experience in conducting research, the burden to engage in research activity was felt strongly by some academics, and made worse by the belief that they had insufficient expertise in gaining research funding to actually carry out any research. Further, tensions arose when inexperienced researchers found themselves working with colleagues 'who happen to have research experience, but are not willing to share it' (13). Although rationalised as a problem that 'only time will cure', there was support for the view that the many academics who did not want to become 'hotshot' researchers should still be highly valued 'for their ability to teach' (62). This equally applied to the management area, some argued, as 'academic scholars do not necessarily make the best managers, and therefore alternative pathways should be available for those who want to manage and for those who are 'true' academics, researchers or scholars and wish to pursue that line. Each can be a leader in their field' (8).

For some academics, the substantial changes resulted in the gradual erosion of promotion opportunities, which further contributed to their growing discontent, as shown in the comments of respondents (40) and (41).

> 'The amalgamations have led to my rejection. I am now a nobody. My position was abolished. When it was recreated as another position another person got the promotion' (40).

'Whereas once I could have thought of myself as a Head of Department, this is now virtually hopeless. There are now barriers to long-term career expectations and this has produced a state of frustration' (41).

The perception that less credence was now given to teaching and more to research projects and publications, which were more favourably rewarded, caused considerable anger and frustration, as shown in the comments of respondent (57):

'It now appears that those who spend their time on teaching activities are devalued compared with those prepared to carry out research; they really are in a position of inferiority. It seems that only those who publish papers get promoted rather than those who concentrate on the main strength of this University which is its teaching'.

Or as respondent (8) explains:

'Some staff at the University are finding the changes, particularly workload, extremely difficult to bear. All they ever wanted to do was teach. In the past there was little concern (at the colleges) about research and higher degrees but these are now seen as essential for promotion. In the past, promotion was via involvement with committees and management roles at the college. But now the promotion stream is via research and publications and scholastic success. This is not helpful to nursing staff who still have, and need, a practical background'.

The findings from this research are in keeping with those of Everett and Entrekin (1987), Moses and Ramsden (1992), and McInnes (1996) and support the view that those academics who had moved across from the former CAEs into the university environment believed they were less valued than previously. This was reflected in a decline in optimism, especially in regard to promotion, as the work environment changed to one where research received more credence than competency in teaching. These changes were especially painful for those academics who had spent a lifetime building expertise in teaching. These observations have also been noted in the work of Hort and Oxley (1992) and Noble (1994). In the previous colleges and institutes of education, these same academics had been highly regarded and competent in their predominantly teaching roles and many viewed, rather confidently, the possibility of future advancement. With the formation of the University came dramatic change, and in

the resultant organisational environment, some 17 (25%) of those academics interviewed now felt 'pushed aside', 'relegated to the background', and 'devalued'. Refer Item 19 in Table 12.3. A number of academics (6, 9%) also expressed resentment at the pressure placed on them to upgrade their qualifications, feeling that they were already well qualified and that these had held them in good standing until the changes were introduced (Item 21 at Table 12.3).

10.4   MAINTAINING MOTIVATION

As the University struggled to establish a research culture, and the value of teaching equally diminished, the level of motivation of some academics to participate in the changing work environment decreased. Work for some became a matter of completing tasks to keep up with expectations rather than from 'a passion for involvement' as respondent (5) indicates: 'I have now given papers at conferences but only because it is expected'. The lack of recognition and sense of injustice felt by many staff for those academics who 'worked tremendously hard and well but will never receive recognition for it...and who do not write conference papers but beaver away helping people in the field, even to working for a time in remote settings overseas' (26) generated considerable tension and sometimes anger, often directed towards management. These academics, it was argued, 'will not receive any praise when they return' (26).

Even those academics eager to participate in research still encountered some frustrations and believed engagement in research activity was not given the support it required. Some interviewees claimed the opportunities for sustained leave to support research endeavours were unsatisfactory, with one academic claiming to have had only 'one 6 months period of leave in 8 years' (15). Budget constraints meant that funding was not easily accessible and some academics complained of difficulties in creating opportunities for research, such as 'buying out teaching time for research' (15). Further, insufficient adjustment in academics' workloads to incorporate a research component, hindered the research development of those academics who entered the University with a research

background and the expectation that this would continue. As one academic explains:

> 'I entered the University with a research background, but now find that the infrastructure does not provide for that kind of engagement; that is, teaching 14 hours per week in the classroom. This compares with former colleagues in other universities who have lecturing loads of 4 to 8 hours of contact per week and the remaining time is allocated to research' (9).

Lack of parity is also apparent in the comments of respondent (22) when reflecting on the work conditions at a previous university appointment, 'where the lecturing load was six hours per week, a sabbatical was provided every three years, administrative support was much better, and there was a thriving collegial atmosphere for significant interchange of ideas' (22). The frustration is also evident in the comments of respondent (61):

> 'The total lack of support for research is very disappointing, e.g., neither recognition of research as part of the formal academic workload, nor any internal research grants. The rhetoric is there but not the supporting mechanisms to achieve objectives such as research, conference presentations, or publication of papers. The only target apparent is the drive to produce more students. Yet it is through the research and publication and seminars that the University is promoted and its image improved. I do my own research in private time but the teaching load is so high that there is very little time available'.

Further, directing staff to engage in both teaching and research had 'created considerable overwork and a deterioration in the service provided to students as the workplace should extend, it was argued 'to include the students and their needs' (4). Many academics remained strongly committed to the need to provide a caring and nurturing environment for students, even though some experienced considerable pressure to discard past practices and 'ration their time with students' (11) as the following recollection between respondent (11) and his/her supervisor illustrates:

> 'Why are you spending time with students? You are not there for welfare. They are responsible for their own course development. They may come to you as a last resort. You must then send them to student records. You don't waste time with students'.

The need for less student contact was premised on the argument that this would allow more 'free' time for academics to manage their burgeoning workload while allowing them to allocate more time for research. Reduced student contact was essential, it was argued, if students were to adapt to the university culture and become 'self-directed learners' ultimately responsible for their own learning; 'welfare and student dependency' subverted notions of 'care and service to others'.

The changing pressure placed on academics to modify their approach and withdraw from extensive student interaction saw the proliferation of lecturer 'availability' schedules on academic office doors, and, in the process, sending a clear message to students that ready access for consultation could no longer be taken for granted. The increasing reluctance by some academics to service the field experience programs, especially in education, was also symptomatic of the need of academics to set aside significant blocks of time for research. Prior to the amalgamation, the interaction with and commitment to the learning of students had provided many academics with great satisfaction and enjoyment: the revised attitudes towards students contributed to an increase in staff tension and anxiety. Students, as important clients, formed a substantial part of the public face of the University; it is therefore somewhat ironic, academics argued, that given the University's desire to promote an image of smallness and caring, it is, at the same time, encouraging staff to withdraw from student engagement. The University cannot claim to be 'authentic', argued respondent (11), if the actions do not reflect the rhetoric.

The increasing need for universities to be more accountable for their use of funding and service to students resulted in a surge of administrative related tasks that placed a further burden on academics increasingly 'suffering under the multiple pressures on their time' (2). Many academics became preoccupied with the excessive demands of administration and felt 'weighed down with the burden of completing endless paper work for accreditation purposes' (57) or 'cross campus administrative commitments' (15). Many regarded the administrative tasks as the least satisfying aspect of their working day, with one academic believing them to be 'basically a dog's body job involving writing memos,

attending meetings; the housekeeping' (15). Others found the substantial changes to their workplace roles posed considerable challenges, as highlighted by respondent (54):

> 'I have changed faculties and had about 6 changes in 7 years so the role has changed markedly. It is more in administration now but I do pursue further professional development. There has certainly been added strain from this and the teaching hours are still far too high right throughout the University. But many of the staff are finding it difficult to juggle the three: teaching, administrative work, and professional development'.

With the development of University structures for academic advancement came a higher level of competition between academics, and a gradual shift towards the measurement of learning and the individualisation of the university experience. This left some academics 'who were the best of friends eight years ago, now at each other's throats' (15), whereas in the past they had worked cooperatively. There was now 'too much self-centredness, too much selfishness' argued respondent (19) while bemoaning the fact that the sense of group cohesion, where academics worked with a common purpose, had gone.

> 'Only senior people are noticed now and advancement depends on publications, conferences, being seen in the right places. So now we must scramble after jobs, scratch each other's eyes out, be competitive in order to appear to have seniority. So no-one trusts anybody else' (11).

Given the radical nature of change at the new University, the need to re-skill staff remained high, yet some academics believed this was not matched by adequate formal staff development training.

The lack of support to engage in international programs and a strong personal belief in the need for such networking resulted in some academics engaging in overseas travel at their own expense. As one academic comments:

> 'Recently I received an offer from the city of London to take part in an international citizen ambassador program. But even the University was not interested in helping with some of the cost so it initially lapsed. But then as second letter arrived commending my work carried out in music and I travelled to the UK and joined a select group of European professors all at my own expense. This

was followed by work in Beijing, Shanghai and elsewhere in music education. Compared with all of this the new University is quite insignificant...and does not seem to be interested in the role of music therapy. This work has been important in saving the lives of young people who are suicidal' (27).

Changes to the nature of consultancy were also noted and where previously the tradition had been to help out in the local Catholic schools for altruistic reasons or as described by one respondent 'out of the kindness of our hearts', under the University system academics were required to identify and cost these activities. As the nature of work changed in keeping with an economic rationalist approach, some academics believed this had lessened the level of fun and satisfaction gained through these activities. Academics committed to pursuing a service model, became academics 'out of step' with the changing organisational practices occurring in the new University.

10.5   CASUALISATION OF ACADEMIC WORK

Another source of tension for academics was the increase in the number of casual or short-term contract staff employed to replace fulltime academic staff losses caused by natural attrition or voluntary retirement schemes. Although purported to be more cost effective some academics believed this to be erroneous commenting that it was a 'short sighted view strategically and one which introduced much uncertainty' (4). Employing sessional staff is only 'a short-term tactic' (13) argued some, and 'to have so few staff with a fulltime investment in the institution was bad for morale' (35). This approach also raised many issues for academics 'about service to the students, interaction of staff to students, proper channels of communication, and the quality of education that is provided' (27). For one respondent, this particular change was regarded as the worst to have taken place since the formation of the University, arguing that 'the policy of increasing the use of casual staff decreased the cohesion and sense of community within the University and gives the impression that staff are not valued' (6). 'Sessional staff are now teaching core units' argued respondent (13), and this, along with the 'excessive travel between campuses to teach' was believed to be 'destroying the quality of what we are offering' (13). In addition, some academics believed the use of short-term contract staff would eventually lead to a

climate of mediocrity as some sessional staff 'are not as highly qualified and are generally poorly motivated...with little time to give (freely) to students as they are paid on a sessional basis' (19). Support for this view came from the belief that academics employed on contract would not be the 'best for the job', as it is the 'highly skilled people who tend to be settled in employment' (19). This view was not supported across all campuses as some sessional staff employed by the University held doctorates in their fields and were generally well regarded by full-time staff. The increased casualisation of academic staff did, however, lead to an increase in the workload for those academics 'who are around all the time' (19).

Those academics choosing to remain with the organisation found themselves responsible for an increasing number of students, more courses and ongoing modifications to programs. Although these experiences were not unique to the new University (see Miller, 1995; Smyth, 1995), they gave rise to staff frustrations, as expressed by respondent (48):

> 'The work has many frustrations especially changes to the curriculum. In nearly every semester, I am teaching a brand new subject and the actual content is changing'.

The changes to the curriculum and reduction of units offered in specific areas had also been devastating for some academics, who now believed their very 'raison d'etre was at stake' (48), and the structural modifications to some courses had left them with limited opportunities to contribute. This was believed to have resulted in 'lost opportunities' for the University as competent academics, already established in international networks, had now left, or were intending to leave, the organisation. Bemoaning the reduction in the number of units devoted to the Arts, the experience of respondent (36) provides a telling example, where a fully structured course had been whittled back to only a six weeks program within a single academic unit; this was an enormous change in the work of one academic as nearly all that had been once taught had disappeared. For this academic, the sense of devastation was further compounded by a perceived lack of awareness within the University 'of the importance of the expressive arts as valuable for the overall personal and academic development of students' (36).

The lack of adequate technological support was also of concern and academics believed there still existed a great need for more sophisticated technology. As respondent (19) comments: 'Having to wait for wiring to connect into particular systems, to be able to link into particular programs rather than removing a disk, and then taking it elsewhere for printing' (19) were constant frustrations, as was the sense of losing the technological race.

10.6 ACADEMICS' LEVEL OF WORK SATISFACTION

The first section of this chapter has sketched an outline of the changing nature of academics' work after the formation of the new University. This section builds on the qualitative analysis by extending the discussion through the use of simple quantitative measures. The following discussion outlines the work preferences of academics and provides an analysis of these preferences across academic level within the University. Descriptions of activities that provide the most satisfaction and the least satisfaction are tabulated, according to position held, and then discussed.

The responses elicited from academics regarding those aspects of their work that gave them most satisfaction or least satisfaction are summarised in Tables 10.1 and 10.2. A few multiple responses were received and these are included in the tables.

Table 10.1: Most satisfying aspects of work

Most Satisfying	Level D (n=17)	Level C (n=24)	Level B (n=28)
Rendering efficient service	4	6	2
Scholarly research	2	4	1
Teaching effectively, promoting learning	6	11	16
Friendships, teamwork, collegiality	8	9	9
Recognition	0	3	0
Interaction with students	4	7	14

10.6.1 Most satisfaction

Teaching, as anticipated, featured prominently in the responses with 33 staff (48%) quoting this factor, reasonably evenly spread amongst all levels, although

increasing from D to B as a proportion (35% at D, 46% at C and 57% at B). Very few staff considered research as providing the most satisfaction; only 7 of 69 (10%) mentioned this aspect. As highlighted by respondent (3): 'The most important value is in teaching, that is, in spending time and effort teaching the subject matter to students...and in carrying out this work in a professional manner. Perhaps research is a value that could become important but it is not at this stage'.

The depth of feeling towards this issue is evidenced in the reluctance of many academics to accommodate adjustments to their work; only 17 (25%) of academics interviewed were prepared to change their behaviour to favour research activities. Refer items 2 and 11 at Tables 12.3.

A significant difference between staff levels was in the identification of student interaction as an important satisfier for some 14 level B staff (50%) but only 7 at level C (29%) and only 4 at level D (24%). However, the comments from one level D academic show the extent of the satisfaction derived from interacting with students:

> 'Most satisfaction comes from interaction with students who are a delightful group of people ranging from serious types, dedicated ones, layback ones, con artists, many different personalities. There is a wide range and it is very satisfying to see them develop' (1).

Some 26 staff (38%) described social aspects of collegiality, staff friendships, and the like as providers of the most (or at least, an important form of) satisfaction. It would seem that as academics perceive the University to become more dehumanised this value assumes more significance, even perhaps significance in its passing.

