



MONASH University

Student Administration and Systems Self Review Report

Report: 7 September 2004

Review Panel Visit: 27, 28, 30 September 2004

Services and Systems Group, Student and Staff Services Division



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1 Introduction

The Student Administration and Systems Self Review has been undertaken in support of the University's commitment to a 'planned and systematic approach to quality' which is encapsulated in the Quality Review Cycle - plan, act, evaluate (monitor and review), improve.¹ This Self Review has provided the area an opportunity to consider its performance in the delivery of quality student services, progress toward strategic directions and to identify future opportunities for improvement.

The structure and process for the Self Review has been administered as recommended by the University's Centre for Higher Education and Quality (CHEQ). The process has been detailed in the methodology provided below. This report is structured around the University's standard Terms of Reference for reviews as provided by CHEQ. These include:

- Organisational Structure
- Management
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Core Services
- Human and Physical Resources
- Professional and other Community Activities

The structure of the Self Review Report is to consider each of the Terms of Reference describing the current situation and then list recommendations for improvement. The Self Review Panel has endeavoured to apply the Quality Review Cycle to this process.

The Self Review Report is presented in two volumes:

1. Self Review Report
2. Self Review Report Appendices

The Self Review Report includes references to a range of documents.

1. Those that are recommended reading are included in the Self Review Report Appendices.
2. Of the additional background reading material not provided in the appendices, a selection of the documents referenced in the footnotes will be emailed to External Panel members with others available upon request.

1.1 Methodology

The Director of Services and Systems established the Self Review Panel at the start of 2004, comprising the Director and Student Administration and Systems section Managers, and an Executive Officer. All members of the Self Review Panel participated in the Review training sessions presented by CHEQ.

A regular meeting schedule has been observed by the Self Review Panel since February, 2004. At a meeting in April 2004, the Director, Services and Systems provided a briefing session on the Review process and its Terms of Reference to the Self Review Panel members and their direct reports who, in turn, have briefed staff in their own work units.

¹ Quality at Monash: Values and Principles
19/10/2004



Since May, a document collection exercise, follow up activities and, in consultation with the Chair of the External Review Panel, Professor Jane Den Hollander, a schedule for the External Review Panel's visit was developed. On behalf of the Chair, the Self Review Panel invited key stakeholders and clients to participate in the Review. See Appendix 1, External Panel Members, Appendix 2, External Panel Schedule.²

Over the last three years the Student and Staff Services Division (SSSD) has undertaken a number of initiatives in attempting to develop and maintain a robust quality methodology to ensure optimal outcomes in Student Administration and Systems. The feedback from the following initiatives inform the detail of this Report:

- Seamless Student Services (SSS) Taskforce survey outcomes, 2001. Many of the outcomes detailed in the course of this report had their genesis in the work of this Taskforce.³
- Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ), 2003⁴
- The Caulfield Service Centre Review Report (of Stakeholder Services)⁵
- Message from the Divisional Director inviting submissions to the Review in the Notices Bulletin sent to all Monash staff on Monday 2 August⁶
- Feedback from formal and informal communication networks
- Circulation of the Draft Report to Unit Managers and staff for comment (25 Aug and again 1 Sept)
- Review of the Group's Planning methodology including the implementation of the Performance Management scheme
- Administration of a Staff Self Review Survey⁷

1.2 Self Review Staff Survey

A key element of the Review methodology was the Self Review Staff Survey, which was conducted to assess staff attitudes and perceptions on areas relevant to the Terms of Reference. To ensure staff understood the purpose of the survey and the nature of its content, all Student Administration and Systems Managers briefed their staff prior to requesting them to complete the online Survey.

Preparation for the Survey, including the development of survey questions, was undertaken with the assistance of CHEQ, which also administered the collection of the data and analysis of the returns on behalf of the Self Review Panel. The Executive Officer to the Self Review Panel then coordinated and disseminated further analysis by section (Student Administration, Client Services, Student Systems and Business Improvements Projects) for reporting to individual section Managers for consideration and action.

The survey results provided quantitative measures of staff perceptions in six areas: Management and Leadership; Human Resources and Physical Resources; Organisational Structure; Planning; Core Services; Professional and Other Community Activities; and the

² Profile of Participants

³ Seamless Student Services Taskforce Report 2001

⁴ Monash Experience Questionnaire administered by Centre for Higher Education and Quality

⁵ Caulfield Service Centre Review Report

⁶ Monash University Notices Bulletin, Item 1, Student Administration and Systems Review, 2 August

⁷ Student Administration and Systems Review Survey 2004



Overall Work Environment. Qualitative feedback was obtained across these areas through staff comments.

1.2.1 Overall Responses

In accordance with the Quality Review Cycle methodology, the Staff Self Review Survey was a key element in the Evaluation process. An overview of the responses is brought to the External Review Panel's attention at this stage of the Report to reinforce the priority given to these results in the development of the Report.

As a guide to interpreting the results, mean scores between 3.5 -3.9 are regarded as good, 4.0 - 4.3 as very good and 4.4 -5 as excellent.⁸ The average mean for each Term of Reference is illustrated in Figure 1. The mean score for individual questions within each Term of Reference were as high as 4.39.

The general guideline for interpreting Broad Agreement results is: anything above 90% is excellent indicating that good practices are in place and should be modelled in other areas; 80%-90% a good level of agreement; and below 80%, fair agreement with areas that possibly need improvement. The average Broad Agreement across all the Terms of Reference was 90.6% with individual questions within each Term of Reference returning as high as 98%.

The Self Review Survey results provide the opportunity to set a benchmark for improvement. This includes setting a minimum mean rating of 4.0 and possibly a 5-10% increase in satisfaction across all Terms of Reference. Practices in the areas returning excellent results should be evaluated and adapted to areas targeted for improvement.

The overall results for each of the Terms of Reference suggest that Student Administration and Systems units are generally well served by current approaches. The results indicate a strong commitment to staff development activities with an overwhelming majority of staff considering the Group as a strong learning environment.

It is noted that one of the lowest means on the Self Review Staff Survey was in response to question regarding intra Group communication and alignment of responsibilities between work units. The Self Review Panel acknowledges this challenge and is exploring ways to increase engagement between work units.

It is also acknowledged that there were a small number of free text comments arising from the Self Review Survey that require consideration and action within local units.

⁸ Feedback provided by CHEQ
19/10/2004

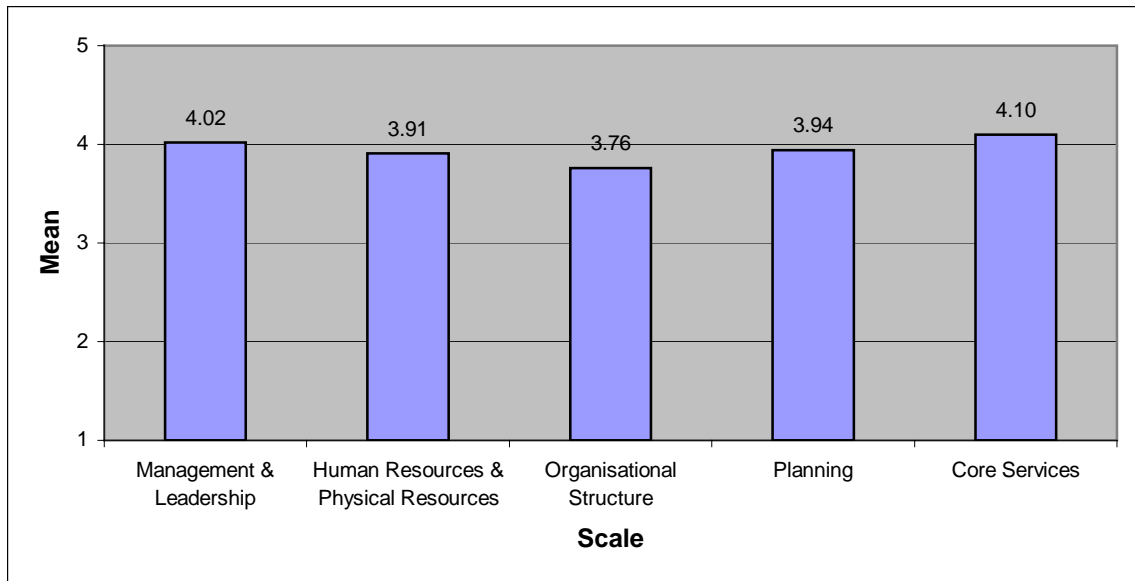


Figure 1 Summary of mean for the 5 scales in the Student Administration and Systems Survey Professional and Other Community Activities