Table 10.2: Least satisfying aspects of work

Least Satisfying	Level D (n=17)	Level C (n=24)	Level B (n=28)
Poor management	10	10	5
Administrative tasks	6	10	10
Lack of affirmation	0	5	6
Student assessment tasks	1	0	1
Loss of cooperative staff spirit	0	5	6
Insecurity, uncertainty	3	3	0
Loss of family life	0	2	3
Poor student achievement	0	2	0
Insufficient time for research	1	1	2
None – completely satisfied	1	0	0

10.6.2 Least satisfaction

As noted in other sections of this thesis, a high proportion of staff were dissatisfied with upper management and the difficulties encountered in the decision-making and communication processes. A surprise finding was that 25 staff (36%) regarded this aspect as representing a major source of dissatisfaction to them personally and expressed this in terms of 'poor communication', 'poor decision-making', 'mismanagement' and 'inefficient' (Refer Table 10.2). The proportions were 10 of 17 at level D (59%), 10 of 24 at level C (42%) and 5 of 28 at level B (18%). Many staff, as expected, disliked the increasing administrative burden including the amount of paperwork now required in the job; this was significantly recorded across all levels, 35% at D, 42% at C and 36% at B. Lack of affirmation was an ongoing difficulty for those staff at level B (21%) and level C (21% also) but none at level D. It might be expected that this would be less of concern for academics occupying positions at this level given that they have already been affirmed through their position within the University.

Issues such as loss of camaraderie, loss of the cooperative spirit and increased competition between staff were regarded as serious by 6 staff at B (21%) and 5 staff at C (21%) while again, this was not seen as cause for concern amongst

those academics occupying a higher level within the University as no level D staff identified this issue.

While student assessment tasks were regarded as 'time consuming and boring' (20) this was not of great concern, although the comments by interviewee (20) that 'while reading one student's assignment may be enjoyable, reading 100 of them is not', would mirror the sentiments of many academics faced with the end of semester assessment burden.

The strong desire for a healthy workplace environment where satisfying work is readily available without excessive pressure emerged frequently in the responses of many academics, along with the need for a sense of fairness in the expectations of individuals. Individuals should be valued and respected for the contribution they can make, rather than forced to pursue avenues that do not provide personal satisfaction, it was argued.

Other more minor issues were identified by only a very few staff. As might be expected in a time of radical change, only 1 staff member (at level D) was completely satisfied! Academics' overall level of positivity and negativity towards the changes is discussed in Chapter 12 of this thesis.

Reflective note

This chapter has highlighted the depth of feeling expressed by academics towards the changing nature of their work after the formation of the new University and, in particular, the perceived injustices resulting from the change in value afforded research activities as compared with that given to teaching. These sentiments confirm the findings of research conducted by others, including Everett and Entrekin (1987), Moses and Ramsden (1992), McInnes (1996) and Adams (1998) that academics from the former CAEs experienced a decline in optimism after entry to the university environment, especially in regard to promotional opportunities, as the status of research increased while the value of teaching declined.

A small number of academics regarded the changes as beneficial and the increased opportunities to engage in research activities were welcomed. Also, the

increased sense of professional autonomy gained as a result of the changes was regarded as beneficial by these academics. Similar observations have been recorded by McInnes (1996).

As Paton and McCalman (2000) and others have stressed, the change process is often made more problematic by the reticence of those responsible for implementing the changes to value individuals as they themselves expect to be valued. When change is poorly implemented a climate of mistrust develops and individuals lose motivation. Too often those leading the changes are limited in their ability to see the relationship between successful organisational change and individual engagement in the process. The level of expectation from management concerning academics' changing work brief, especially in regard to research, was seen by some academics in this study as yet another layer imposed upon an already heavy workload. As well, many academics believed their work had been significantly devalued in the process. It comes as no surprise therefore that the loss of that which was once perceived as a cooperative, well-informed, stable working environment had led to adverse personal impacts, as also noted in the work of Trowler (1998) and Martin (1999). These will be discussed in the following chapter along with the strategies adopted by academics to cope with the changes.

CHAPTER 11: ACADEMICS COPING WITH CHANGE

Introduction

During periods of radical organisational change, as experienced during the changes at the new University, individuals are confronted with a multitude of new experiences and stresses that impact in varying degrees on their personal and professional lives (Drucker, 1998; Nadler, 1998; Fullan, 1999). The manner in which individuals perceive, define and experience these changes will vary according to a multitude of factors, including the effectiveness of the strategies they utilise to cope with the changes. Consistent with a symbolic interactionist approach towards understanding human action, academics in this study are regarded as dynamic and active, rather than passive; as such, immediate situations are defined 'according to perspectives developed and altered in ongoing social situations' (Charon, 2001:40). In this regard, academics not only respond to their environment, but also 'act toward it, and use it' (ibid., p.40).

From the qualitative analysis of the interview data collected for this research, there remains little doubt the organisational changes brought about by the formation of the new University impacted significantly on academics, although the level of intensity and stress experienced by each academic varied considerably. This chapter outlines the personal responses of academics to those changes and discusses these in relation to the differing approaches utilised by academics to manage and cope with their changing work environment. This thesis argues that coping is a dynamic process, in which individuals are constantly engaged in defining, redefining and interpreting situations in order to take appropriate action. To capture this process, the findings from the analysis of academics' responses are presented in the form of a metaphor of a bus journey during which academics experience different levels of comfort, and take in the changing view of the landscape from a variety of perspectives. Inspiration for the use of metaphor emanated from two sources; firstly, from Morgan's (1997a) extensive and effective use of metaphor in his study of organisations; and secondly, from the realisation that metaphor might prove effective in capturing the dynamic nature of the change and coping process. As Crotty (1998:220)

highlights, 'metaphor emphasises similarity, since it is a figure of speech that relates two unlikely items so as to suggest an identity between them; for example, the ship and camel in the metaphor of 'ship in the desert'. The use of metaphor in this chapter positions academics on a journey of change, similar to the changes experienced during a bus journey; those academics experiencing great difficulty coping with the changes might be regarded as having not travelled very far in their journey of change, and even desiring to get off the bus, whereas other academics attempting to cope with the changes are situated at differing points along the continuum of change or bus journey.

11.1   RIDING CHANGE

11.1.1   Stop the bus – it's out of control

A major concern for academics in this study was the rapidity with which the organisational changes occurred.   The increased uncertainty and lack of understanding of the direction of the changes left some academics believing the organisation to be *'out of control'* and *'going nowhere'*, thus creating an overwhelming feeling for some that 'everything is going round and round in circles' (27). This produced such intense feelings of pressure for some academics that even those who supported the changes believed a reduction in the pace was needed to allow academics 'to take ownership of the changes' (17), although respondent (52) believed 'it would be good if it stopped'. Staff should be able to work 'with' the changes rather than feel as though the changes were being 'forced on them', respondent (17) argued. Exhausted by the constant pressure, some academics believed a period of reassessment was needed to allow time for reflection on the direction and negative impact of the changes on staff, both at work and in their personal lives. Respondent (57) highlights the difficulty:

> 'we need time to consider the worth of what is being done to individuals working at this pace. It is very hard to be working at the level we are working, studying at the levels we are studying, committing ourselves to family, and fulfilling our needs and obligations to family, and our commitment to our own parish and the Church'.

Further, respondent (57) argues:

> 'The ideal University would be one that calmed down for a while to give time for reflection, time to celebrate achievements and then to foster new growth as the staff become comfortable with the changes, own them, and become change agents'.

The rapidity of change increased the 'unpredictable nature of work and administration' (62) and this had made the 'future for individuals less certain' (23). As a consequence, academics found themselves immersed in a rather 'unpleasant working environment' (48) where concerns regarding staff losses and campus closures were compounded by a heightened level of anxiety regarding the viability of the University. 'All staff are frightened for their own jobs ...and staff feel that all they have done in the past is not valued' (11). The sense of pessimism that emerged at this time in the minds of some academics is clearly evident in the response of interviewee (62):

> 'The University is barely surviving and that has presented many difficulties particularly for some staff who are stressed by the uncertainty of their jobs. The workload is very hard. Once 4pm was the end of the day. Now it is 7pm. Teaching has also become demanding as the courses have changed involving total rewrites. The biggest personal difficulty is the irritation that after all this is over we may still not survive. This means it is impossible to be optimistic. There have been too many upheavals. Too many staff losses while student numbers have increased. In a word: we are diminished at the campuses and have very little input into the whole picture'.

These concerns left some academics fearful of 'losing their jobs and feeling threatened by the changes' (48), while others were made more vulnerable by the dramatic changes to their workplace roles, especially those academics 'who had well defined roles in the college system' (48). This had produced an 'adverse personal impact in terms of role clarification, tiredness, excessive pressure and morale' (58).

The anxiety of academics was further intensified by the possibility that falling student numbers would result in even greater reductions in funding and therefore threaten the viability of the University. Considering the already low staff morale, a further increase in personal stress would, it was believed, impact very

negatively on staff and possibly lead to the breakdown of the organisation, for, as respondent (7) comments, 'without motivated staff the University will fail' (7). The gravity of this situation was just 'too scary' (7) to even consider.

Even those academics supportive of the changes believed the change experience had exacted a heavy toll, and the high level of energy required to continue working at the current pace eventually unsustainable. As interviewee (37) highlights:

> 'The personal impact has been very positive, particularly in re-
> establishing contacts with people at other campuses and in working
> at Faculty Board level. I had been on a large number of committees
> both in the University and in the community but the pressure on time
> led me to withdraw from many. I am now encouraging some of the
> younger ones to get involved. The University would like to see us
> run ragged, giving 400% of our time to the University'.

As previously noted by Bridges (1980, 1988), the process of change is often accompanied by a tremendous sense of loss, and the results of this study confirm this observation. Academics described the: loss of the nurturing, caring environment for students; loss of the opportunity to continue to build a career focused on teaching; loss of power; loss of time to do things well; loss of control over the environment; loss of a sense of belonging; loss of energy; loss of self-efficacy; loss of trust; loss of value; loss of area of subject speciality; loss of autonomy regarding course development and structure; loss of funds to central administration; loss of staff not replaced; loss of staff expertise; loss of service; loss of quality; loss of courses; loss of choice of units; loss of enjoyment; and loss of self-confidence. Taylor (1999:8) suggests that in any study of change, the sense of loss must be acknowledged and dealt with, along with the non-rational in the sense-making process. Unfortunately, he states, there is often little acknowledgement that 'change is always *from* something, not just *to* something' (p.8).

The reduced opportunities for academics to participate productively in the changes had increased the feeling of isolation from management, and some greatly missed the climate of support and camaraderie experienced previously in the colleges. Although commitment to the concept of the new University was

generally quite strong, the organisational changes had resulted in considerable alienation for some academics, and a feeling of no longer 'belonging' to the organisation. This had contributed to the significant reduction in motivation for these academics, as well as a lack of self-efficacy in being able to contribute to the ongoing life of the organisation, as expressed by respondent (23):

> 'Overall the impact has been the loss of a sense of belonging or being part of the institution. I don't feel that I am a part of it nor a part of what is going on anymore. I no longer know whom to contact...If people don't feel they belong to anything then they won't contribute to it'.

The loss of motivation and sense of working towards a worthwhile goal is clearly evident in the words of respondent (49):

> 'I feel that I am just simply working for my wages. I'm not working for anything that I believe in. It's just a job. It's something that has to be done and I get on and do it'.

11.1.2   Still maintaining the old model

For some academics, the strength of commitment to the *'old way of doing things'*, along with a firm belief the changes had done 'more harm than good' (23) left them struggling to cope with the dissonance created by the changes. As a result of a high commitment to teaching and student care, some academics disregarded the advice from management to focus on research, preferring instead to direct their energies towards those aspects of their work that gave them most satisfaction; a course less likely to be productive in terms of career advancement in the new University. Justification for this stance came from the belief that not only should time be spent with students, but also that extra time was needed to fill the void left by other academics, who now were either more reluctant to give their time to students or unable to do so as they were employed on a sessional basis.

The high level of satisfaction gained through the interaction and encouragement of students' learning proved too valuable to discard and as these academics struggled to maintain those practices now perceived to be less valued by the University, some strengthened their resolve by becoming overly critical of the performance of management in handling the change process.

For those academics unable, or unwilling, to integrate the changes into their working and personal lives, the ongoing pressure and growing disenchantment with the workplace changes reduced their stamina to 'remain in the race', and this contributed further to their increasing sense of alienation from the organisation. Respondents (40) and (58) portray the picture as bleak and there appears little chance that conditions for these academics will improve in the foreseeable future; the burden is considerable:

> 'I have little future and have been job hunting for twelve months. This job is now very frustrating – it takes so long to process initiatives. There are too many empire builders, and senior management is inept. There is poor communication from the VC down to the grass roots. Centralisation of functions has been ineffective and inefficient. Things will break down soon. Perhaps we will then decentralise again. At present there is no effective driving force and no leadership just lots of people running around in circles. The University is reactive, not proactive. We are getting tired of the constant physical, mental and emotional stress. Maybe the older ones have ploughed the field and must now get out of the road to let the others plant the crop and harvest it' (40).

And:

> 'The pressure put on everyone now is immoral, and necessitates working solidly most weekends, and looking for an opportunity to retreat' (58).

For those struggling to make sense of the changes, the attraction to revert to past practices was strong, as shown in the comment of interviewee (40) who held some hope that 'perhaps we will decentralise again', while respondent (55) provides another example:

> 'Within the ACU the main change has been the upgrade from colleges to a university model. But this has been at the cost of now needing to comply with the government's rules. It was all very confusing. I am hoping that one day we will go back to the college system'.

The sense of disillusionment brought about by the organisational changes left some academics feeling 'bitter and twisted...and more frustrated than at any time in the past' (55); a feeling intensified now as the increased pressure had not been matched by equal support. Of those academics interviewed, 14 (20%) felt more

isolated than before while 17 (25%) felt they were now not valued or were experiencing a lack of affirmation for their efforts.

The strong sense of community that had characterised the pre-university colleges was sorely missed, yet some academics felt reluctant to promote 'a campus perspective or spirit' lest it be misconstrued 'as working against a sense of belonging to the whole university' (23). In the previous organisational environment, most academics had enjoyed opportunities to socialise, support and interact with colleagues, whereas the change to University status produced a noticeable reticence in staff attending community or staff functions, especially so since attendance at such functions would no longer gain recognition or reward.

For some academics, the greatest disappointment during the changes had arisen from a lack of recognition of their efforts to contribute and adapt to the workplace changes, which having gone unnoticed had left them despondent and depressed. In an endeavour to cope, some looked more readily to move away or retreat from the workplace:

> 'The changes have caused a lot of stress and I have been depressed for some time. There is the pressure at work and the pressure to upgrade qualifications but I have been run ragged in work for students, which is most important. Yet there is a lack of care and this is bad for self-esteem. I haven't got a hope in hell of ever becoming a senior lecturer. On top of this is the new pressure to be entrepreneurial, to raise funds. Yet no one noticed my first article published. The disappointments here have been huge. So now I come to work, assist the students, attend meetings and do all that is required but also retreat to home and work there when possible. This is to survive physically' (50).

The increasing difficulty for some academics to cope with the burgeoning workload and the increasing sense of hopelessness extended far beyond the working day and into their personal lives, resulting in an increase in the 'hardworking people who are demoralised, and getting sick and stressed' (58).