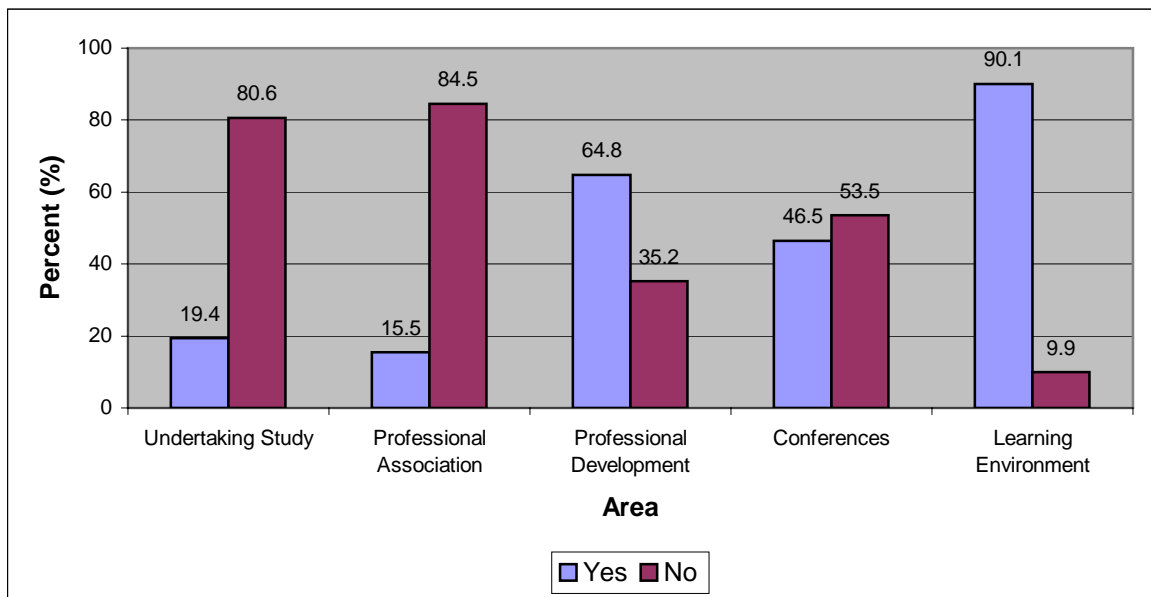


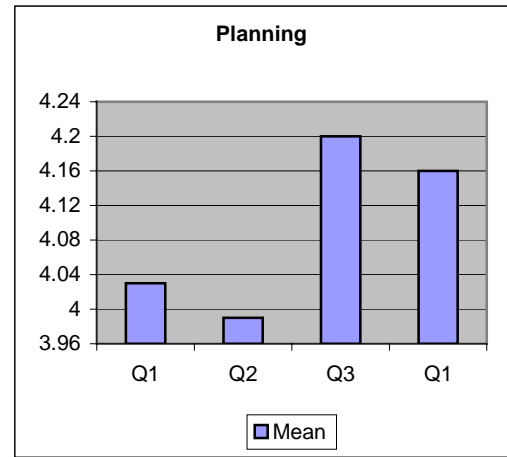
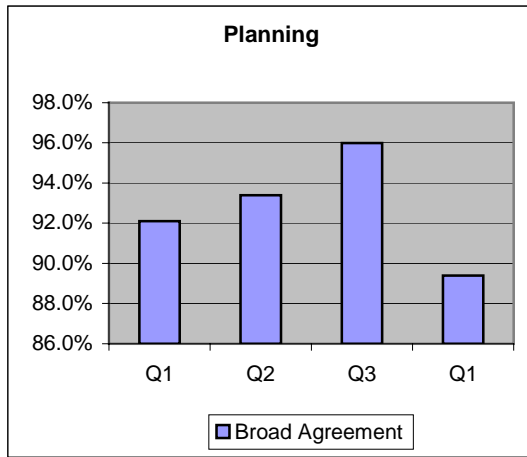
Figure 2 Summary of distribution for items in the Professional and Other Community Activities Area

A major strength identified by the survey was the perception that the Group's planning methodology and targets were widely understood, and that progress toward these targets was appropriately monitored. A strong commitment to a client focus in the delivery of high quality services was also evident in the results of the survey indicating an alignment with the Group's stated mission.



The Survey results reinforced the defining attributes of the group:

1. Excellence in planning methodology (Management and Leadership/Planning)⁹



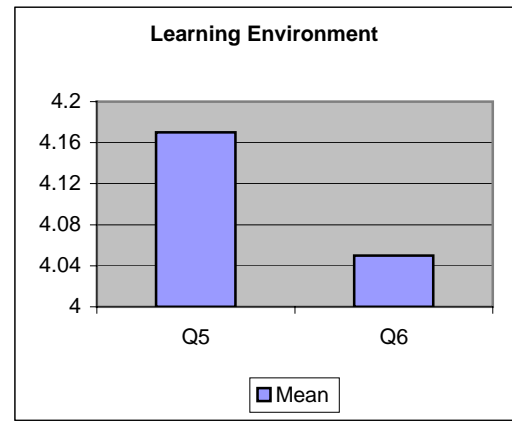
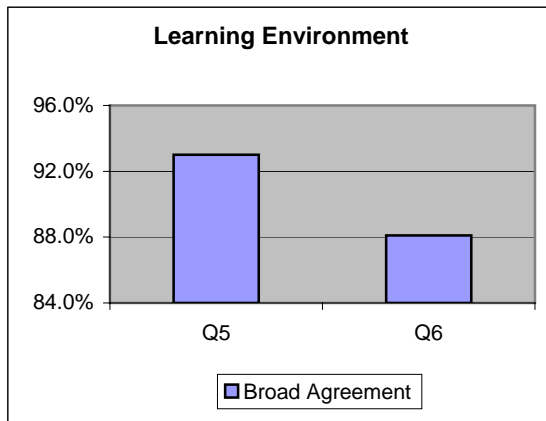
Q1 (ML) I am aware of the group's plans and key deliverables.

Q2 (ML) I understand how the group's plans support the University strategic direction

Q3 (ML) I understand how my work contributes to the achievement of the group's plans and deliverables

Q1 (P) My unit meets on a regular basis to track its progress in implementing and reviewing its plans.