11.1.3 Balancing the pressure in the tyres

The 'pressure is everywhere' lamented respondent (23) and the need for support paramount, yet the provision of greater assistance by management was not

forthcoming. The concern that insufficient information had been provided regarding the need for change left many academics feeling they were 'just being told we should be changing' (23). The pressure on academics to cope with the demands made upon them did not correspond, some argued, to the amount of training available to assist and build confidence in those attempting to participate in the changes.

Many academics reported stress in trying to publish, research, teach and, as well, care for students; this was further increased by the frustration at not having sufficient time to complete the work properly. At the same time 'new courses needed to be written' and teaching had become more demanding 'as the courses have changed and involve total rewrites' (62); this had all been made more difficult by 'the significant reduction in academic staff' (57). As respondent (54) highlights:

> 'The changes overall have been beneficial to staff as well as students but the frustration level has also increased, especially in trying to carry out research while doing all the other jobs. And the stress comes with the deadlines. There is not enough time to balance it all out'.

The need to attend to many differing tasks within the same time period had produced a situation where 'things compete against each other' (16). This had produced a feeling of 'just getting there; when the work is done it is fine, but sometimes I would like to be further ahead than I am' (16).

The effort in *maintaining a balance* between teaching long hours, developing a research profile, completing administrative tasks, and fulfilling community service obligations, proved difficult for many, especially when also grappling with the 'remoteness of headquarters' (22) for administrative matters, such as approvals for initiatives. The lack of resources provided a professional challenge for others, requiring tolerance and patience with the increasing 'degree of inefficiency and poor practice' (38). Some struggled with the burden of maintaining clinical expertise, especially the nursing staff 'doing shift work such as night duty and weekends' (60), which was regarded as extremely hard work and stressful.

Some academics sought relief from the 'huge increase in personal stress' (15) through the pursuit of physical activity including 'getting up earlier and going for a walk' (15), or engaging 'in aerobics to keep fit' (47). As respondent (47) explains: 'I now deliberately exercise, so I have joined the recreational centre and I go along there three or four times a week. I find that helps because I was getting too tired in the evening'.

Some 25 (36%) academics interviewed resented the increased stress resulting from the changes, 11 (16%) stating the increased stress had a detrimental effect on their home life.

11.1.4   Seeking support from co-drivers

> 'I find a magnificent example in my friend's patience, the quick
> flashes of wit evident in his expression for long moments before he
> is able to give voice to them, the generous empathy of his listening,
> so ready to cry or laugh with me as I tell him what is happening in
> my life.'

> Caroline Jones (1998:200)

Some academics looked to colleagues for support and this had proved to be a great source of comfort and had assisted them to cope. This, it was argued, was in stark contrast to the level or lack of support offered to them by the management of the University. A 'far more user friendly' approach was required, some argued, and a model of organisation that is 'more supportive and addresses people's insecurities generated by the changes' (35). While the University 'demands we publish', some academics felt they were attempting to do the 'impossible with nothing' (35) and this had resulted in the perception that the changes and workplace demands were somewhat 'one-sided' (35). Working within a new definition of community, the workplace environment had become less personal than that experienced in the predecessor colleges. As a result, this had created a more 'impersonal university world' (50).

> 'No one knows whether you are sick, divorced, remarried, or have
> other problems and need pastoral care. No one has time to check the
> staff is being cared for. The campus ministers are run off their feet
> not only with stressed students but also stressed staff'.

11.1.5 Travelling over bumpy roads

Although disenchanted by the changes, many academics sought to *accommodate* the ongoing changes into their working lives by expanding or modifying their behaviour in order to meet the expectations brought about by the organisational changes. In a relatively short period of time, a significant number of academics had enrolled in post-graduate studies to improve the level of their qualifications, were attending conferences more regularly, and had begun to consider the possibility of engaging in research projects. Active participation in various endeavours brought some academics higher levels of work satisfaction and motivation as effort and outcomes produced tangible results, either in recognition or career advancement, thereby providing the necessary reinforcement to continue. The new expectations, including the move to upgrade qualifications, carry out research, publish, as well as teach, had created, for these staff, a positive feeling of being intellectually 'stretched' (6); an attitude well appreciated by a University striving to enhance its profile through improved staff credentials. Yet the increased productivity came at a price, as many academics worked tirelessly to cope with the increasing workload, demands of administration, and the extra burden of upgrading qualifications while writing for publication. Without adequate support, many were left struggling:

> 'This year has been extremely hard. The effect is stress. While the University has its attractions and its potential, I don't want to stay much longer as my own personal goals in research and study for a Ph D have not been supported. I have to think about the future and the increase in stress' (61).

Some academics coped with the increasing pressure and workload by *extending* the working day and by working at weekends to complete, or 'keep up', with the daily demands placed upon them. Others sought opportunities to *retreat* from the workplace to minimise disruptions and complete work tasks. Some found it essential to *ration time* or 'block out a period of time each week' (54) in order to gain time for concentrated periods of research, writing and relaxation, as evidenced in the examples provided by respondents (38) and (31):

> 'Personally the work has been very stressful and hard. This has led to working at home a lot more, particularly in writing books and

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journal articles, in reviewing student theses, so professional development has improved of necessity' (38).

And

> 'The work is now harder and it is necessary to work at home. There are conferences to attend now and life is more hectic' (31).

Working off-campus proved for some to be a useful means of coping with the increased workload, while others sought to avoid the workplace for different reasons, including a perceived sense of injustice. Respondent (4) provides an example, where even though completing doctoral studies, the main motivation for working off-campus was more directly related to the increased frustration brought about by the lack of opportunities for promotion, or even transfer, 'despite the rhetoric'. While the pursuit of doctoral studies constituted a legitimate form of academic behaviour, and one that would ultimately benefit the University, being off campus, for this academic, constituted a form of resistance to workplace practices and perceived inequities. As respondent (4) explains: 'I have given much to the faculty in the past and now it is time for the faculty to make a contribution to me, especially in time release'.

11.1.6   Variable performance

Although many academics complained of feeling exhausted and 'burnt out' others remained positive, despite the difficulties experienced in the workplace. While the University environment provided academic stimulation, the stress and disappointment is obvious in the comments of respondent (43), yet this academic is able to remain positive through continuing to achieve personal goals:

> 'The personal impact has been hard work, research, publications, committees, a Masters degree, soon a PhD, conference presentations, involvement in aboriginal education that was very rewarding. But there is stress, there is the problem of being let down, feeling tired. None of this was apparent with the former teachers' college. So my time has to be rationed around now. There is a lot of work that is not recognised in any workplace agreement document. I feel positive about the changes, in spite of all this hassle, due to setting goals and achieving them'.

Internally motivated, these academics utilised opportunities that arose in order to gain more control over their workplace environment through the adoption of numerous strategies including individual *goal setting*. As a result, they believed they had grown professionally from their experiences; for example, they had, of necessity, become more organised, utilised technology more than before to facilitate learning, and had improved their administrative skills. By actively participating in the changes, rather than 'fighting against them' (9), these academics had been able to increase their repertoire of behaviours, and this had produced a feeling of being 'more able to control the emotional tension, even in spite of the unstable working climate' (7), and had facilitated 'more control over the working environment' (9). Individuals should take some responsibility for the changes, these academics argued, even though it may not be clear 'where the University is going' (2).

While some argued the effect of the changes had resulted in lower staff morale, others believed that individuals had developed 'greater self-assurance about themselves as academics' (53). Conversely, those academics less inclined to believe they might affect some control over the changes, accepted that academics would 'just have to grin and bear them' (4).

The approach adopted by interviewee (29) provides a useful example of an academic who managed to work effectively within the organisation even though experiencing feelings of considerable rejection as a result of the changes. By actively increasing the level of self-value and de-emphasising the role and value of the organisation, this academic was able to reduce the level of dissonance created by the lack of personal recognition, and de-emphasis on teaching. In this way, respondent (29) was able to restore sufficient balance between work expectations and personal satisfaction to remain working at the University rather than resign. In relation to the intended resignation, interviewee (29) explains: 'but on balance the joy of teaching won the day' and in countering feelings of rejection: 'So while the institution doesn't value me, on another level I am able to say poor them' (29).

11.1.7 Turbo-charging

The significant losses experienced as a result of the changes were, for some academics, compensated for by the creation of opportunities to work *in different ways* and engage in work related activities not previously experienced. As shown in the comments of respondent (16), the changes brought 'more stress, a lot more stress...and many more demands that before, in terms of administration', yet these had proved:

> 'challenging in terms of the things we have to think about and decide. Miss the personal contact with students BUT now teaching at a higher level and in a different way than before' (16).

For another, the exposure to the new workplace environment brought opportunities to develop assertiveness, the ability to speak with authority and to give definite answers, and, with a reordering of priorities, an 'ability to cope with the increase in pressure' (14). Others argued that their ability to cope with the changes had been a 'matter of choice'; that is, after appraising the situation, academics were free to either adapt or simply allow the changes to overwhelm them. As indicated in the response by interviewee (66) the opportunity for personal and professional growth cancelled out any possible losses caused by the changes, and the required resiliency to cope, on some occasions, had extended to dealing with workplace politics. For respondent (66) the positive outcomes had resulted in an increase in commitment to the University.

> 'The personal impact has been the challenge to sink or swim, better career opportunities than before in the College system, the chance to do a PhD, to develop professionally and in management. Because of this I feel some loyalty to the University although there is a lot of backstabbing politics here, but my scars are healing well' (66).

A strong belief in the impact and need for individual change to ensure change at the more general level is evident in the response of interviewee (56). To this academic, change is about 'self-change' rather than changing others or the institution. In this way change equates to the growth of the individual, others and the institution, and is an essential element if the organisation is to move forward.

Respondent (56) explains: 'If one of you continues to grow, the University continues to grow; if you stop growing the University begins to die. The people who suddenly feel they are on top, that they don't have to grow, that they can tell other people what to do, are finished. As far as I am concerned, the University is going backwards from that moment' (56). This philosophy toward change and the ability to remain enthusiastic about the future assisted this academic to cope with the less than ideal experiences of the past, as illustrated in the comment 'things were decided from on high without consultation, but we strive into the future' (56). The acceptance that change is essential for individual growth, no matter the age, is clearly evident in the words of this academic: 'I am not the same person today as I was last year...I would say I have changed radically...The older I become the more sure I am of myself' (56). Yet, paradoxically, this statement is also an illustration of the confidence that may come from having fixed assumptions with which to observe new facts (Douglas, 1986), perhaps a barrier to change acceptance!

11.1.8 Realigning the road map

The ability to *convert negatives into positives* proved useful as a means of coping with the changes for a number of academics, as evidenced in the comments of respondent (28). While agreeing that many changes had indeed occurred, 'you accept those and look for the positive things you can do about them. Don't dwell on the past. You just simply make the best of the present situation and maintain as much integrity for the program as you can' (28). By *reconceptualising the changes*, difficulties become challenges to be overcome and a number of academics interviewed had felt a 'warm glow' from the sense of achievement of overcoming adversity. The ability to reduce the dissonance created by the changes through the ability to *retain a balanced view* between the negative and positive elements of the changes allowed some academics to retain a forward-looking perspective. The approach to *presenting both sides of the argument* is illustrated in the comments of respondent (56) when commenting on the disparity between the wealth of one university compared with the new University: 'We don't have its wealth, or resources, but in one sense we have a status as a university'. In this

way, the positive dimensions of the changes were able to 'move things along' (56).

Respondent (52) makes effective use of metaphor to describe the impact of the changes and, while these had been difficult, the stimulus provided by the 'challenge of change' and the modification to work behaviour had enabled this academic to remain positive.

> 'Working at the university has been a very tiring time, like 'riding a bike and building the bike at the same time'. But there has been the challenge of change. My teaching style has had to change to cater for adult learners and I have had to be more flexible than before' (52).

Respondent (47) provides another example:

> 'The changes have aged me, caused me to work longer hours here and leave my son at home alone. The challenges of academic work are a positive and I had had to be more adaptable, learn how to switch off, do aerobics to keep fit, be more organised. Generally I feel I have come through the changes satisfactorily'.

11.1.9   Running in the new model

Others found that the increased workload severely restricted their time available for personal relaxation and enjoyment with others, yet the *strong commitment to the value of the University* provided the necessary impetus to sustain efforts to cope with the changes, as respondent (14) explains:

> 'A difficulty has been the horrendous workload which has greatly reduced time available for contact with others and even personal time such as holidays. But in spite of these negatives, the experience of developing a university has been well worthwhile, a 'great experience' Meeting people, particularly those from other states has been a plus'.

For some academics, the strong commitment to the concept of a Catholic University provided the necessary motivation to maintain the struggle to 'keep on' (16); all that is needed is a great deal of 'hope and patience' (14); eventually the University would 'get there' (14).

> 'In all this we need patience.   The University cannot happen overnight. Some universities in Australia have been in existence for

100 years, others for 30 years. But ACU has been in existence only
5 years. We need patience and hope'.

The high value and commitment towards individuals, both students and staff, were important elements in assisting some academics to cope with the negative aspects of the changes, as interviewee (56) shows: 'I have had my share of pain in this place, but I love it, that is because I love the people in it'.

11.1.10 Hoping the bumpy road ends soon

The belief that change is transitional in nature assisted some academics to cope more effectively with the organisational changes confronting them; hopefully, they believed, the changes would not last forever. Supported by the view that there is 'a definite end in sight', and that, at least, 'we should be over the worst of it' (48) as 'we move from A to B' (16), these academics accepted the difficulties of the changes primarily to reach the 'the light at the end of the tunnel' (1,16,51). While accepting the difficulties of the changes, academics more readily accepted the negative aspects of the changes in the belief that the changes were characteristic of this transitory stage of the University's development. As respondent (8) shows: 'because the University is in a transitional stage, it is easy to see the negative aspects of the changes, but it is now a University and values such as scholarship and research must be encouraged'.

11.1.11 Guiding the tour

For a small group of mainly senior academics, the changes created little disruption, especially so for those who were either keen researchers in the predecessor colleges or who were ideally placed in positions of influence and control over the direction of the changes. Others believed their success in coping with the changes resulted from their ability to 'work harder and smarter' (59) and as a consequence, the high energy normally required to cope with the changes was able to be channelled more productively into assisting those who were struggling. By assuming the role of mentor or nurturer to others, these academics fulfilled an essential role, as highlighted by respondent (26):

'The personal impact has been the necessity to work much harder.
There is also the need to somehow stop the troops from mutinying,

reminding them of their positive achievements and at the same time watching they don't overload themselves in the interests of the institution but not themselves'.

Wood et al. (1998) described the challenge of organisational change as firstly, 'being able to personally deal positively with change and the stress that accompanies it; and secondly, being able to help others do the same' (p.619). The sense of satisfaction gained by some academics in being able to help others is considerable, as the response from interviewee (8) shows:

> 'I like doing positive things and as head of department I feel pride in encouraging staff around the various campuses within the school to achieve their own potential, e.g., giving them access to resources they may not have known existed'.

If any concerns existed for these academics, they were not for themselves but for others who were not as easily able to cope with the changes. The experience of watching these academics suffer caused considerable distress for some who occupied positions in management, as shown in the comments of respondent (59):

> 'But for others there is uncertainty, a feeling of being let down, and a lot of stress. It has been distressful watching these hard working, wonderful people feeling this way'.