2. Learning and Innovation (Management and Leadership)



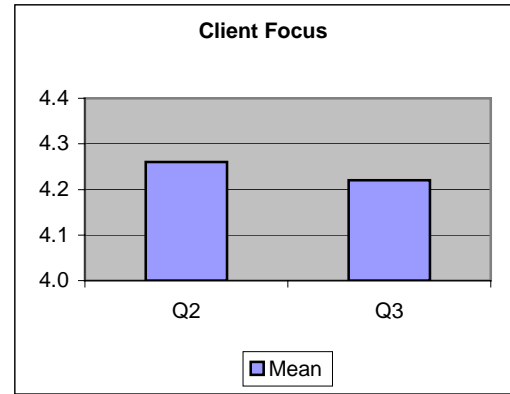
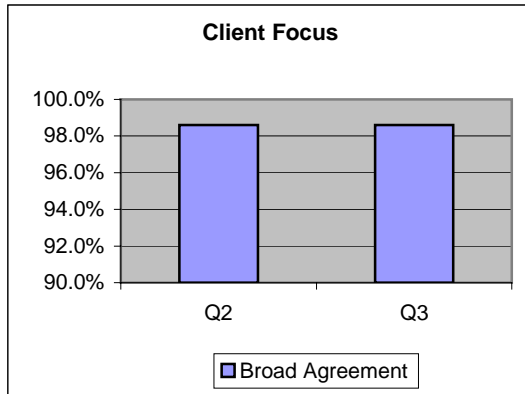
Q5 (ML) My unit has a culture that encourages listening, learning and the sharing of ideas.

Q6 (ML) My unit has a culture that encourages innovation, improvement and diversity.

⁹ Detail in brackets refers to the Term of Reference under which the questions were listed
19/10/2004



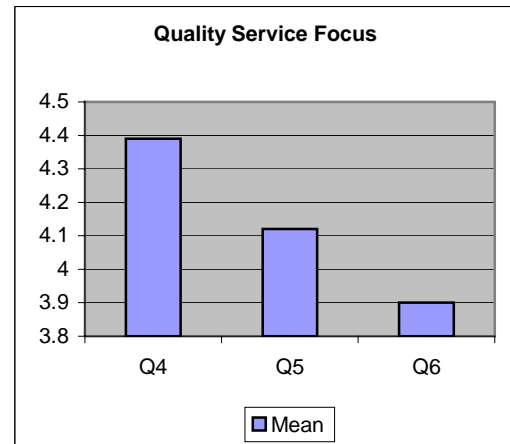
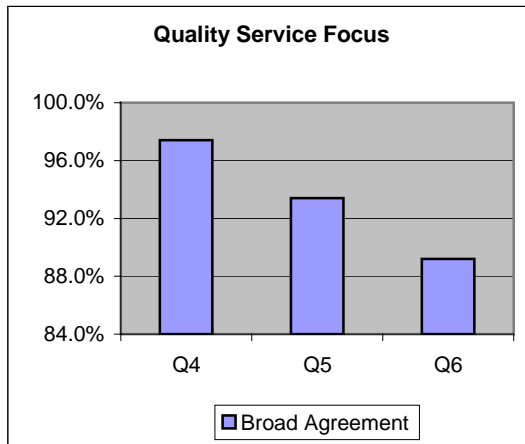
3. Client Focus (Core Services)



Q2 (CS) My unit has clearly identified its key client groups.

Q3 (CS) The core services and processes of my unit have been developed in consideration of the needs of its key client groups.

4. Quality Service Focus (Core Services)



Q4 (CS) My unit delivers a reliable and quality service.

Q5 (CS) My unit is able to identify service delivery problems to key client groups and implement strategies to overcome future problems.

Q6 (CS) The service performance of my unit is regularly monitored, measured and improved.

2 Monash Overview

Monash University has six campuses across Australia including Berwick, Caulfield, Clayton, Gippsland, Parkville and Peninsula. It also has campuses in Malaysia and South Africa as well as centres in London, UK and Prato, Italy. It has more than 50,000 students from over 100 countries. Monash University is a member of the prestigious Group of Eight (Go8) universities, recognised for excellence in teaching, learning, research and graduate outcomes.

For an overview of the organisational structure of the University See Appendix 3, Senior Management Chart.

The number of student and staff is reflected in the table below.

Table 1 Student and Staff Statistics

Campus	Academic Staff	General Staff	Total Staff	Students
Berwick	38.2	30.3	68.5	1,888
Caulfield	324.3	330.9	655.2	13,339
Clayton	1,724.4	1,860.0	3,584.4	22,998
Gippsland	185.1	214.4	372.4	7,188
Malaysia	1.0*	0.0*	1.0*	2,220
Parkville	83.7	44.8	128.5	1,173
Peninsula	91.4	76.4	167.8	2,715
South Africa	2.0*	2.0*	4.0*	345**
Total	2,423.1	2,558.7	4,981.8	51,926

Notes:

- Figures for staff are full-time equivalent as at 31 March 2003
- Student figures are based on enrolments as at 31 March 2004
- * figures relate only to staff employed directly by Monash University in Australia
- ** figure relates only to students enrolled in award courses

2.1 Scope of the Review

Responsibilities for Student Administration and Systems functions at Monash are spread across four organisational sections within the Services and Systems Group of the Student and Staff Services Division:

- Student Administration
- Client Services
- Student Systems
- Business Improvements Projects

The Student Administration section delivers core functions in the areas of Student Admissions, Enrolments, Fees, Coursework Scholarships, Student Administration Policy and Timetable Systems.

The Client Services section provides the front line of service to students, supported by the functions of the Student Administration section. Client Services also take responsibility for management of Examinations, Graduations and Student Service Centres.



The Student Systems section was established to facilitate the implementation and development of academic and student administration information technology applications. The section provides assistance with development, implementation and support for end-user applications, including a selection of packaged software and the design and construction of application solutions for academic and administrative purposes.

The Business Improvements Projects Team is a change team that provides a standardised approach to project implementation within the Student Administration and Student Systems areas. It offers the Services and Systems Group the opportunity to deploy change management and technical skills for new initiatives.

Student Administration and Systems has functional responsibility for the delivery of student services at Monash University Malaysia and Monash South Africa.



3 Organisational Structure

3.1 Evolution

The current organisational structure of the Student and Staff Services Division was established in 2000 at the time of the merger of the Personnel Services and Student Services Divisions.¹⁰ A Services and Systems Group was established within the new Division with the intent of developing a common approach to service delivery and systems deployment across the University. Since that time, the Group structure has been further refined to enable 'front office' service provision by the Client Services section supported by specialised 'back office' units under the broad title of Student Administration.

The Student Systems section was established on a continuing basis following implementation of the Callista Student Management System at the end of 2000. The Business Improvements Projects Team was formed from the members of the Callista Change Team following the Callista implementation to allow work on other change management projects such as the Caulfield Service Centre, Syllabus Plus and the ask.monash inquiry management system.

The prime mission statement for the Services and Systems Group is to provide high quality cost effective student-centred service mechanisms and structures for delivery. The front office/back office structure aims to integrate and deliver these services through a network of Service Centres located on each campus. These services are also provided by a variety of other channels such as Websites, the Call Centre, email (although this is being phased out) and by the inquiry management system ask.monash. Many of the Group's new developments focus on increasing the provision of 'high tech' self service administrative solutions with 'staff assisted' services focused on areas where students need that assistance or where there is some other value added by that approach.

¹⁰ Student and Staff Services Division Organisational Chart
19/10/2004

The organisational structure for the Services and Systems Group as at August 2004 appears in Figure 3.