However, one academic was less generous in commenting on the difficulties of others:

> 'Now many staff members are stressed because they cannot handle the new tasks. Some staff members are genuinely overworked while others only talk about it; they believe the university only exists to provide them with employment' (39).

The extra workload imposed by those academics perceived as not completely fulfilling their work responsibilities, had resulted in considerable pressure for this academic, as indicated in these comments:

> 'It is difficult working in an environment that is poorly organised and inadequately funded. The impact on me is that I am now working much harder but it is frustrating to be uncertain that others are doing the jobs they are meant to do. Now I am simply doing more jobs and the quality has disappeared due to tight time constraints. The uncertainty is always there unfortunately. I cannot keep operating in this pressured way much longer' (39).

11.1.12 Forging ahead – near to the speed limit

The increase in institutional status brought about by the changes saw some academics experience a sudden rise in professional status and position, which allowed them greater input and control over the organisational direction and change. This provided an effective 'cushioning' effect against the impact of the changes enabling these academics to remain somewhat more positive than others, even though their 'working hours were much longer' (24). As respondent (49) explains, the impact of the changes had 'allowed me to very rapidly rise within the system' and, as a result of 'being in the right place at the right time', had 'allowed me to develop myself in ways that I hadn't dreamed of when I came here 5 years ago' (49). The sudden rise in academic status was not, however, only attributed to being 'lucky', but also to the possession of desirable personal characteristics, such as in 'being a fairly flexible, easy-going person, who is able to move with the flow, but at the same time maintain those things that I believe in'. The strong sense of self-efficacy comes through in the reflective comments of respondent (49):

> 'I am simply one of those people who believe that if the job has to be done, I'll do it, no matter what it is and I'll do it to the best of my ability, but I'll be doing it and I can't be somebody else, I have to do it my way'.

The 'easy-going' approach to the working environment and sufficient freedom to 'do all the things' that had been achieved 'in spite of the structure not being as good as it could be, or as I would like to see it' allowed this academic to continue to function quite successfully within the system. The level of tolerance toward imperfect conditions would not continue, however, if 'I couldn't function within it'; if this were to occur, then 'I would have to go (49). External praise was not a condition for this level of commitment to the task, rather the satisfaction 'comes from me knowing that I am doing the best I can do, to the benefit of those who are here having to work with me and are going to follow' (49).

For this academic, the impact of the changes had also increased the level of personal satisfaction in regard to contributing to the improvement of the teaching curriculum, while at the same time, raised a few concerns about the quality of

past endeavours. This respondent stated the changes have 'allowed me to creatively take a whole curriculum and twist it upside down, back-to-front, and turn it into something from a very traditional didactic science program into a very student-centred approach to teaching and learning which I have never had the opportunity to do before' (49).

For some academics who had obviously benefitted from the changes, especially in regard to career advancement and opportunities to develop professionally, there had been a decline in the level of personal enjoyment experienced when working. Of future interest will be the desire and willingness of these academics to remain working in such positions that offer greater professional rewards yet considerably less personal satisfaction. As interviewee (33) explains:

> 'The personal impact has been favourable as far as my career is concerned ' I have certainly shot up the ladder to Head of Department, even without a Masters degree. I have learnt administrative skills. But my teaching and personal styles haven't changed. There are frustrations but I am happy enough with the career development. The structural changes have been frustrating and chaotic and I haven't been as happy as in the early years'.

11.1.13 Driving the bus

Some academics expressed considerable delight towards the organisational changes as these had brought greater opportunities for professional development and research, and a high level of satisfaction at being able to contribute to the development of the University. Respondent (31) expresses this well:

> 'Overall the changes have been positive. The personal freedom is exhilarating. This has involved more personal research effort than in the past; making connection with people overseas has helped establish the credibility of the university'.

For these academics, the reorientation of values created by the formation of the University left them excited by the possibility of being able to pursue those endeavours less valued in the predecessor institution. Little realignment was required to maintain the balance between organisational and personal values; for these academics, opportunities to help 'create' organisational change, rather than

merely respond to change, was clearly a strong element in their ability to remain positive toward the changes, as respondent (51) highlights:

> 'Personally, I have always been involved in research and so did not have to adapt (others have felt threatened by the directives to carry out research). I haven't made work behaviour changes although other staff have been greatly affected by the changes'.

The personal impact of the changes has been 'all for the better, particularly in encouraging research, that is, giving it credit' argued respondent (24), while another rejoiced in the perception that the changes fit with 'my intentions and motivations, identity and vocation' and there were now 'worthwhile challenges to contribute to' (25).

For the relatively small number of senior academics already in positions of influence, the changes brought opportunities for increased participation in being able to shape the direction of the new University, and being 'very much at the cutting edge of putting people in the picture with the University' (30); a situation that produced high levels of personal satisfaction. Even though the changes had often necessitated considerable adjustment (e.g., increased travel), these academics remained positive towards the changes:

> 'The personal impact has been profound. Driven from one managerial position to another. Chairing committees, acting Head, acting Director in various faculties. There has been constant change and constant travel. Probably only one day per week spent in the substantive position and campus. All other days have been spent at other campuses. So constant change has become normal and there has been less time available for teaching. The administrative experience has been excellent. So the personal effect of the changes is positive' (67).

The extensive knowledge of these senior academics regarding the political, social and economic influences that had led to the changes in higher education and the new University provided the necessary contextual framework through which to understand the enormous pressures confronting the organisation as it sought to establish itself in the higher education arena. Mechanic (1962) highlighted the importance of experience as a valuable personal resource both individually and collectively. With the accumulated knowledge and skills brought from

experience in the forerunner colleges, these senior academics appeared more able to operate satisfactorily within this period of organisational change and sought opportunities to contribute to initiatives before they were implemented.

11.2   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COPING AND ACADEMIC LEVEL

A further analysis of the personal impact of the changes on academics was conducted to ascertain if academics occupying different levels within the organisational structure utilise similar or dissimilar strategies when responding to change.   The results indicate that specific strategies are not unique to any particular organisational level and that all academics utilise, to a greater or lesser extent, a variety of strategies to assist them manage and cope with the workplace changes.

The following discussion outlines the different strategies utilised by academics during the changes to their work environments and then focuses on the differences between academics according to position (level D, C, or B). From the analysis, the coping strategies were classified into three broad groupings: *Proactive, Reactive,* and *Counter-active.* A discussion of the trends across levels then follows.

11.2.1   Strategies utilised by academics

For the purposes of this discussion, the specific coping strategies identified from the data could be classified into three broad groupings: *Proactive, Reactive* and *Counter-active.* These depict the extent to which a specific strategy is useful in assisting or hindering the individual to respond to the workplace changes. Strategies are regarded as productive if viewed as beneficial in terms of improving the professional development and potential career advancement for the individual and are in keeping with the achievement of organisational goals.

11.2.1.1 Proactive strategies

Proactive strategies are defined as those that allow academics to take an active role in workplace change, such as formulating policy that brought about change, or to contribute through the provision of professional support and assistance to

others, both staff and students. Organisations need members who demonstrate an ability to look-forward; an essential quality claimed to be that which distinguishes leaders from other credible people (Kouzes, & Posner, 1993:15). From this perspective, responding to change is a constructive process in which individuals attempt to shape their workplace environment so that they are more able to 'bring them under control' (9). As Baron (1994) aptly highlights, while it is important that individuals possess effective problem-solving skills, more important is that they are problem-seekers, flexible in their thinking and willing to actively search for or anticipate problems rather than simply reacting to them. Similarly, changing workplace environments need individuals who display such characteristics and are able to take a proactive role in the organisational changes to maximise opportunities and to anticipate possibilities for the future growth of the organisation. Proactive strategies identified in this study include: Reinventing, Networking, Positioning, Shaping, and Mentoring (described in 11.2.3). Accepting that academics do actively engage in the construction of their environment, organisational change should be possible across all levels of the organisation, although within hierarchically arranged structures this is not always the reality. It might be expected that those individuals situated at the higher levels of the organisation, due to their position and formal power, would have more opportunity to use Proactive strategies. Through the use of Proactive strategies, individuals are more able to become part of, rather than merely responsive to, the change process.

11.2.1.2 Reactive strategies

Reactive strategies are identified as those utilised by individuals to manage, rather than construct, the changes within the changing workplace environment; that is, increased emphasis on research. Engagement in any number of these strategies should result in productive outcomes for the individual and the organisation, although similar considerations as discussed above still apply here and the effectiveness of these strategies for individuals remains dependent on many factors, including gaining recognition for endeavouring to change behaviour and now participate in more organisationally valued activities, and possibly being the beneficiary of more formal rewards. Academics adopted a variety of strategies to

assist them manage the increased workload, the longer hours, the burgeoning paperwork, and the expectations to engage in professional writing and research. Reactive strategies include Refining, Extending, Rationing, Leaning, Reconstructing, Prioritising, and Distracting (described in 11.2.3). Through the use of Reactive strategies, academics may be better able to maintain or restore a balance between the frustration and anxiety generated by the changes, and a growing acceptance that the changes may be 'worth putting up with'. Some of course, decided they are not.

11.2.1.3 Counter-active strategies

Unlike Proactive and Reactive strategies, the use of Counter-active strategies tends to hinder or act against individual or organisational achievement. Counter-active strategies tend to move the individual further away from, rather than towards, the workplace environment. Counter-active strategies include: Regressing, Retreating, Ignoring, Severing (described in 11.2.3).

11.2.2   Effectiveness of strategies

Both Proactive and Reactive strategies may be productive when considered in terms of working towards achieving organisational goals, but will vary in terms of level of effectiveness for individuals. As shown in the qualitative analysis, many factors impinge on the extent to which specific strategies eventually become effective including the perceived length of time required to maintain a particular strategy. For example, while a considerable number of academics were prepared to work harder in the short term, thus being productive in terms of organisational and individual outcomes, many were unsure they had the necessary stamina to continue working at such a pace indefinitely. The pace and work overload also left many experiencing high levels of stress and exhaustion. The level of commitment of many academics to the concept of the University increased their resolve to continue when faced with increasing workloads and frustration, while a small number of academics remained motivated from a sense of duty rather than personal commitment to the organisation.

Although the use of Counter-active strategies is viewed as working against individual professional development and the achievement of organisational goals, they may be productive in terms of reducing the individual's level of anxiety; for example, retreating from the workplace, usually to home, as often as possible. This highlights the complexity in determining the value of specific strategies and their possible long-term benefits to the individual. Retreating has benefits to the individual in providing some relief from workplace stress, and may even be productive in terms of achieving personal goals and measurable outcomes such as conference or journal papers, when measured in terms of organisational health, continued use of this strategy would appear to have the potential to be detrimental to the organisation over time, especially so if staff availability for student consultation remains an important element in the work of academics at the new University. Other strategies, such as 'acting on a decision to leave the organisation' may in fact prove to be quite productive for the individual in the long term if the new position offers greater rewards and satisfaction, but detrimental to the organisation in terms of loss of corporate memory, experience and intelligence.

The strategy Regressing involves channelling energy and time into the teaching and care of students. This mirrors the service orientation of the predecessor colleges and, while still an essential element in the life and ethos of the new University as caring and supportive of students, continued use of this strategy may become unproductive to the individual if not combined with other strategies that enhance the profile of both the individual and an organisation attempting to bring about change in its workplace culture. It is important to note, however, that an acceptance to change behaviour does not imply a total commitment to the changes, and, as highlighted elsewhere in this thesis, while academics modified their workplace behaviours, they did so for numerous reasons, including the belief the changes were transitory and would not continue forever. Engagement in a specific behaviour or activity, even if disliked, has been shown to eventually lead to an acceptance of that behaviour or, in some cases, even a likeness for it. It is quite possible that as academics engage in Reactive coping strategies they may come to gain satisfaction from this and even start to enjoy participating in them;

for example, engagement in research may lead to enjoyment in research projects. Of course, the rewards offered by the organisation for engagement in research will also be of importance.

Several academics sought relief and distraction from the pressures of the workplace by increasing the amount of physical or leisure activity engaged in throughout the week. Leisure activities or pursuits, such as walking the dog, or attending the local gymnasium or drama group were mentioned. Adoption of this form of strategy is regarded as productive in that it tends not to distract from the daily working routine, should help to reduce tension and anxiety more generally, and should further assist the individual work effectively in the workplace environment.

Within the three main groupings (Proactive, Reactive and Counter-active) it is accepted that academics will, from time to time, vary their strategies in order to manage and cope with the changing pressures impacting on them in the workplace. Movement across the categories is expected, and some academics may resort to the use of Counter-active strategies if engagement in new actions is found to be unproductive in terms of personal satisfaction or more formal rewards.

11.2.3   Strategy classification

Proactive strategies

Academics utilising Proactive Strategies tend to adopt a proactive approach to gain or maximise advantages generated by the changes. They seek to become part of the change process.

Reinventing

Developing expertise and skills to change or enhance personal profile, e.g., up-grade qualifications, change priorities to align behaviour with organisational goals and expectations.

Adopting behaviours that are in keeping with the direction of the new university, e.g., research, publications (rewarded by the university).

Positioning

Seeking out promotional opportunities or positions on university committees and the like to increase control over the work environment, career development and influence in the future.

Seeking involvement in networks that enhance professional development, especially at the national and international level.

Shaping

Contributing to activities that help generate and determine the direction of the changes, e.g., course development, policy formation.

Mentoring

Assuming the role of mentor to assist others develop strategies to cope with the changing work environment.

Supporting others, taking on the burden of others, offer rather than seek support.

Reactive strategies

Strategies used by academics aimed mainly at managing the changes in the workplace environment; for example, increased administrative load. These strategies are regarded as generally productive as they tend to lead to better performance and work outcomes for the individual and organisation. These strategies have little impact on the changes themselves.

Accommodating

Implementing time management strategies in order to cope with the daily tasks; prioritising work tasks; working smarter or working more efficiently to avoid duplicating tasks and falling behind.

Enhancing

Utilising knowledge, telecommunications, technology in product delivery; enhancing personal performance through use of technology.

Extending

Increasing effort by:
Lengthening the work day; working harder
Working at home as well as in the workplace
Working at night and weekends

Rationing

Rationing time with students so that more time is made available for University preferred activities such as research and writing for publication
Reducing / withdrawing from interaction time with students.

Leaning

Seeking out social support and networks within the workplace.
Utilising support networks for work tasks.

Reconstructing

Changing or altering the way in which the changes are conceptualised, such as changing negatives to positives, focusing on the positive aspects, converting changes to challenges to be overcome.

Distracting

Engaging in leisure and relaxation activities, e.g., aerobics.

Counter-active strategies

Counter-active strategies are those that work in opposition to the workplace changes and these contrary actions are adopted so that they might neutralise or mitigate the effects of the changes. Some strategies may in fact be productive for individuals in the long term. These include securing a more highly paid position with another organisation. Counter-active strategies effectively move the individual away from, rather than towards, the organisation.

Regressing

Channelling energy towards activities that are highly valued and immensely satisfying to the individual. These activities include teaching rather than research but tend not to be as well rewarded in the changing culture of the new University. An example is that of concentrating on student care and support. This strategy maintains the community-oriented teachers' college model of teaching, service and student care.

Retreating

Minimising contact with the organisation, e.g., work at home rather than campus workplace.
Withdrawing from colleagues and students.
Increasing time pursuing professional related tasks such as private consultancy.

Ignoring

Ignoring requests from management.

Severing

Planning to sever ties with the organisation through retirement, resignation, searching for a new job.

11.2.4 Use of strategies across academics levels

From the results displayed in Table 11.1, academics at all levels appear to utilise a whole range of strategies as evidenced by the spread amongst the three academic levels: D, C, and B. In all, 178 responses describing the various strategies used were provided by the 69 academics, 40 responses from the 17 level D academics, 70 responses from 24 level C academics and 68 responses from the 28 academics at level B.

Table 11.1: Strategies adopted by academics across organisational levels

	Levels		
Proactive Strategies	**D**	**C**	**B**
Reinventing	6	7	9
Positioning	1	1	0
Shaping	3	3	1
Mentoring	2	10	5
Reactive Strategies			
Accommodating	3	11	6
Enhancing	1	2	5
Extending	3	3	5
Rationing	1	4	2
Leaning	2	2	3
Reconstructing	5	5	5
Distracting	0	1	1
Counter-active Strategies			
Regressing	6	6	15
Retreating	1	4	6
Ignoring	0	3	0
Severing	6	8	5

Level D n=17;   Level C n=24;   Level B n=28

In studying the findings displayed in Table 11.1 several points are worthy of note. Firstly, it is apparent that a significant number of academics across all levels of the University are utilising Proactive strategies, especially Reinventing and Mentoring, when responding to the changes. The number of academics actively engaged in Reinventing themselves through modifications to past practices and adoption of new behaviours in keeping with the expectations of management and the changing emphases of the institution, augurs well for the future development of the University. This of course is dependent on the ability of academics to

continue this process and not become too overloaded or disillusioned through lack of encouragement and support. The challenge for management will be to provide the necessary incentives to staff in order to build on the process already begun.

Of interest is the mentoring role assumed by many of the level C academics in assisting others through the processes of change. An explanation for this might be found in the fact that many level C academics had been the beneficiaries of sudden promotion; the rise in status often resulting in improved opportunities to participate in the change process. Greater levels of control and opportunities to take a constructive role left these academics more positive towards the changes and presumably with more excess energy to divert to the support of others. Level C academics were also more noticeable in their readiness to adopt Accommodating (Reactive) strategies to ensure the effective management of their working environment.

Academics across all levels showed they had begun to modify their practice through the adoption of various Reactive strategies. This trend could be indicative of a developing interest in the changing emphases within the workplace or to a greater or lesser extent, a growing resignation and acceptance that change 'is here to stay' and therefore, in order to remain with the University, there will need to be some changes to workplace practices and style of operation.

The tendency to engage in Reconstructing strategies, such as converting negatives to positives, to gain some control of the processes of change obviously proved to be useful for many academics as shown by its acceptance across all levels within the University.

Amongst the Counter-active strategies, the trend by level B academics to adopt Regressing strategies is disturbingly high, but in keeping with the high levels of disillusionment towards the changes as noted elsewhere in this chapter and in Chapter 12. For these academics, the desire to revert to practices associated with the service orientation of the teachers' college model still retains its allure and at this stage, still remains more satisfying than engaging in work that is more

sympathetic to University workplace changes. This approach by level B academics, more so than academics at other levels, might be seen as a further reflection of the intensity of the impact of the changes at the lower levels of the organisation. The perceived inadequacies of the rewards offered by management for changing practices resulted in these academics preferring to seek refuge and to obtain continued work satisfaction in familiar workplace practices they believe they do best. Ironically, these academics are fulfilling an essential role for the University in helping to maintain its past strengths of service and care for students, the perceived or real loss of which was a concern raised by many academics across all levels. Unfortunately, at this stage in the development of the new University, the teachers' college model does not receive a high rating in the broad 'scheme of things'. While there were 15 level B academics who described Regressing strategies (Counter-active) there is some balance in the finding that 9 level B academics described Reinventing strategies (Proactive).

A serious Counter-active strategy is to sever the working connection with the new University. Nineteen academics described their response in this way. Table 11.2 provides details of the responses.

Table 11.2: Severing response

Severing	D	C	B
Plan retirement	3	3	1
Plan to leave for another job	3	5	4

Within the 169 responses from the 69 academics, some 33 academics were categorised as either planning to move away from the organisation through retirement or seeking other employment, or were engaged in retreating from the workplace. Another relatively small number of academics attempted to cope with the workplace changes by effectively denying they existed or ignoring requests from management.

Obviously with 19 of 69 academics (27%) admitting to their intention to retire or leave for another job, staff turnover could present a serious issue to management in the immediate future. These academics were reasonably evenly spread across

the levels. However, the number of academics retreating from the workplace increases the lower the level within the University (only one level D but 6 at B). Academics furthest from the decision-making processes appeared least able, or most unwilling, to manage the changes.

Reflective note

This chapter highlights the multiplicity of responses utilised by academics in order to cope with the ongoing changes being introduced throughout their workplaces. Many academics perceived the losses from the changes had not been sufficiently balanced by the gains and this effectively increased their sense of loss and disillusionment. In keeping with the work of Bridges (1980, 1988, 1995), a growing sense of disenchantment or loss of personal meaning was clearly evident in the comments of some academics who struggled to remain effective in the workplace during this period. For others, the loss of role identity had created difficulties and frustrations leading to, in Bridges' terms, a sense of disidentification. The intensity and impact of the changes experienced by these academics helped determine the strategies utilised to cope in the workplace and, for some, this meant effectively removing themselves from the stressful work environment to the comfort of working at home. The lack of congruence between organisational and personal goals left these academics with little confidence to participate in the workplace changes. As Oakland and Ostell (1996) note, a sense of efficacy plays an essential role in the individual's ability to cope effectively. This study confirms this assertion in that many academics believed they no longer possessed the skills that would allow them to participate fully in their new environment. They claimed to be overworked and unhappy, and found the work environment alienating. These perceived difficulties were exacerbated further when compared with the abilities of those academics who were apparently more able in their new environment, especially those with a strong appreciation for opportunities for research. For those promoted into middle management roles (e.g., Head of School), the new workplace offered more positive experiences and the opportunity to take an active role in shaping the events and situations in which they found themselves. These academics often attributed their coping ability to personal characteristics, such as being flexible and adaptable to change, while for

some senior academics, opportunities to take part in the decision-making process left them feeling more positive. Carpenter (1992) too noted that the need to cope with change might have positive effects. As evidenced in this research, this need can act as a catalyst for personal growth, the broadening of individual perspectives, and the development of new skills.

As illustrated in Chapter 5, evaluation of the coping process is far too complex to be measured accurately by recording the amount and type of stressor only. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, are more able to capture the transactional and dynamic nature of the process between individuals and their specific situations, providing a more in-depth understanding rather than 'static snapshots' of isolated events, as noted by Carpenter (1992). Coping is also often protracted and unpredictable and this necessitates the adoption of approaches that will more likely lead to positive outcomes through use of strategies that are cognisant of the situation and the goals and actions of others. Determining a course of action often requires the modification of initial strategies. While academics utilised numerous coping strategies, including emotion-focused and problem-focused approaches, this study highlights the importance of the nature of the relationship between those actions, personal goals, and the desired goals and expectations of the newly developing University, as well as the extent of academics' willingness to modify their personal goals and strategies in order to better cope with the demands within the workplace. Those more accommodating of the changes, more able to exercise some control over their environment, and more flexible in their outlook appear more likely to remain with the University in the future.

During any change, the development of new skills and competencies is essential in order to cope with work-related problems. Many academics in this study became involved in professional development activities, including working towards the achievement of a higher degree. As noted previously, the time required to acquire these new skills and competencies will vary considerably between individuals and a number of temporary strategies may need to be utilised to combat stress levels and anxiety experienced. Many academics showed great adaptability in the strategies employed to deal with their daily frustrations,

workplace overload and workplace politics. These covered a whole spectrum of possibilities ranging from denial, withdrawal, seeking support, reconceptualising, to more positively supporting colleagues, assuming the role of mentor, and being more proactive in the workplace. Unfortunately, the changed emphasis in the nature of academics' work led many to believe this had led to a deterioration of quality due to the inadequate time to properly perform academic, administrative and professional duties, as in the past.

The earlier part of this chapter utilises the metaphor of the bus journey to highlight the differences between academics in their response to change and in the strategies they adopted to cope with those changes. There is little doubt the strategies utilised will produce differing outcomes, and the long-term success of these strategies will be partly dependent on the relationship they have to the overall goals and direction of the University. The positions adopted by academics in this study regarding their response to change show similarities to the transitional phases of denial, resistance, exploration and commitment, as outlined by Scott and Jaffe (1989). While many academics have struggled hard to adjust to the changes, others are achieving greater levels of success than would have been likely in their previous roles. Essential to the process for many academics, is the need to relinquish past practices in order to focus on the possibilities for the future.

The literature sources discussed in the earlier chapters established the dynamic and multidimensional nature of problem situations and noted also that the coping approaches adopted by individuals at times only lead to the creation of further problems. It is therefore essential that in order to more fully understand the nature of the coping process, the context in which the individual is situated must be considered. As academics bring to the workplace differing perspectives on all manner of issues, these will guide their interpretations of events and influence their subsequent actions. The following chapter builds on this discussion through a further exploration of academics' responses to change according to academic level within the University.

CHAPTER 12: OVERALL LEVEL OF POSITIVITY OR NEGATIVITY TOWARDS THE CHANGES

Introduction

Preceding chapters outlined the responses of academics to change both within the higher education sector and more specifically at the new University. As noted, changes to the structure of the organisation created significant strain on both the administrative and academic components while the drive by management to become recognised as a University produced cultural shifts and changes to the nature of academics' work. Academics held differing perspectives regarding the role and future direction of the University, sometimes contradictory, and these views affected the nature and impact of the changes on academics themselves. More particularly, the analysis highlights the dynamic nature of organisational change, the resulting tensions created, and the positive role adopted by some academics in not only responding and adapting to the changes but in their willingness to contribute to the development of the new organisation.

This chapter builds on the qualitative work presented earlier in this thesis by extending the analysis through the use of simple quantitative measures aimed at discerning differences in the overall response to change by academics situated at various levels within the University. This chapter presents findings from the analysis of academics' responses according to academic level regarding:

- academics' perceptions and evaluations of the changes in higher education as beneficial/non- beneficial
- academics' perceptions and evaluations of the changes at the new University as beneficial/non-beneficial
- the personal impact of the changes on academics at the new University
- changes to academics' work behaviour or style as a result of the changes
- the intensity of academics' personal feelings during the changes

The results are expressed in terms of the strength of response, that is, the extent to which academics were positive, negative or undecided in their responses. A discussion of the results follows.

12.1 IMPACT OF CHANGE

Table 12.1 provides a visual description of the findings from the analysis regarding the impact of change within the higher education sector, within ACU and at the personal level. Building on the earlier categorisations created as a result of the qualitative analysis, the data were categorised according to the participant's strength of response towards either a positive (P) or negative (N) view. Results were tabulated according to each person's level (D, C, B) within the new University. Where a participant expressed both positive and negative views for a particular question, the overall response was assigned to the category that represented a higher strength of view. A minority of the participants were ambivalent or undecided (U) about the changes at the new University; most held strong views.

Table 12.1: Strength of academics' response to change

Category	D (n=17)			C (n=24)			B (n=28)		
	P	U	N	P	U	N	P	U	N
Higher education changes beneficial?	4	10	3	10	8	6	13	11	4
	23%	59%	18%	42%	33%	25%	47%	39%	14%
Changes at ACU beneficial?	12	2	3	13	2	9	11	1	16
	71%	11%	18%	54%	8%	38%	39%	4%	57%
Personal impact of changes?	8	0	9	7	2	15	9	0	19
	47%	0%	53%	29%	8%	63%	32%	0%	68%
Changes to work behaviour?	8	0	9	10	0	14	13	0	15
	47%	0%	53%	42%	0%	58%	46%	0%	54%
Feel about changes?	8	0	9	13	0	11	6	0	22
	47%	0%	53%	54%	0%	46%	21%	0%	79%

As might be expected in a period of significant organisational change, academics across all levels saw positive and negative aspects resulting from the changes that had so radically restructured the higher education sector and driven the amalgamation of the various colleges of education to create the new University. Differences were also evident in the degree of personal upheaval experienced by academics. As the results presented in this section emerge from the earlier qualitative work, it is inevitable that some repetition will occur in the expression of ideas.

12.1.1   Level D responses

In response to the question regarding the benefits of the changes that had occurred in higher education sector only 23% of level D academics believed the changes to be distinctively positive, while a very high 59% were still undecided about their value. This contrasts significantly with the 71% of level D academics who accepted the need for changes at the new University as expressed in statements 'they allowed us to survive' and were 'beneficial to the concept of the University'. Many of these academics regarded the changes as positively facilitating the involvement of the Church in tertiary education. Considering the importance placed on involvement in primary and secondary education by the founders of the predecessor colleges, this was seen as a logical step. Changes were also regarded as more beneficial for those who came into the University with high qualifications and who would have 'stood their ground in any institution'. Similarly, benefits were also seen in the change in organisational culture to one where research is valued and intellectual isolation overcome through communication with colleagues in the same field within the University and at other universities.

While acknowledging the benefits of structural and cultural changes, negative comments tended to highlight the significant impact of the changes on staff members over which the level D academics had responsibility. These academics were concerned that such dramatic changes had not been sufficiently recognised and adequately catered for in terms of human relations, including the stress generated by the transitional process from a relatively small field of operation to a

substantially broader arena with higher expectations and performance levels. While tolerance was sought for those preferring to remain primarily as teachers, it was believed that such a preference would be corrected over time as more research-oriented academics gain employment at the University.

On a personal level, some 47% of level D academics responded positively and welcomed such aspects as the more favourable research climate, especially for those who had always worked as 'unrecognised' researchers 'swimming against the tide' in the predecessor colleges. However, gains in this area were countered by the 53% who experienced increases in the amount of administration and the need to work much harder due to the diversity of tasks, lack of direction and unpredictable nature of the job. Sustained research effort was viewed as difficult by some given the workload necessitated by the major transition from a college of education environment to that of a university. Faculty members saw positively the continual revamping and development of new national courses for use across campuses as providing opportunities for ownership, but time consuming and restrictive in terms of meeting state-based requirements.

In regard to changes to work behaviour or style of operation, most level D academics (14, 80%) considered they work harder and had increased the amount of time spent on the job, either by extending the length of the day or working on weekends. Such factors were viewed negatively by slightly over half the 17 participants (53%) while coping strategies were viewed positively by a similar proportion (47%). Coping strategies adopted ranged from: building in safe-guards to work patterns to relieve pressure and allow some flexibility; decreasing the amount of time allocated to specific jobs even though the 'quality is clearly not there'; and prioritising. From a more negative perspective, the extreme measure of 'leaving the organisation' was under consideration by 6 of the 17 level D academics.

While 47% of academics expressed positive feelings towards the changes overall and felt challenged by the new environment, a similar proportion (53%) expressed negative feelings and cited increased stress and tension, irritation and a perception that the University had become smaller rather than larger as the

campus identity or personality had become lost in the ongoing development of the new larger institution.