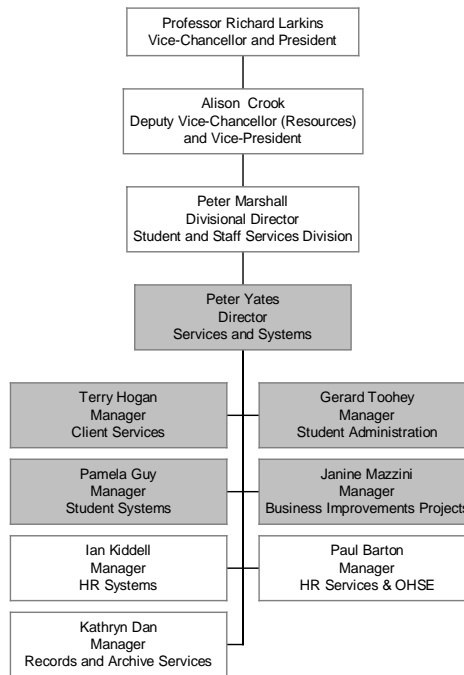


Figure 3: Services & Systems Group organisational structure (shading indicates the sections within the scope of the review, referred collectively to as Student Administration and Systems)

The organisational structure supporting the delivery of student administration is detailed in Figure 4.

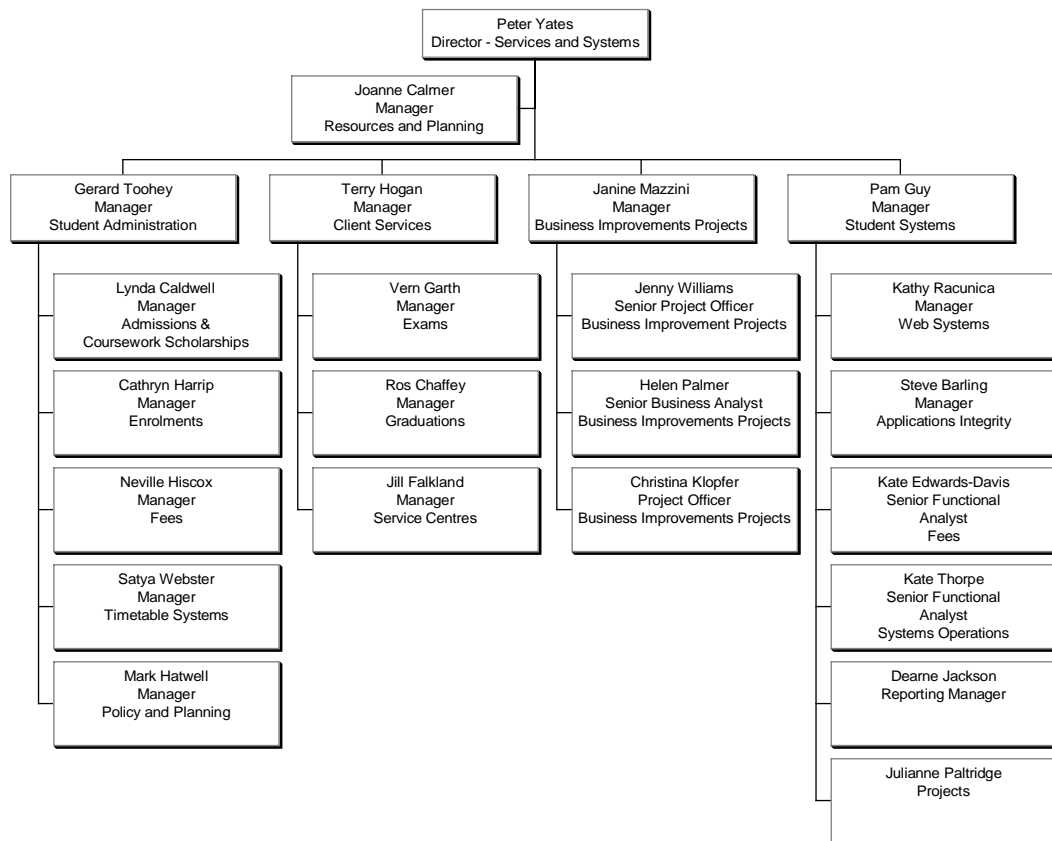


Figure 4: Services & Systems Group – Sections & Staff



3.2 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Current Organisational Model

The broad organisational structure of Services and Systems Group, consisting of a Director with Managers in seven discrete sections, is an effective way of grouping together units with a similar client base within the University. The seven sections are broadly but clearly delineated and represent a realistic manner of administering the roles defined for each area. The inclusion of a Business Improvements Projects Team is an innovative means by which the Group is able to identify and implement creative approaches or technologies for service delivery that might otherwise not be possible.

Into its fifth year of operation, the Services and Systems Group is now well placed to reflect on the planning and performance of functions that has occurred over this time, and make recommendations on how improvements may be effected. One area for debate is whether the Services and Systems Group has within its portfolio the range of activities and tasks that ought logically to be grouped under that banner. Additionally, questions could be asked as to whether the tasks currently administered by the seven discrete sections are appropriately organised and assigned within and between those sections.

It is suggested that the Handbook function, currently administered by other organisational units in the University, would more logically fall within the auspices of 'Services and Systems' and thereby enable the more effective and integrated provision of service delivery to students:

3.2.1 Handbook

At the August annual meeting of the Heads of Student Administration from Australian universities, papers were presented on methodologies for managing course and unit information and online handbooks. These presentations illustrated that the common practice in certain universities is for this type of activity to be undertaken by the Services and Systems Group (or equivalent). There is sense in having those three areas under one coordinating roof, and the suggestion is that they would most appropriately sit within Services and Systems. Similarly, there is currently no singly-defined editorial responsibility for the annually produced Student Resource Guide.

Recommendation 1:

That a 'Handbook' unit, located in Student Administration within the Services and Systems Group, undertake editorial and technical responsibility for the Handbook (online and hardcopy) and the Student Resource Guide.



4 Management

The Self Review Panel has focused on the following areas in its consideration of this Term of Reference.

4.1 Leadership

The Self Review Panel acknowledges the strong leadership of the Divisional Director, Student and Staff Services Division in the establishment of the newly formed Division in 2000 and his ongoing support of Student Administration and Systems Managers in their endeavours to further the quality of Monash services and systems.

The Group Director and the Student Administration and Systems Managers take an active leadership role within the University and within the sector. The University is devolved in its structure with devolved data entry and service points. Faculty Managers have direct reporting lines to their Deans and only a functional relationship with Student Administration and Systems sections. As a result, it is necessary for Student Administration and Systems Managers and their staff to develop and maintain strong working relationships with Faculty staff at all levels to ensure that the University's legal responsibilities, duty of care with respect to student administration matters, and the associated government reporting requirements are satisfied.

Student Administration and Systems Managers are also prominent in University governance matters, sponsorship and management of major projects, steering committees, sector wide professional networks, conference presentations and in hosting visiting universities interested in Monash initiatives. See Appendix 4, Leadership Activities.

4.2 Planning

The University's key planning document 'Leading the Way'¹¹ sets the agenda for the University towards 2020 with its vision of a self-reliant, broad-based, global university and learning organisation. In addition to this long term plan, 'Excellence and Diversity'¹² the University's new Strategic Framework – 2004-2008 lists 10 defining values for the University including:

- Excellence in education
- Excellence in research and scholarship
- Excellence in management
- Innovation and creativity
- Diversity
- International focus
- Fairness
- Engagement
- Integrity
- Self-reliance

Of these values, the Services and Systems Group takes the two values of 'Excellence in Management' and 'Innovation and Creativity' as the key elements to the Group's mission of

¹¹ Leading the Way Monash 2020

¹² Monash University Excellence and Diversity Strategic Framework 2004-2008



developing quality, cost-effective, student-centred mechanisms and structures for service delivery. In pursuing these two values, the Group is attempting to ensure that the other eight values act as guiding principles in support of the University's prime focus of Teaching and Research.

Although the Group's schema for 2005 is still in development there are two other emphases of the new Plans that are worth mentioning here.¹³

1. To ensure consistency in the quality of services across all campuses and an ability for students to travel between campuses in Australia or internationally to study in any one semester and retain service privileges.
2. That the values of Fairness, Diversity and Integrity be satisfied within the provision of services to students and staff. This is particularly relevant in ensuring that no group of students is disadvantaged by a particular approach to service of systems provision.

Since 2002, the Service and Systems Group has primarily used the University Resources Sector Plan 2002 – 2004¹⁴ to inform the Group's strategic direction. This Plan defined five key areas of intent relating to student administration and systems, as follows:

- Sustaining and Developing Monash Global Operations
- Competitive Advantage Through the Monash Student Customer Experience
- Competitive Advantage Through the Monash Staff Experience
- Preserving and Building Monash's Image and Reputation
- Achieving Self Reliance

While the Group regards all five of these as important, *Competitive Advantage through the Monash Student Customer Experience* became the prime area of intent that encompassed and, hopefully, advantaged all other areas of intent. It contained two Key Performance Statements:

1. A continually enhanced Monash student experience
2. Developing quality, cost-effective, student-centred mechanisms and structures for service delivery

The Group's Planning Schema, project portfolio, key deliverables and performance planning documentation for 2004 are all based on ensuring alignment with these two Statements.

4.2.1 Planning process

The planning process for Student Administration and Systems units is both structured and consultative. The Services and Systems Group works closely with the Student and Staff Services Divisional Director, the Director of the Strategy Group of Student and Staff Services Division, other Directors within the Division, and the Finance and Resources Manager in the development of Group planning. The Student Administration and Systems Managers are involved in the Division's strategic planning process and participate in an annual SSSD planning conference and the subsequent development of Divisional and Group Plans. The Group's planning activities are tightly structured and a genuine attempt is made to map or cascade planning from the strategic high level plans of the University down through the Group plans and to the individual staff member's Performance Plan. See Appendix 5, Cascading Planning Documentation and Appendix 6, Services and Systems Group Planning Schema 2004.

¹³ Services and Systems Group Planning Schema 2005

¹⁴ University Resources Plan 2002 - 2004



4.2.2 Annual Information Technology Services Project Submission

Annually, and in consultation with key clients, Student Systems identifies university wide business improvement requirements as they relate to student systems and take responsibility for the preparation and submission of the request for additional funding to the Information Technology Services (ITS) Project Portfolio. When approval is granted, Student Systems play a lead role in the project management, planning and implementation of the requirements. It is noted that Thomsett Project Methodology has been used for these projects with significant success over the past 2 years. The Benefits Realisation document for 2003 lists the project outcomes (successes).¹⁵ Similar success is predicted for 2004, including the substantial work required to support the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003 reforms.

4.3 Financial Management

The Group works within the University's formal processes for costing under the Strategic Cost Management methodology and budget allocation methodology. The Student Administration and Systems budget submission is developed and overseen by the Director, Services and Systems and the Manager, Resources and Planning. There is regular consultation with the Divisional Director, Student and Staff Services Division, the Division's Finance and Resources Manager, and Managers from each of the Group's cost centres in the lead up to the budget submission process and in the monitoring of expenditure against budget.

In addition to the recurrent budget, Student Administration and Systems units are responsible for a number of large scale University Wide Cost Centres (UWC) with budget totalling \$1,330,000. These UWC budgets provide for the following functions:

- Enrolment notices printing
- Fees statements printing
- Exams printing including script booklets and exam papers
- Exams venue hire (primarily related to payments for the Melbourne Racing Club contract for use of the Caulfield Racecourse)
- Exams supervisors
- VTAC admissions

Performance against budget is closely monitored from a global perspective by the Director's Office and, locally, from a cost centre perspective, within the individual Cost Centres. Monthly budget reports for each Cost Centre are produced by the Director's office and are tracked against key expenditure items for the previous two years¹⁶. This ensures that any anomalies in expenditure patterns are investigated progressively through the year to assist in budget planning and forecasting.

Student Administration and Systems units also have functional responsibility for projects funded by Information Technology Services Project Portfolio. Such projects for 2004 include Callista Essential Business Improvements, the ask.monash inquiry management system and Timetabling Systems.

¹⁵ Benefits Realisation 2003 - Callista Business Improvements

¹⁶ Monthly Budget Report

4.4 Risk Management

The University's Audit & Risk Management Office (ARM) has, over the past three years, introduced Risk Management based on the Australian Standard across the University's academic and administrative divisions and has implemented Control Self Assessment methodology for use on compliance audits in departments and centres.

A complete risk assessment profile of the Division was conducted involving the Self Review Panel members in 2003 and again in 2004. As a result, all Managers in Student Administration and Systems units have contributed to and are aware of the risk profile risk treatment strategies and progress toward risk amelioration.¹⁷

Further to the overall risk profile of the Division, the ARM has recently conducted a comprehensive and specific risk analysis of the Callista database, Graduations and Cashiering.

Business Continuity Planning is an emerging requirement for each operational unit for the critical periods of the annual business cycle. Some work has been done already in the development of such plans and this will be extended across all major processes in the coming months.

4.5 Compliance

Student Administration has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Higher Education Funding Act 1988 (Cth.) (HEFA), the Higher Education University Support Act 2003 (Cth.) (HESA) and the Higher Education Support (Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments) Act 2003 (Cth.) on behalf of the University. The Audit Committee of Council requires detailed risk-focused reporting of compliance to areas of legislation from Compliance Officers. Compliance Officers have previously signed annual compliance statements, however, for 2004 this has now been extended to quarterly reporting and officers must now provide information about actual breaches of the law, areas where there is an identifiable risk of non-compliance and 'complaints' which may be indicative of areas where there is a risk of non-compliance¹⁸.

The Manager of Student Administration is the designated Compliance Officer for HEFA and HESA and associated legislation. Key aspects of the legislation requiring compliance, and for which potential penalties may be imposed, are identified and the organisational unit/s responsible are each year notified of their obligations, asked to report any areas of ambiguity, and certify their compliance with those key aspects. This is then collated and certified as a 'package' to Audit and Risk Management. To facilitate the introduction of the new HESA requirements, Student Administration and Systems staff have initiated and delivered extensive training and information dissemination sessions to staff across the University.

A number of Committees convened and/or serviced by Student Administration and Systems units take responsibility for ensuring compliance with University administrative policies.

¹⁷ Student and Staff Services Division Risk Profile

¹⁸ Quarterly Compliance Report to Audit Committee, Quarter 2, 2004
19/10/2004



4.6 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Current Management Processes

The point at which responsibility for a variety of processes falls to faculties or central student administration is not always clear. For example, faculties have recently initiated discussion about practices in faculties concerning Special Consideration at the end of semester. While there is a University process, this has not been uniformly implemented and it was apparent to them that this inconsistency required standardisation. The existence of two separate application forms was contrary to the standardised approach being taken by Student Service Centres. While there was concern from some faculty representatives about a change to the status quo, a common business process has now been agreed. Monitoring is required to detect other similar situations, as processes must be common if we are to deliver consistent service to students, and to enable automation of processes. Duplication must also be reduced where possible.

Recommendation 2:

That opportunities be further explored to reduce a duplication of effort in central and faculty processes and to reduce unnecessary variation to common business processes across the University.