12.1.2 Level C responses

Academics at this level recorded a relatively high Undecided result (33%) regarding the changes to the higher education sector, although another 42% of level C academics regarded the changes as positive. Far less indecision (8%) was noted in regard to the changes at the new University with some 54% of level C academics responding positively to the processes of amalgamation and other changes, citing the development of a corporate image, the emphasis on research, the value of research in strengthening the teaching profile, and the opportunities for staff to develop academic pursuits, extend capabilities and to communicate with colleagues. The speed with which members of this group of academics had been able to rise within the organisation as a result of the changes was, most likely, a contributing factor in their level of enthusiasm for the changes; or as some attributed, to 'being in the right place at the right time'. Benefits highlighted as a result of the organisational changes were that students were now viewed as members of the wider university community gaining status through course diversification and cross campus associations. A further 8% of academics were undecided or had negative perceptions (38%) such as concern that as the University increases in size, the level of care for students might diminish. Other concerns expressed were the high levels of stress experienced by staff under pressure to upgrade qualifications and engage in research and, in the field of Nursing, the difficulty of maintaining clinical school credibility with students given the multitude of other functions academics are now expected to carry out. Previously, these staff had engaged in shift work in hospitals to maintain skills.

The movement towards over-centralisation of functions was seen as a concern by most level C academics, especially in regard to aspects such as the efficiency of day-to-day operations. Some reservations were expressed concerning the move to 'be like other universities' and the danger of only adopting strategies that appear financially viable, rather than accepting the special serving mission of the

University to pursue a direction which other universities might find less attractive but which is in keeping with Catholic and community social interests.

At a personal level only 29% of academics found the changes beneficial. Some found the transition straightforward, while others felt liberated by the opportunity to pursue areas of 'real interest' and move into areas not possible under the previous structures. Opportunity to take part in shaping the faculty and assist in laying down foundations was seen as positive while, on the negative side, 63% of staff believed they were demanding more of themselves, working harder than ever before and feeling more tired in the process.

Changes to work behaviour or style were perceived as positive by 42% of the interviewees and most had attempted to modify work practices to cope with the increased workload. These took the form of attempts to 'work smarter', compartmentalise work tasks, use information technology to advantage, modify teaching style to encourage student independence in learning, and work more from home.

Overall feelings towards the changes to work behaviour or style were distributed reasonably evenly: 54% positive and 46% negative. While mention was made of the overall pressure and frustration experienced when work plans do not develop as expected, comments such as being 'comfortable most of the time', 'feel good about the contribution I have made', 'happy enough in myself' and 'can't hold onto the past' were indicative of a reasonable level of acceptance of the changes and degree of personal comfort experienced while working.

12.1.3 Level B responses

In relation to the changes in the higher education sector, a significant number of level B academics were Undecided (39%) about the benefits of the changes, yet a further 47% responded positively to the changes while only 14% recorded a negative view. When compared with the level of negativity expressed towards the changes at the new University (57%) this appears somewhat incongruous. In further examining the data, an explanation lies in the composition of the group, in that of the 13 academics at level B recording a positive view, eight were from the

Health Sciences Faculty, obviously highly appreciative of the eventual government support for Nursing which enabled the discipline to enter the higher education sector. Overall, level B academics presented the most negative outlook and generally perceived the changes as having fewer benefits than did those occupying higher levels within the organisation. As distinct from many level C academics who prefaced their comments with a very affirming 'Yes' in response to whether the changes had been beneficial, level B academics were more hesitant, often choosing the words 'I think so' before identifying any benefits. General structures in which to work were perceived as being beneficial only for those at the top. However, the concept of a national Catholic University was regarded as good for Australia. Upgrading of educational standards to a more rigorous level was also seen to be beneficial. Of interest were the perceptions that change would, in the 'long run', be beneficial, and the resignation that there was 'no choice' in the matter.

While some 32% of level B academics regarded the changes as exciting and providing opportunities for personal development and progression within the organisation, the other 68% voiced concerns for the personal stress placed on staff, the difficulties of operating from a distance (i.e., across campuses), excessive paper work, feelings of inadequacy regarding teaching preparation time, problems of credibility and the lack of consultation in the implementation of management and organisational structures. Adjustments to work behaviour (46% positive) included specific changes to teaching practices, thinking ahead, and becoming more skilled in the use of technology. Other strategies adopted to cope with the increased workload included taking more work home and actually working at home more to avoid phone calls and disruptions. Overall feelings about the changes by level B academics were quite negative with 79% negative and only 21% positive.

12.1.4 Overall strength of response to change

While a considerable amount of indecision was evident in academics' responses regarding the changes impacting on the higher education sector, the results of the analysis conducted for the other areas of this section of the research project found

that academics across all levels of the University perceive they have been significantly affected, either in a positive or negative way, by the changes that have occurred as a result of the amalgamation of various state and territory based Catholic institutes of higher education. The deep emotional impact of the changes in the workplace during this period of rapid change is also noted both here and in the earlier qualitative review (refer Chapters 10 & 11). From the responses, it is clear that level B academics appear to have been most affected by the changes. Those academics occupying higher positions regarded the changes as more beneficial and positive than did those academics occupying positions at level B: 71% at D and 54% at level C compared with only 39% at B. This highlights the greater opportunities for academics at higher levels within the organisation to actively participate in the decision-making processes and play a role in shaping the direction of the developing institution through the formation of, and implementation of, policy and new procedures. There was a strong commitment to the acceptance of change regarding the concept and formation of the new University at level D, and level C but less so at level B; changes were felt overall in a positive way by 47% of those at level D, 54% at C but only 21% of those at B. However, negative responses to the personal impact were strong at all levels, as noted: 53% at D, 63% at C and 68% at B.

Grouping the responses according to degree of positivity while removing the level within the organisation produced the results shown in Table 12.2. The general shift from positivity to negativity as the questions progressed from the wider field of higher education toward that of personal impacts and feelings about the changes is clearly evident in Table 12.2.

Table 12.2: Overall strength of academics' response to change

Category	Overall		
	P	**U**	**N**
Higher education changes beneficial?	27	29	13
	39%	42%	19%
Changes at ACU beneficial?	36	5	28
	52%	7%	41%
Personal impact of changes?	24	2	43
	35%	3%	62%
Changes to work behaviour?	31	0	38
	45%	0%	55%
Feel about the changes?	27	0	42
	39%	0%	61%

12.1.5 Strength of personal impact

A further analysis of the type and number of responses per person for interview Question 20 (Personal impact of the changes) was conducted. The data were grouped according to the positive or negative nature of the impacts described and level held. No 'Undecided' responses apply to this analysis.

The results of this analysis could be considered to provide a crude measure of the degree of positivity or negativity felt by each individual toward specific aspects of the changes impacting on them personally. Further analysis attempts to relate specific aspect to academic level held within the organisation. Differences between faculties were found to be insignificant and are not included here. For interview Question 20, a very large number of responses were provided by the academics. In total, 372 responses were provided by 69 people, an astonishing average of over 5 responses per person; obviously academics were keen to communicate the depth of their personal feelings about the changes. Details are summarised in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3: Strength of personal impact

	Positive Effect	Level			Total
		D	**C**	**B**	
1	Increased staff contacts	3	3	1	7
2	Improved research opportunities	6	3	4	13
3	Career advancement	6	6	1	13
4	Improved work role	3	1	1	5
5	Increased responsibility	1	0	0	1
6	Increased travel overseas	2	0	0	2
7	Sense of achievement	6	1	3	10
8	Developed professionally/new skills	3	4	2	9
9	Increased confidence	2	3	1	6
10	Liberating	2	0	0	2
11	Opportunities to upgrade qualifications	0	2	2	4
12	Improved collegiality	2	3	2	7
13	Refreshing	1	1	0	2
	Subtotal	**37**	**27**	**17**	**81**
	Negative Effect				
1	Role ambiguity	0	6	4	10
2	Increased administration	8	9	6	23
3	Increased instability	0	0	2	2
4	Frustration at poor management	10	17	19	46
5	Lack of opportunities for promotion	0	1	3	4
6	Increased insecurity	4	2	6	12
7	Work harder	4	5	6	15
8	Physically draining – exhaustion	3	2	5	10
9	Increased workload	7	15	13	35
10	Role overload	0	2	2	4
11	Loss of motivation/energy	1	2	3	6
12	Increased tension/pressure	2	11	12	25
13	Sense of helplessness	1	3	2	6
14	Exhaustion	2	1	1	4
15	Less enjoyment	4	4	6	14
16	Less prepared	0	1	3	4
17	Sense of isolation/loneliness	4	3	7	14
18	Lost trust	0	2	4	6
19	Not valued/lack or loss of affirmation	2	2	13	17
20	Loss of academic freedom	2	0	4	6
21	Pressure to upgrade qualifications	0	2	4	6
22	Loss of support	1	2	5	8
23	Detrimental effect on family	1	3	7	11
	Subtotal	**56**	**95**	**137**	**288**
	Negligible Effect				
1	Minor changes to work behaviour	1	2	0	3
	Total	**94**	**124**	**154**	**372**

Of the 372 responses, 288 were negative, 81 were positive and there were three responses described as minor or negligible. The subtotal trends followed the staff academic levels, that is, a greater number of positives for level D staff compared with level C, which in turn was greater than level B. Conversely, negatives were highest for level B academics and lowest for level D. Ratios of positive/negative effects to respective staff numbers are shown in Table 12.4.

Table 12.4: Personal effects of the changes

Effect	Level	No. of responses per academic	Ratio
Positive	D	37 for 17 staff	2.1
	C	27 for 24	1.1
	B	17 for 28	0.6
Negative	D	56 for 17	3.3
	C	95 for 24	3.9
	B	137 for 28	4.9

Ratios of numbers of negative to positive effects for the three levels were:

Level	Ratio
D	56/37 = 1.5
C	95/27 = 3.5
B	137/17 = 8.1

These tables illustrate the high degree of negativity amongst most academics interviewed, but especially amongst level B academics. The responses that are highly prominent are all in the negative categories, particularly:

- **Frustration at (perceived) poor management:** This drew 46 responses from the 69 staff! This represents two-thirds of the staff interviewed.

- **Increased workload:** The increased workload as now imposed on staff was highlighted by 35 academics although an additional 15 staff responded that they were now working harder (not necessarily an imposition). If these responses are totalled they represent 50 staff, that is, 72% of those interviewed.

It was no surprise then to hear that 25 staff (36%) members were suffering from the new pressures and stress, even to the point of having a detrimental effect on families for 11 of the staff (16%). Other categories are self-explanatory. Seventeen staff (25%) now felt devalued. On the positive side, 13 staff (19%) appreciated the new research opportunities, 13 staff (19%) considered their own career had been advanced with the changes and 10 staff (14%) felt a 'warm glow' from the sense of achievement of overcoming adversity. As mentioned, only 3 staff (4%) considered the changes had not had any significant personal impact.

12.2 UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGES AND LEVEL OF POSITIVITY AND NEGATIVITY

As described in Chapter 7, it might be expected that an enhanced level of understanding of the reasons behind the changes might lead to a more positive approach towards them while also facilitating greater ability to cope. Table 12.5 draws on the nine factors described in Chapter 7 (refer Table 7.1 & Table 7.2) and enumerates positive reactions and negative reactions to the factors identified.

Chapter 7 described the level of understanding of the changes and related this to position held (level B, C, or D) within the organisation. As expected, there was a higher degree of understanding about the changes amongst level D staff than at lower levels. However, the greater level of knowledge for level Ds did not translate into a high level of positive reaction to the changes overall. Table 12.5 provides details of the relationship between academics' level of understanding of the changes, as measured by the number of factors identified throughout the discussion, and their level of positivity or negativity towards the higher education changes. Refer also Tables 7.1.and 7.2.

From the results, Table 12.5 shows that 39 of 70 responses were negative for D (56%) by this measure, 29 of 72 were negative for C (40%) and 59 of 76 responses were negative for B (78%). These proportions are close to those found in Table 12.1 'Feel about the changes' and serve to reinforce the Table 12.1 findings. Thus negative reactions to general change in higher education were strong at all levels; the surprise was that this finding applied to level D academics, that is, the senior academics. Their 56% negativity compares with

127 of 218, i.e., 58% negativity for all levels, or 88 of 148, i.e., 59% negativity for levels C and B combined.

Table 12.5: Relationship between level of understanding and level of overall positivity or negativity towards the changes

No. of factors identified	Level D (n=17)		Level C (n=24)		Level B (n=28)	
	P	N	P	N	P	N
7	0	2	0	0	0	1
6	0	1	0	1	0	0
5	3	1	3	1	1	0
4	2	2	2	2	0	6
3	2	1	4	0	2	4
2	1	1	4	3	3	5
1	0	1	0	4	0	6
Group totals	31	39	43	29	17	59

Reflective note

Although there was a positive, or ambivalent, perception overall that the changes in higher education and at the new University were beneficial, the degree of negativity increased markedly when issues at a personal level were discussed (see Table 12.2). The personal impact of change, the changes to work behaviour, and the overall feelings about the changes attracted a much higher negative reaction than did other discussion questions. This is in keeping with the observation of Morgan (1997a) who noted that people respond to discrete events that impact on them, and their working environment, individually, whereas the events that are more remote (or perceived that way) are less inclined to attract strong personal feelings.

Overall the nature and intensity of negative feelings was a finding that presents special difficulties for this University. Many academics who were members of the predecessor colleges expressed a high commitment to the values and successful practices of their respective institutions and took great pride in doing their job well. That sense of professional satisfaction has not transferred well to the changing nature of academic work at the new University, particularly for the

level B academics. Given the high level of negativity felt by the level B academics (78%) it is perhaps not surprising that they appeared less adept at employing some coping strategies, as discussed in Chapter 11; converting negatives into positives was found to be a useful reconstructing strategy by a higher proportion of those at level D than at other levels, although level D academics still recorded 56% negativity towards the changes overall (refer Table 12.5).

The range of responses received by academics situated at varying levels within and across the University provides general support for the observation of Argyris (1964) that those individuals furthest from the source of authority and control will be the most disadvantaged during any period of change, and, in fact, at most times during the functioning of the organisation. As Argyris highlights:

> 'The lower one goes down in the hierarchy in organisations, the greater the probability that behaviour is controlled by systems of technology, organisational structure and managerial controls. The higher up in the organisational hierarchy one goes, and the less programmed or routine the activity, the less influence these factors tend to have over behaviour and the more will interpersonal relationships tend to become crucial variables' (p.3).

However, the degree of negativity, across all levels within the organisation, was a surprise. This is reflected in the finding shown in Table 12.2 that only 39% of academics (27 out of 69) in this study expressed positive feelings towards the changes overall. As highlighted by Kaufman (1971) and Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) the stability associated with existing patterns of successful practice become fixed entities or core rigidities that create barriers to major innovation and encourage resistance to change (Hall, 1999).

CHAPTER 13: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The decision to undertake a massive restructuring of tertiary Catholic education institutions in Australia was made in direct response to pressure from the Australian Government to meet specific criteria for funding, including that of size. Whereas previous studies have focused on mergers and amalgamations that brought together institutions within the one state, this research studies the formation of a new University, namely Australian Catholic University, that saw the amalgamation of four, more or less autonomous, Catholic colleges, comprising eight campuses spanning three states and a territory, into one centralised, academic and administrative structure. This thesis contributes to furthering an understanding of the nature and impact of these changes on academics during this historic period in Catholic education, and more generally, within the broader higher education sector across Australia.