The Self Review Panel contends that the planning methodology and practice is one of the strengths of Student Administration and Systems units operations at Monash. It is an expectation that Managers communicate and reinforce the importance of the planning process to achieving the strategic objectives and that they monitor adherence to this intent. This expectation is articulated in Performance Plans to ensure alignment of staff effort both vertically and horizontally throughout the Group. There is evidence of success in this area in the results of the recently administered Self Review Staff Survey, where 96% of respondents understood how their work contributed to achievement of the Group's plans and deliverables.

Recommendation 3:

That the current planning methodology be continued and adapted to the Monash Excellence and Diversity Strategic Framework.

Recommendation 4:

That an annual Student Administration and Systems staff workshop be incorporated into the annual planning cycle with particular emphasis on staff contribution to the planning process.

Emerging campus development plans of the University offer an opportunity for the Student Administration and Systems units to act as service providers for a range of stakeholders and initiatives.

Recommendation 5:

That Group plans incorporate a focus on emerging campus planning imperatives and particularly on providing consistency in the quality of services across all campuses. This should include an ability for students to travel between campuses in Australia or internationally to study in any one semester and retain service privileges.



Often when budgets for projects are allocated, this is done without regard for ongoing administrative support requirements. That is, when a project is mounted where there will be ongoing maintenance and staffing costs, the project funding mechanism does not deal with the longer term sustainability of the function which has been 'kick-started'.

Recommendation 6:

That, as part of project scope considerations, provision be made in long term cost forecasting to provide budget and staff in recurrent funding for ongoing support functions as the implementation of projects is completed.

Student Administration and Systems has attempted to restrict budget requests over the last two years to remain in line with Enterprise Bargaining outcomes. This has become increasingly difficult where costs are imposed by external parties and by factors beyond the Division's control. For example, the annual subscription to VTAC can cause the budget for ongoing operations to be adversely affected in any one year by many thousands of dollars. Similarly, examination venue hire and invigilation costs have grown exponentially, particularly for Distance Education venues overseas.

Recommendation 7:

That a revised budget base be sought for the area's annual budget allocation, beyond the allowance made for salary increases, so that the area is appropriately resourced to cover externally imposed costs. This is particularly relevant in the areas of VTAC contributions, exam accommodation at the Caulfield Racecourse, and the provision of Distance Education exams where cost increases are out of the University's control.

The risk management approaches and compliance procedures in the Student Administration and Systems units are sound and current treatment of the risk profile is appropriate. However, the work undertaken by these units has such critical and widespread effect upon the financial and academic viability of the University's operation that ongoing assessment of key stages and processes should be identified and Business Continuity Plans should be further developed in case of business interruption.

Recommendation 8:

That Business Continuity Plans be implemented progressively across all major Student Administration and Systems processes.

5 Quality Assurance and Improvements

5.1 Strategic Cost Management

Monash University has recently moved to Strategic Cost Management as a model for financial management within the University. Through this method, revenue earned by faculties from the Department of Education, Science and Training, student fees, and other faculty research grants and donations are recorded against faculties at 100%. Faculties incur direct expenses for staff salaries and other non-staff related expenses and are also charged for costs incurred centrally, referred to as net central charges. To determine the net figure, revenue from fees and charges received by central support areas, less expense, are charged to faculties. Costs are charged to faculties to reflect the faculty's consumption of each service. To support this funding arrangement, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have been adopted between support services, such as SSSD and faculties to ensure that there is a mutual agreement regarding the services and service levels provided. To monitor performance, Key Performance Indicators agreed by the faculties and support services are used to measure service performance and standards.

5.2 Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements are used to support Strategic Cost Management and to articulate service standards and expectations between Student Administration and Systems units and faculties with regard to the following end user services:¹⁹

- Admissions and Scholarships
- Enrolments
- Examinations
- Fees
- Graduations
- Caulfield Service Centre (one for Monash International and one for stakeholder faculties)

Note: At this stage there is not an SLA in place for Timetabling, as this unit is currently funded for 2004 as a project in the ITS Project Portfolio. The SLA with Monash International is not part of Strategic Cost Management.

The method for measuring performance by a service provider within SLAs is by way of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which measure quality in qualitative and/or quantitative terms.

During the first eighteen months of SLAs, Student Administration and Systems units satisfied all KPI targets. See Appendix 7, Key Performance Indicators.

5.3 Information Dissemination and Feedback Mechanisms

In addition to University-initiated evaluations of the stakeholder service expectations and evaluations, Student Administration and Systems have developed additional processes to determine expectations, satisfaction and potential areas for improvement. These include leading and/or participating in a range of committees, user groups and networks. Examples

¹⁹ Service Level Agreements for Student Administration and Systems
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include the Student Administration Network, Syllabus Plus User Group, Allocate Plus Reference Group, OS-HELP Working Party, University Admissions Committee, Callista Client Strategy Group, Student Complaints and the Grievance Committee. A full list is included in Appendix 8, Communication and Networking Activities. These groups and networks meet regularly on both formal and informal bases and help to ensure that the Group's goals and strategies are aligned with stakeholder needs. They provide regular contact with stakeholders so that any issues that may have arisen in between the formal SLA cycle are managed appropriately. They also give Student Administration and Systems Managers the opportunity to highlight achievements and consequently increase the standing of Student Administration and Systems within the University.

These feedback mechanisms are of major importance to Student Administration and Systems and are essential to the implementation of the Quality Review Cycle. By initiating consultation and evaluating stakeholder feedback, Student Administration and Systems is in a position to act on any areas identified for improvement.

5.4 Service Quality Initiatives

The Student and Staff Services Division has implemented a range of quality initiatives since 2000 in response to feedback gained from a variety of survey and other quality measures. In summary, these include but are not limited to:

- The Seamless Student Services Taskforce
- Fees Business Process and Systems Improvements
- Student Centres: A Service Strategy
- ask.monash inquiry management
- Performance Management Scheme
- Work Processes Documentation
- Student Systems and Integrated Administrative Systems approaches to improvement in Callista performance
- WES Enrolment Survey

5.4.1 Seamless Student Services Taskforce

The Seamless Student Services Taskforce was established in 2000 with the objective of determining ways to increase efficiency, quality and capabilities of student and staff services provided by the SSSD across the local campuses. The Division arranged for research to be conducted with the aim of identifying possible improvement areas for service delivery. Feedback suggested that key concerns were for improvement to service delivery and access to information. With this in mind, planning objectives were developed to:

- provide students and staff with a single point of contact through integrated services; and
- develop and maintain effective service mechanisms to provide high quality customer focused services.

The mechanisms to deliver these objectives were identified in the SSS Taskforce Report:

- the development of a student service centre through which integrated faculty and general student services could be provided, e.g. the Caulfield Service Centre (CSC); and
- the implementation of an online inquiry management system, ask.monash

It was also determined that significant effort be directed to improving fees-related services.



5.4.2 Fees Business Process and Systems Improvements

Lower satisfaction levels from the Survey for Fees related services highlighted the need for targeted attention. Subsequently, the SSS Taskforce developed 22 recommendations for improvements in the Fees and Fees systems areas. These recommendations have now been implemented resulting in a significant improvement in service quality and systems performance. This is evidenced by a reduction in turnaround times in fees administration and batch job run times. Results of the Monash Experience Questionnaire of 2003 revealed higher levels of satisfaction for Fees services than other areas of student administration. Appendix 9, Fees: a case study, presents further detail of improving service quality.

5.4.3 Student Centres: A Service Strategy

In 1999 the ground floor of Building 3C at the Clayton campus was renovated to create the first Service Centre. At that time there were significant improvements as a result of this work but there was no attempt to integrate with back office functions, cashiering, to have a call centre or an electronic inquiry system. These objectives became a major focus in the Caulfield Service Centre initiative, when it was first mooted late in 2001 after discussions with the Faculty of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Information Technology. In this project, potential synergies were identified in combining faculty and central services across a variety of areas including student administration, admissions and Information Technology support. When the Faculty of Art and Design, Monash International and IT Services also took interest in subsequent discussions, the project concept was established.

Phase 1 of the Project involved a renovation of the existing SSSD Client Services facility and the delivery of some faculty services from the Centre. It was envisaged that the Centre would, over time, be a key access point for prospective and current students seeking a diverse range of services.

The development of the Centre coincided with the integration of various service functions and mechanisms across the areas of student administration and, more broadly, the Student and Staff Services Division. The back office/front office organisational and service model for Student Administration was one component of this strategy. See Appendix 10, Back Office/Front Office Organisational Model.

In the lead up period of the project it became clear that administrative business processes differed greatly between each faculty and the departments/schools. However, it is also a fundamental truth that many of the administrative processes and activities in each of the faculties are similar and are designed to achieve the same objectives in relation to providing support services to the teaching and research activities. Most of the services provided by the faculties are the same (with local operational and policy variations), and are supported by a common suite of computer systems and applications.

The Caulfield Service Centre Review

The Centre has been identified as a vehicle that can offer great benefit in service provision to students and stakeholders such as faculties. It also presents the most significant challenges for implementation and development. Some of these include the securing of funds for investment in infrastructure, technology, restructuring of staffing arrangements and information management. The interface with academic units, location and cost sharing are also matters to be further worked through.



In April 2004, a CSC Review Panel was convened with the task of reviewing the services delivered by the CSC on behalf of faculties after its first six months of operation. This Panel resolved that further work was required in three main areas:

- Redefining the mission for the Centre based on future stakeholder and campus needs
- Exploring and addressing concerns from faculty staff regarding the quality of processes
- Devising staffing and costing alternatives for the delivery of stakeholder services

Actions are being taken to address these issues through discussions with the sponsors and formation of Working Groups. One significant outcome is the move for some of the faculty office staff to be located adjacent to the Service Centre. This will significantly lessen concerns about not having 'business matter experts' on site. Again, this move will approximate a back office/front office model that has been successful for central student administration matters. Details of the key conclusions and recommendations of the Review Report are provided in Appendix 11, Caulfield Service Centre.

5.4.4 ask.monash Inquiry Management

ask.monash is an online self-help inquiry management system powered by the RightNow Technologies product, RightNow Service. ask.monash incorporates a database of published content that can be viewed by customers and a mechanism for managing customer inquiries including activities such as receipting, responding, and routing to subject matter experts as required. Content published in ask.monash is characterised as typical information sought by customers, or frequently asked questions (FAQs).

ask.monash offers an integrated service delivery approach to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Customers can self-serve their information needs and if required can submit an inquiry. Inquiries are tracked, managed and monitored in a quality-controlled environment with the objective to provide a timely quality experience of customer service at Monash University regardless of the business unit managing the inquiry.

Significant benefits for students and staff have been realised and site activity has increased by approximately 95% over the last 12 months. During the month of July 2004 approximately 17,500 customers accessed the system (12,000 new customers and 5,500 returning customers) and viewed answers 40,000 times. It is anticipated that 150-200,000 student administration related answers will be viewed within the ask.monash system in the 2004 calendar year up from approximately 99,000 in 2003. The number of students accessing the system for the first time continues to grow as does the number of students returning to use the system.

The BIP Team implemented ask.monash within SSSD using the Quality Cycle methodology of Plan, Act, Evaluate and Improve. See Appendix 12, ask.monash: a case study in implementation strategy.

5.4.5 Work Processes Documentation

During 2003, Student Administration and Systems saw the need to consolidate information on central work processes in one repository rather than continue with the situation whereby information on processes was available in a variety of formats or was not documented at all. There is a potential risk to business continuity and succession planning unless work processes are documented and thereby provide an assurance that key knowledge can be passed on. To ameliorate this situation, an online documentation project was established. This involved the engagement of an external technical writer to develop online documentation of work processes,

which included procedural text, flow-charts, tables, charts and images. The project involved defining all aspects of Student Administration work processes and making that content accessible on the intranet to central administration staff only.

The project ran for six months during which time work processes were developed for most core service areas. It was accepted that the project must necessarily be a work in progress and regularly be either reviewed or enhanced if it was to remain a useful concept. A key challenge is therefore in providing incentive for staff to ensure the documentation remains up to date. To this end, a staff member in each unit is given the task of ensuring this occurs. It is intended that Managers of core services include this imperative as part of their Performance Plans.

5.4.6 Performance Management Scheme

A framework for staff performance management, the Performance Management Scheme, was developed at the University as part of the Enterprise Bargaining process. The resulting Monash University Enterprise Agreement (Academic and General) 2000 includes a formal Performance Management Scheme which covers the majority of university staff. Performance Management Plans have been implemented progressively across most Student Administration and Systems units. These are seen as an important tool to ensure accountability for objectives, give staff the opportunity to articulate their career goals and development needs, highlight their achievements and identify potential improvements. The process also helps staff to understand the goals of the University, Division and their own work group. Performance Management Plans set performance targets for staff and are expressed in a way that depicts how individual plans are aligned with the broader University goals. This alignment is also illustrated in the Group's Planning Schema. See Appendix 6, Services and Systems Planning Schema 2004. A small number of staff do not have performance plans in place at present but this will be addressed in coming months.

5.4.7 Student Systems and Integrated Administrative Systems approaches to improvement in Callista performance

At both mid year and end of year, a significant number of business processes occur relating to student results, progression and re-enrolment. The timelines for these processes are very short and many of them rely heavily on the use of the Callista Student Management System. The initial design of the Callista jobs did not consider optimisation of processing times or significant volumes. This resulted in jobs that were unworkable and unreliable when running in a large, devolved environment such as Monash. Workarounds and significant hands-on effort was required from Student Systems staff to try and deliver a workable solution. Investigation and analysis was undertaken collaboratively with Callista Software Services (CSS), Integrated Administrative Systems and Student Systems. Iterative improvements have been made to Callista performance over the last four years. This has resulted in significant improvements to reliability and performance and has enabled the provision of timely information to faculties and students. Further details are available in Appendix 13, Student Systems/IAS/Callista Collaboration: a case study

5.4.8 Web Enrolment System Survey

In order to obtain student feedback on the Web Enrolment System (WES) and the re-enrolment process in general, a survey was developed for use as the final stage of online re-enrolment. The survey is made available through WES which is accessed via the my.monash portal. The survey is designed so that feedback can be broken down into various student and faculty



cohorts and as such makes areas of improvement more easily identifiable. A summary of the survey results is available in Appendix 14, The Web Enrolment System Survey

5.5 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance & Improvements

While the SLAs and KPIs are satisfying current requirements, these need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet client needs.

Recommendation 9:

That Service Level Agreements be reviewed periodically in consultation with clients to ensure service standards are appropriate. Key Performance Indicator measurement methodology should also be regularly reviewed.

It was agreed at the 2004 Heads of Student Administration Conference that a sector wide process benchmarking be undertaken, and that reports would be made accessible to universities. Monash is a keen participant in this initiative and would consider that much benefit may be gained through the exercise. Preliminary discussions on the nature of the project have already begun with CHEQ regarding methodology and with interested universities including, The University of Melbourne, Curtin University of Technology, Queensland University of Technology, University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Western Australia. Some preliminary benchmarking data will be available to Review panel members prior to 27 September.

Recommendation 10:

That the Group explore benchmarking opportunities with Australian and New Zealand universities.

While Performance Management Plans have been implemented across Student Administration and Systems, there remains a small number of staff who do not have performance plans in place at this point.