Given the enormity of the changes that occurred within the higher education sector towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, the research landscape is comparatively barren; this research builds on the available research and extends the discussion by providing insights into academics' perceptions and evaluation of the changes, both within the higher education sector and, more specifically, within the new University, and the impact of those changes on their personal and professional lives. Of importance is that while the senior academics had high levels of understanding of the changes, this was not reflected in a greater degree of positivity toward the changes. The degree of negative personal impact experienced by academics was similar across all staff levels.

By the very nature of case study research of a single institution, the findings from this research will be limited in their translatability to other organisational settings, yet there is much that bears relevance to the difficulties experienced elsewhere, especially for those implementing or undergoing organisational change. This study furthers an understanding of the complexity of the change process and highlights the deficiencies of mechanistic approaches in bringing about successful organisational change, especially in regard to the reticence of proponents to

recognise the powerful role that individuals play in the change process. This thesis argues that individuals have differing experiences, perspectives and values that influence the way in which they interpret, evaluate and respond to change; these must be considered in any change implementation process. The research highlights the importance of personal beliefs and values as contributing factors in determining academics' level of acceptance of the changes, their preferred models of organisation, and the approaches they adopt when coping with change.

For organisational change to be successful it is essential that due recognition be given to the complexity of the process; this necessitates the adoption of alternative approaches that are cognisant of the emergence of paradox or contradictory tensions inherent in any change. Eight contradictory tensions emerged from the analysis of the change process at the new University: pragmatism vs independent vision; centralised control vs local autonomy; academic freedom vs Catholic conservatism; teaching and learning vs research and scholarship; equality of women vs patriarchal control; consolidation vs diversity; autocratic managerialism vs democratic collegiality; and academic workloads vs maintenance of quality. It is only within this complexity that adequate descriptions can be found for the dynamic nature of change and the coping process, as utilised by individuals.

The following sections of this chapter develop the underlying themes central to this research project and offer recommendations for future study.

13.1   UNDERLYING THEMES

13.1.1   Complexity of the change process

Several underlying themes are discernible from the discussion presented in the chapters of this thesis. Underpinning the first is the complexity of change itself. Change is with us to stay and, not surprisingly, has always been so. What is surprising is our reluctance to learn from the experiences of the past in order to better facilitate effective organisational change in the present and future, to ensure those individuals encapsulated within the process are not so adversely affected. Of importance also is the recognition by those charged with the responsibility for

facilitating change of the need to be diligent in understanding and anticipating the possible effects and outcomes emanating from the organisational change process.

As evidenced in the literature review presented in this thesis, examples of successful organisational change are fewer than those that have failed (see Bolman & Deal, 1991; Nadler et al., 1995; Conner, 1998; Morgan, 1997a; Wood et al., 1998). While this may partly be attributed to the nature and complexity of change itself, the findings of this study suggest there are other important factors that contribute to the level of success experienced during the change process.

Of significance is the manner in which the perspectives held by individuals assist in 'defining and guiding experience' (Charon, 2001). Differing perspectives create strong contrasts between what academics believe to be important in their work and the direction and outcomes management may desire. Consequently, organisational change is often characterised by contradictions or paradoxical tensions, as noted by Fullan (1999), Hall (1999), Stacey (1996a), and as evidenced in this thesis; the challenge for management is to utilise the energy produced from these emergent tensions so that it becomes a creative force within the change process itself for productive effect.

13.1.2 Promoting the human side of organisations

A second theme to flow throughout this study concerns the nature of organisations and the role they play in society. This thesis argues that organisations, including universities, should be regarded as predominantly human enterprises that are highly important to the lives of individuals. In accepting this, certain expectations follow in regard to the nature and level of involvement of individuals, or academics, in the processes of organisational change. Accompanying this is an expectation that those charged with the responsibility of implementing the change will assume a conciliatory role towards those less empowered within the organisation; words such as collaboration, cooperative relationships, effective communication and participatory decision-making describe the ideal. Organisational members across all levels of the University might hope for substantial levels of involvement, as well as support for their trust in those charged with the management of the change process. Clearly this was

not perceived, by the majority of academics interviewed, to be in operation at the new University during the period of this study.

An observation from the high level of negativity toward the changes is that the imposition of traditional hierarchical structures as introduced at the new University and mechanistic approaches to organisational change do not sit easily with the nature and complexity of human action. More organic forms could be expected to provide greater opportunities for the participatory action of academics in the change process. If organisational change is to be successful, due recognition must be given to the individual perspectives, values, and motivations of academics in order to build confidence and trust between the management and other staff. The approach and strategies adopted during the implementation of the changes must be perceived by organisational members to reflect and be congruent with the values espoused by the University itself.

13.1.3 Managing and responding to change

Thirdly, the way in which individuals respond to and manage the processes of organisational change in their working lives is also complex; individual actions need to be understood within the specific context in which decisions are being made. This is essential in gaining insight into the types of strategies selected and in studying their potential to lead to positive outcomes. Individuals do not exist in isolation and, as shown in this study, the interaction between environmental factors and the personal beliefs and values of this group of academics contributed significantly to: the way in which they interpreted and responded to the changes; the effectiveness of the strategies they selected to respond to the changes; and the level of satisfaction and sense of efficacy experienced when dealing with ongoing workplace changes.

13.2   CHANGE WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

13.2.1   Reconstructing higher education

While higher education in Australia had experienced numerous modifications and policy changes over the years, nothing could have prepared those working within the sector for the breadth and transformative nature of the changes that occurred

towards the end of the 1980s. Until the mid 1980s, higher education had enjoyed a period of relative calm, able to operate at a distance from governmental scrutiny and with relatively minor involvement of government in the functioning of its institutions other than to establish the necessary intermediate agencies. Given changing political and economic priorities, this situation could not last forever, and, with the Australian Federal Government's direct intervention in the structure and operations of the higher education sector, the binary system that had been in existence over the previous two decades effectively ended.

The paradigm shift that resulted from the changes in higher education in Australia saw universities move away from a privileged position of reasonably secure government funding to one of reduced government support and increased pressure to seek self-funding from entrepreneurial activities in a competitive and market-driven world. From the late 1980s the often contradictory and paradoxical relationships of universities to their economic environment was brought about by the tensions generated by the competing perspectives espoused by academics, politicians and policy makers (Miller, 1995:64).

13.2.2 Academics' understanding and evaluation of the changes

Academics differed in their level of understanding and ability to provide explanations for the changes both within the broader social, economic and political context of change in higher education in Australia, and as directly related to the formation of the new University. Most academics identified the major force affecting change within the higher education sector as emanating from an economic rationalist approach to management that pervaded government thinking at the time. While academics identified the need for economic efficiency as a driver of change throughout higher education, this contrasted with the significant inefficiencies apparent in their own work environments.

Although academics expressed mixed feelings towards the changes, the significant benefits identified included greater access for students, opportunities for students to obtain degree status qualifications, overcoming the intellectual isolation of college academics, and the positive contribution of college academics to the teaching environment of universities. The over-emphasis on economic

values as opposed to human values was regarded as potentially detrimental to more liberal views of education, and of special concern for a new University committed to religious and social justice issues and service to the community.

In parallel with these changes, the working environment of academics changed dramatically for a number of reasons including: the realisation by governments and societies of the importance of knowledge at an advanced level; mass higher education in pursuit of that knowledge and prospects for wealth; accountability measures for educationalists individually as well as their corporate structures; and the influence of rapid global knowledge transfer mechanisms such as the Internet and mobile telephone systems. These changes brought immense challenges to those individuals and institutions already enjoying university status; they were even more acute for academics and institutions aspiring to university status and accepting the lifeline of amalgamation as the means of survival, growth and development.

13.3   CREATING THE NEW UNIVERSITY

The task of forming a university from eight distinctive institutes and colleges of education was accompanied by new tensions generated by the unique and varied histories, cultures and particular characteristics brought by each member institute to the collective planning table. Catholic stakeholders and others charged with the task of effectively bringing these institutes together to form a unified Australian Catholic University saw the potential for a high quality institution aimed at promoting the Catholic tradition through the work of its faculties and schools. As evidenced in the findings of this study, support for the concept of an Australian Catholic University was strong and while some unease existed at the time, the decision to embark on the radical restructure of Catholic education in Australia was supported.

The significant changes brought about by the formation of the new University necessitated a radical restructuring process to coordinate the functions and procedures of management and the administration, and a need to produce a unified, corporate culture to support the new direction. Management was challenged to provide strong leadership while academics were required to make

qualitative shifts to the way they perceived, conceptualised and carried out their workplace roles.

13.3.1   In search of an identity

In pursuit of an identity, the amalgamated colleges and institutes set out to be an excellent University but, as reported by academics at interview, opportunities to be unique in the formative years of its development were lost. Academics bemoaned the trend towards the adoption of a traditional model of University, believing greater opportunities for difference existed in more organic forms, strengthened by an ethos built on Christian values of individual integrity and care for others. From its inception, high aspirations were held by all for the creation of a unique institution having a distinctive ethos and character forged in the Catholic tradition through which the new University would provide a blending of opportunities for the coexistence of Christian life and tradition, intellectual pursuits and career entering attainment. In his Inauguration speech for the new University, Cardinal Clancy outlined the high ideals that would guide its growth and development and, through the quality of its graduates, the University hoped to contribute to the national and wider international community.

The need to establish a distinctive identity and ethos that reflected the aspirations of the University's founders and supporters necessitated changes to the organisational culture and modes of operation. The implementation of these changes sent a series of minor shocks reverberating throughout the University, thrusting those working within the organisation into a period of uncertainty and insecurity. In the process of evaluating the gains and losses caused by the changes, a majority of academics expressed overall negative feelings towards the changes as actually implemented. While the University title suggests it has distinctive features, academics believed it essential that this be reflected in reality.

13.3.2   Towards integration

Historically, amalgamations in higher education have rarely proceeded smoothly. The formation of the new University was no exception as evidenced in the extent of interstate rivalry that surfaced throughout the interviews. The decision to establish the Vice Chancellery in Sydney generated ill feeling across borders and

was believed to be representative of the changing power relationships within the University from the autonomous state-based campuses to a centralised model that would inevitably reflect the values and modus operandi of that location, with other campuses merely an appendage to the Sydney 'conglomerate'. Ironically, others believed the momentum driving the University emanated from the 'Victorian push' that reflected the ideology and influence stemming from the location of the three deans (Education, Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences) in Melbourne.

The disillusionment created by the imposition of a centralised, hierarchical model of organisation produced a growing resentment towards management perceived as authoritarian and operating from a managerial philosophy that emphasises accountability and tight control rather than from a preferred democratic approach that encourages initiative and innovatory practice. Academics' comments reflected the frustration at what they believed to be the use of inappropriate management strategies, convoluted communication processes, and unnecessary delays in the decision-making processes. This feeling was compounded by the increasing sense of loss associated with the long traditions, independence and collegial strengths of the predecessor colleges. The opposition and frustration with the centralisation of administration for the new University became a palpable force evidenced in the expression of a strong desire for a decentralised model allowing greater control of curricula, resources, administration, and finances to be exercised at the campus level. Difficulties in ensuring course structures and content aligned with state-based requirements while complying with the need for a single, national focus increased the disenchantment of some academics.

The geographical dispersal of campuses (within states) was perceived as representing an unnecessary working day burden, especially in regard to meeting teaching commitments. The need to travel not only introduced an inordinate amount of time spent just on travel but also represented a security risk for some, particularly when travel was undertaken outside normal working hours such as in the evening. The necessity for senior management to travel interstate to conduct the business of the University was viewed by many as an unnecessary cost burden, particularly so as this was reflected in funding reductions at the campus

level. In short, the national multi-campus collective was viewed as representing a loss of local autonomy, and was inefficient. The solution proffered was to restore local authority, funding and responsibility.

More positively, academics identified the gains from the amalgamation as presenting greater opportunities for increased collegiality amongst a wider circle of academics as well as access to a wider range of product deliverables such as international programs. These benefits were appreciated most by those in the nursing profession (Faculty of Health Sciences) who were acutely aware of their sudden rise in status from the hospital–associated apprenticeship system to a level of professionalism that saw students exit with university degrees. This represented the culmination of an historical struggle and long process of change in parallel with the other changes within higher education in the 1980s.

Concurrently with the changes in higher education has been the more general change in the construction of workplace practices in the general workforce. Stability, company loyalty and tenure are now less noticeable and the quest for long-term employment with the one organisation has been replaced by the desirability of short-term, highly varied career paths for individuals. Thus the changes and uncertainties prevalent in other enterprises also feature in academic institutions and the move towards casualisation of academic employment at the new University was regarded by many of those interviewed as a detrimental step that could result in a reduction in the quality of the University's offerings.

13.3.3 Commitment to the change process

Organisations change more effectively when individuals feel committed to the changes being implemented. Commitment stems from an understanding of the changes, how they are expected to work, a sense of empowerment to contribute to the changes, being in possession of the necessary resources and competencies to participate in the changes, and being acknowledged for efforts to engage in the changes through social virtues such as a shared confidence and trust. Even where, initially, disagreement amongst individuals might exist as to future pathways or directions for the organisation, the underlying commitment is such that the sense of positive motivation should prevail, leading eventually to

common group goals being identified and achieved. When this commitment does not exist, then resistance occurs. Resistance to the organisational changes as implemented was apparent in many of the interview responses encountered in the study, for example, 67% of academics were frustrated at the way in which the changes were managed and only 39% expressed positive feelings towards the changes overall.

While academics expressed strong commitment to the overall concept of the formation of an Australian Catholic University, many became disillusioned by the processes of change, and opinions differed as to the manner in which organisational success might best be achieved. A common view expressed was that the new University should be built on the strengths of its past history, notably an enviable reputation for high quality teaching, very high graduate employment levels and personal attention provided to the students. The pressure from government brought about by economic imperatives and need for the University to develop a strong research profile, and the resultant shift in focus away from students and teaching characterised the demise of the quality and form of teacher education programs as had been so highly valued in the predecessor colleges. Yet this was not unique to this new University; even the established universities had encountered difficulties in providing the same level of service to students as before and were experiencing pressure to reduce operations in this fiscally conscious era. Such cost-cutting pressures were obviously more acute for the new University, charged with the task of establishing, and consolidating structures, procedures and staff time commitments. Nonetheless, the sense of loss at not being able to provide the former level of service to students was felt deeply by many staff well aware of the 'special history' present in the predecessor colleges.

For other academics interviewed, the uniqueness of the University's identity would best be expressed through the continuation of a service orientation so characteristic of the college environment and in keeping with strong Christian values. Placing a high priority on the extension of the University's sphere of operations to include special customer areas such as prisons and social welfare centres (probably economically unsustainable), would provide a special service to

the community and, in so doing, the University would be well positioned to contribute to the betterment of society. For many academics, future success and survival resided in the ability of the University to develop niche markets that would assist in making it economically viable and also contribute to its uniqueness. The value of research as a central feature of the University's priorities was not rated highly by many academics still committed to promoting excellence in teaching and learning, and deploring the digression from their quality teaching time that research represented. Only 8% of staff opined that the future direction of the University should have a research scholarship focus. With pressure on management to increase research output to ensure continued and adequate funding from government, this would appear to be one of the major challenges, and a potential source of tension, to be overcome by senior management in the future.

The expectation that staff engage in research activities while maintaining heavy teaching and administrative workloads created considerable tension. Even those enthusiastic for the task found their motivation floundered while trying to operate under such conditions. The perceived unrealistic expectation that staff suddenly embark on the development of a research profile left many academics feeling inadequate, devalued and struggling to cope with the workplace environment. The minority of academics who did express appreciation at the new opportunities to conduct research generally were researchers in the predecessor institutes and their interest appeared in keeping with their natural inclinations, their concept of what constitutes university life, and their preferred career path in the academy. Yet again, even these academics, keen to promote a research culture, expressed some negativity towards the administration for not providing adequate time release nor facilities considered essential to support research endeavours that produced quality outcomes.

The considerable degree of freedom once enjoyed by academics in the workplace has, since the late 1980s, gradually been eroded and, as highlighted by Ramsden (1998a), Taylor, (1999) and others, academics now find themselves subjugated under bureaucratic control due largely to governmental interventionist policies. Ironically, this increased control is occurring at a time when the general

workforce is being encouraged by management theorists to be flexible and self-managed. At the institutional level, universities are increasingly accountable to government while many other industries are moving toward self-regulation. Such workplace changes have created cultural tensions. The preference of academics for a collegial model of organisation (shared decision-making) and autonomy as highlighted in this research project is now no longer available and academics now face an increasingly prevalent shift towards antiquated leader-follower relationships with the university's administration.

13.3.4   Emerging tensions and paradoxes

Potential new futures always create oppositions to the status quo (Hall, 1999) and new initiatives or new directions often become enmeshed in paradoxical tensions and complexities that can easily undermine the desired change (Morgan, 1997a:292-3). As a result of the changes at the new University, several competing perspectives typify the paradoxical tensions confronting its uncertain future. The imposition of a centralised model of administration (and the burgeoning reporting requirements of government) worked paradoxically to create the equally strong desire amongst staff to regain more local autonomy. This was compounded by the perceived failure of the centralised model to provide effective and efficient service to the state-based campuses. The lack of adequate administrative structures to cope with the heavy demands of the states and inordinate delays in the decision-making process created an impression of a less personal administration now operating from 'out there'. These concerns were especially serious, as staff believed they militated against the provision of good service at the state level although few academics believed a reversion to the previous model of organisation was realistic or even desirable for a university.

Continuing concerns regarding the impact of financial matters and the dependency on government funding, worked paradoxically against the University's ability to forge an independent identity in keeping with the distinctive nature of its mission and goals. The pre-occupation with financial matters might lead the University to succumb to pragmatic solutions, thereby compromising the integrity and distinctive nature of the organisation. The

constant pressure to reduce funding across the whole University had already created serious tensions across all aspects of the ongoing life of the University. The challenge for management will be in ensuring its staff remain sufficiently motivated in their work to produce the creative energy, necessary to allow innovation and the emergence of high quality programs, and research projects that help to counter the funding limitations that must be faced.

The leadership style as presented to staff by the senior management of the University generated further tension. The imposition of a top-down approach to organisational change and workplace practices by senior management ran counter to the strong desire of academics, as expressed strongly in this thesis, for a more democratically oriented approach in which academics could expect enhanced levels of participation in the decision-making processes and more effective communicative processes relating to the changes. The disillusionment and sense of alienation experienced throughout the implementation of the changes left some academics struggling to cope with the perceived lack of congruence between the University's espoused theory of action and the theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

For some the influence of Catholic orthodoxy and conservatism appeared at odds with the nature of a university and the desire for academic freedom in the work of its academics. Free and open debate on all issues affecting society, including Church dogmas, was regarded as an essential element if the University were to encourage its staff and students to be free thinkers. Gaining some resolution of this paradoxical tension will not be easy and necessitates deep understanding of the nature and role of the Church in developing the University and the image the University wishes to convey to its public. What is clear is that if the University is to develop in national and international strength then it must be seen to be at the forefront of contemporary thinking both in the work of the Faculties and in the emphases it places on research and scholarship. The move towards the inclusion of Theology in its academic structures as a separate discipline may help to dissipate some of the tension.

13.4 IMPACT OF CHANGE ON ACADEMICS

13.4.1 Nature and level of intensity of the changes

The impact of the changes on the professional lives of academics situated within the various teachers' colleges and institutes forms another important element in this research. Although some authors have argued the changes in the higher education sector produced considerable structural change but impacted less so on academics, the findings of this research show clearly that the impact of the changes on sixty-nine academics, as representative of staff generally, situated in varying positions across the eight campuses of the newly formed University was quite significant indeed. While some of the negativity towards the changes can be attributed to the implementation processes involved, the nature and level of intensity of the changes to the professional lives of these academics catapulted from the colleges of education system with its collegial, teaching and service orientation into a university system with its emphasis on research was a dramatic and even traumatic experience for many of these academics during the 'Dawkinisation' of the sector.

As a result of the changes within the University, it was not surprising to find that 72% of those academics interviewed expressed the view that they were now working harder than ever before. For some, the increased workload was made even more so by the administrative requirement to gain higher qualifications before being eligible for promotion, a painful prospect for those who had spent a lifetime teaching college students competently and with high regard, but who had not conducted research at this higher level for some time, if at all. Twenty-five academics (36%) were suffering from the new pressures and stress. A relatively high 25% of academics were left feeling devalued as a result of the changes.

This general level of negativity was reinforced by other stresses, real and imagined, borne by these academics. Many academics expressed some dismay at the rapidity of the changes and held some hope the process would soon end or at least slow down to allow some respite and time to restore equilibrium. By conceptualising the change as transitional in nature, some academics gained the necessary impetus to 'remain in the race' while hoping the changes would soon

pass and the University and its staff would settle into a state of relative calm. The speed of change and the approach adopted by management towards the implementation of change left many academics sufficiently stressed to feel as though they were 'going around in circles' and that the University did not know where it was headed. Improved communication and increased levels of involvement and implementation of more participatory strategies by management could work effectively to restore self-confidence, self-worth and enjoyment amongst staff.

The move from a predominantly teaching culture prevalent in the previous institutions, to a culture emphasising research left many academics struggling to cope with the expectations of management, further dampening their sense of efficacy and creating extensive feelings of loss and disempowerment. For those academics seriously disaffected by the changes, the levels of dissonance generated through the changes left them unable or unwilling to accommodate the changes, and they effectively began to disengage from the University in various ways including the extreme measure of preparing to leave. As Ramsden and Martin (1996), Martin and Ramsden (2000) and Robertson and Bond (2001) have noted, the ongoing changes to Australian universities have left many academics increasingly discontent.

13.4.2   Coping with change

Less climactically, many academics coped by disengaging from the organisation and by moving away from the emergent pressures by retreating from the workplace. This was not regarded as particularly satisfying to these academics as it derived from feelings of disillusionment, lack of affirmation and other negative reactions.   It did act as a safety net, providing temporary relief for some academics trying to 'remain in the race'. Retreating took various forms including working away from the campus at every opportunity, engaging in more 'outside' activities such as aerobics and other keep-fit programs (perhaps resulting from negative motivation but producing positive end results), and disengaging from students and staff (less informal staffroom contact and relaxation). Ironically, the high level of commitment to the organisation, as expressed by many academics,

would most likely have led these aggrieved staff to pursue the extra duties associated with research, publishing papers, conference presentations and the like if they had experienced more tangible encouragement and active discussion regarding the difficulties they were facing. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the disappointment felt by academics that senior management had also disengaged and preferred to issue communiqués rather than foster dialogue that might result in improved commitment, professional growth and greater sense of direction and cooperation for both staff and the University.

For other academics, handling the difficulties presented by the changes took place through the process of reconceptualisation. In this way, academics highlighted the positive elements of the changes, rather than dwelling on the negatives, by converting the difficulties into challenges and barriers to be overcome. By accepting the changes unconditionally these academics were able to 'make the most of the situation and press on'. A considerable number of academics (14%) were proud of their achievements in overcoming apparent adversity presented in the form of administrative paperwork, upgrading qualifications, workload time allocation, course restructuring and other personal challenges; their ability to work diligently to gain greater control over their working lives had produced some effective outcomes. Only a small group of academics, (4%) believed the changes had created little or no disruption; these were either staff who had always enjoyed research or those who had experienced a sudden rise in professional status and position through which they could provide input and possibly influence the changes. At a personal level, feelings towards the changes were positive for some academics, but a far greater proportion recorded negative effects. Of special concern is that, as a result of the changes, personal working relationships suffered and the home life for some academics negatively affected; eleven academics (16%) were experiencing a detrimental effect on their families.

As Oakland and Ostell (1996) have noted, coping with change must be understood within the context in which it occurs, as the motivation and stamina to cope with workplace changes will not only be strongly influenced by personal factors such as sense of self-efficacy, but also by the individual's commitment to the goals and values inherent in the changes. For many academics, the strength of

their commitment to the concept of an Australian Catholic University provided the necessary stimulus for them to continue to work through the maze of complexity and frustration experienced in their workplace. Naturally, the competing perspectives of both academics and management regarding the developing form and shape of the University is a force that may generate further tension and paradox; the challenge for management is to ensure that future changes are handled sensitively and cooperatively. As Morgan (1997b) has highlighted, before an organisation can come to understand its environment, it must begin by understanding itself.

The interdependence of organisations and individuals is an essential principle in organisational effectiveness. As Bolman and Deal (1991) highlight, the need to reframe thinking is essential if organisational change is to be implemented successfully, and this applies to all organisational members participating in the ongoing life and work of the organisation. Organisational change involves mindsets, values and the visions of individuals who collectively comprise the organisation. Therefore change should not be regarded as necessarily a rational process, but rather one, as Taylor (1999:38) notes, through which values are expressed 'in new ways, under new conditions'. Trowler (1998:151) observed that academics do not come 'empty-headed' into the University but import into their professional lives, attitudes, sets of values and behaviours from other environments which help shape the type of work environment created, as well as guide the selection of work-related activities and roles to which individuals aspire. The findings of this study support these observations of academics as essential participants and contributors towards the emerging shape and culture of the new University, notwithstanding the fact that they differed in their individual views regarding the nature and role of the new University and how it might best realise its mission and goals.

Unfortunately, many organisations attempt to sustain unrealistic identities or produce identities that ultimately destroy important elements of themselves and the contexts of which they are part (Morgan, 1997b). Organisations, as well as individuals, need to openly question assumptions regarding their beliefs and practices or they risk simply engaging in single-loop rather than double loop

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learning that might see them 'produce something for today but lose control of tomorrow' (Argyris, 1982: preface). Change involves new challenges and new learning; this is 'risky business' (Taylor, 1999) but as Dunphy (1973:29) might comment: 'ultimately, the only way to understand the future is to have the courage to begin to live it'.

13.5   THE CHALLENGE

Ongoing change presents a considerable challenge for those vested with the responsibility of managing organisations and ensuring they remain dynamic and profitable, while still retaining the commitment and motivation of those individuals working within them. It is therefore imperative that high priority be given to the importance of understanding the complex processes of organisational change. As Taylor (1999:8) highlights, the available literature 'tends to provide mutually exclusive discourses – a binary formulation of pro- or anti- any focus for change', yet the reality remains somewhat different.

As organisations continue to evolve and change their structures and practices to meet environmental pressures, it is imperative that the implementation of strategies contributes to, rather than negates, the health of the organisation in order to reduce the financial and emotional costs. More effective ways of handling change in the future to minimise organisational, professional and personal loss are essential. This is especially important when organisational change is accepted as not simply a single event to be overcome, but as part of a continuing, integral part of the normal growth and life of any organisation (Morgan, 1997a). Organic models and styles appear more likely to be productive in terms of the organisation and less stressful for its staff.

The University, like most modern-day organisations, now operates in a competitive environment, one that is far removed from the cloistered, privileged position that prevailed some two decades ago. In today's climate, the greatest asset is its knowledge base, that is, its people. Their significance and importance will be even more crucial in the future age of technological progress and multinational liaisons, for they may be the only sustainable competitive difference between one institution and another. If survival and growth within this

complexity is the goal, then it is incumbent upon the University to utilise the strengths and potential of its staff more effectively than in the past as their wits and wisdom will be crucial in the world's market for educational products. As Universities continue to evolve and reshape in response to their environments, they will need to employ 'innovative responses to triggers, holistic solutions, visionary leadership, and committed support' (Paton & McCalman, 2000:263).

13.6 FOCI FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the need for ongoing change and individual adaptability, increased efforts are needed to ensure the processes and impact of organisational changes are more fully understood so that disruption and resistance might be minimised. To improve this understanding further research is needed in a number of areas.

13.6.1 Longitudinal studies of organisational change

The opportunity for continuing research into the nature and direction of organisational change, such as at the new University, is necessary to fully understand the long-term effects of the impact of change on individuals and the effectiveness of strategies adopted to respond to changing workplace environments. The process of tracking individuals (academics) during another significant time period would assist in clarifying the manner and extent to which individuals: modify their behaviours to become more aligned with the expectations of the developing organisation; give up trying to accommodate the changes; choose to continue working as before; or proceed with plans to leave the organisation.

Increased understanding of the way in which competing perspectives and paradoxical tensions become major forces or dissipate with the emergence and establishment of the new organisational form would also be possible through more longitudinal research. This would allow further study of the impact of such tensions on the nature and continuing direction of the developing organisation in the future. Ongoing change will most likely result in the emergence of new tensions and again these will impact on the organisation and individuals alike. Greater application of new ways of thinking about organisations, such as systems and chaos theory, might allow more intense study of the relationship of

organisations to other components of their systems, the long-term effects of change programs, and the role of organisational members in culture formation and shaping future organisational directions.

13.6.2   Qualitative studies of reactions to change

Although considerable research has been conducted into the processes and implementation of organisational change, the predominant approach has been through surveys and questionnaires. More prevalent use of qualitative approaches to research in this area should provide greater depth and offer a more holistic approach to understanding the mechanisms involved.

13.6.3   The changing nature of universities in Australia

Continuing monitoring of the effect of government policies and reforms on institutions of higher education and of academics working within them is essential given the important role played by universities in society and the growing emphasis on the knowledge society.

Many academics are reported to be more stressed and feel overworked and alienated from their institutions than before. This problem is not likely to dissipate in the near future. Continuing high levels of stress in the workplace will lead to unhealthy work environments and result in more academics seeking work elsewhere. This would be detrimental to Australia in the long-term. While accepting that economic and political pressures are also contributing factors, there is a need for further research aimed at producing helpful interventions designed to assist academics deal with their complex working environments. Such research must ensure due consideration is given to the goals and concerns of the academics themselves.

13.6.4   Coping with change

Coping, as a process, is dynamic and complex and is not easily reducible to simple measures. The need for research into coping strategies may become more urgent should increasing fiscal difficulties force amalgamations of other institutions within the higher education sector, or further campus rationalisations within the new University. The experiences of the past, including those of the

individual academics at the new University may be valuable in reducing the trauma that may otherwise be experienced.

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