Recommendation 11:

That all staff from HEW Level 5 and above have Performance Plans in place by June 2005 and that these link to higher level University Plans. Performance Plans should also be adapted for HEW Level 4 staff and below.



6 Core Services

Student Administration and Systems provides services to a large number of clients. Core services provided to faculties are mostly articulated in the Service Level Agreements. However, there are additional services outside the current SLAs such as timetabling, student inquiry services delivered from Service Centres including but not restricted to, academic transcripts, student letters, ID cards, travel concessions, student forms, and cashiering. Services such as student systems development and support are considered part of the cost of delivering the core end user services such as Enrolments or Fees and so are not separately identified through an SLA or the Strategic Cost Management costing model. A brief description of the core services is detailed below:

6.1 Services to Students

6.1.1 Admissions and Coursework Scholarships

This unit is responsible for the management and development of the University's undergraduate (and postgraduate Education) selection and admissions processes and systems, and the centrally funded coursework scholarship programs. The unit represents the University with VTAC and other external bodies and manages the development of admissions, selection and scholarship policy within the University, and services the University Admissions Committee and the Coursework Scholarships Committee. The unit coordinates an annual intake through VTAC of 9,000 students, and administers an annual scholarship budget of approximately \$3 million.

6.1.2 Enrolments

The University enrolments and enrolment-related processes coordinated by Student Administration affect the total student population across all campuses. The Enrolments unit also has responsibility to oversee the budget, appointment, training and supervision of approximately 60 casual enrolment staff, and incurs expenditure of around \$70,000 for the University-wide costs associated with enrolment processes. The unit is responsible for authorisation and change of several significant aspects of student enrolment, such as Academic History Amendment Requests (6,001 in 2003), Change of Citizenship (383), Change of Fee Status (287), Resolution of Double ID's (1,127), Australian Permanent Resident Assessments for Commonwealth Assistance (901), Fee/HECS Variations (1,461), Pre 97 HECS Transitional Arrangements (12) (projection for 2005 for pre 2005 HECS and PELS is 4,000).

6.1.3 Examinations

The Exams unit is responsible for the administration and conduct of examinations for all students of the University. This includes on-campus, distance education, open learning and enhancement students on all campuses of the institution. The unit is also responsible for overseeing the collection and publication of all finalised results as per agreed schedules with Faculties. The unit has responsibility for the results administrative processes and publication systems. The number of results processed and published each year is around 300,000. The Examinations unit coordinates seven exam periods per year for students enrolled in both on-campus and off-campus mode at more than 400 exam venues worldwide. Approximately 247,000 exams are conducted each year for more than 1,500 units. The number of invigilation staff required to be employed and trained in all aspects of the conduct of examinations is in excess of 500 throughout any given year.



6.1.4 Fees

The University fee processes conducted by Student Administration affect the total student population across all campuses except for Monash Malaysia, Monash South Africa, and offshore partner offerings. There is approximately \$320 million of student fees (including Amenities Fees and fines) invoiced and collected annually, using around 240,000 fee advice notices. The Fees unit has 170 active sponsors on the system, dealing with over 1,600 sponsored students each semester. Over 10,000 encumbrances are placed against students each year for non-payment of fees by the due date, with over 7,000 subsequently lifted. There are 336 journal entries made against faculty accounts each year for faculty payments (excluding refunds and discounts). Approximately 2,000 discounts are processed annually, in addition to around 3,000 refunds. There are approximately 3,000 fee extensions processed each year, and over 2,200 changes of fee status and associated variations. The unit is responsible for the collection of student loans made by Community Services; for the period January-August 2004 there were 1,590 such transactions, valued at \$355,874.

6.1.5 Graduations

The Graduations unit provides graduation services including year round graduation support, scheduling of the graduation timetable, preparation for graduations, conduct of graduation ceremonies and post graduation administration. The unit is responsible for the organisation and preparation of all aspects of graduation ceremonies relating to graduands and their guests for all campuses of Monash University. This includes processing of applications to graduate, ticketing, testamur and transcript production, pre-ceremony communication to graduands, their families and guests, and presentation of graduands to the Chancellor on the day of the ceremony. The University holds 27 'onshore' graduation ceremonies and seven 'offshore' graduation ceremonies each year. In 2003, the unit coordinated graduations for 8,384 attending graduates at 34 ceremonies and 3,616 *in absentia* graduates. This was an increase of 10% from 2002 and a further increase is anticipated in 2004.

6.1.6 Timetabling

This unit develops and manages the continued rollout of the Syllabus Plus and Allocate Plus systems across the University including development and maintenance of these applications to ensure the systems meet University requirements including the delivery of service and optimising of resources. Callista, Syllabus Plus, Allocate Plus, WES and the online publication of the timetable are integrated enabling real time change updates across these systems. The timetable system is used by each of the ten faculties, each of the six campuses in Australia, and will be rolled out progressively to the two international campuses of the University. This unit is responsible for the scheduling of over 4,500 units options, and over 30,000 activities each year.

6.2 Student Systems

The Student Systems section is split into five functional areas as follows:

- Systems Operations Group
- Reporting Group
- Applications Integrity
- Web Systems
- Systems Fees Group

A description of the functions performed and challenges faced by these groups appears in Appendix 15, Student Systems Functions. Activities of the Student Systems section have included the following:

6.2.1 Callista Vendor and Integrated Application Systems (IAS)

One of the keys to recent success in system deployment at Monash has been the close and successful working relationship between business units and ITS. An important reason for this has been the existence of the IAS structure which was formed for the implementation of SAP – Finance/HR and Callista. This group brought together all the relevant participants under one umbrella ‘competency centre’. At the conclusion of the project it was decided that an appropriate way forward would be to retain a core competency centre that would provide the relevant resources required for the ongoing support of these Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. The Manager, IAS is able to bring together resources from the relevant areas to undertake specific projects prior to functions becoming operational. The IAS Management Team is led by the Director, Applications Services, ITS, the Director, Services and Systems, SSSD and the Project Manager, Corporate Finance Division, thus covering all of the major corporate administrative areas. It also includes the Manager, Student Systems, the Manager, HR Systems and the Manager, IAS. This Team oversees strategic directions and operations. The Self Review Panel contends that it would be desirable for the IAS concept to continue and that in future IAS should be responsible for all major corporate systems and any new administrative systems purchased by the University.

The establishment of the Student Systems team and its inclusion in the IAS Group has enabled the University to obtain leverage from Callista to support service improvements to students. Monash has rolled out all modules of Callista to support the major administrative processes, which has enabled some areas to replace previous manual processes with technical solutions. This has been particularly successful with the roll out of the rules engine of Callista where Monash has taken advantage of the functionality to a greater extent than any other Callista client with 29,451 course and unit rules currently being utilised. These rules support activities associated with course progression, enrolments and course completions.

6.2.2 Client Liaison

Student Systems is the first point of contact for vendor liaison with Callista Software Services (CSS), the supplier of the University’s student management system, and for the Callista User Group (CCSG) activities on behalf of the University. Monash is often called upon to present its implementation story and support arrangements. Monash also plays a lead role in the Callista Conference and workshop presentations and facilitates the provision of consulting services to new Callista client institutions. Monash also acts as a reference point for any new or prospective Callista clients.

The HESA 2003 requirements have proved particularly challenging to the relationship between Monash, other client institutions and the vendor, CSS. In the past, CSS as part of the existing license agreement with clients, provided the annual changes for Government reporting activities. As the HESA 2003 Reforms were of a magnitude not previously experienced by the sector CSS reassessed their position with regard to their obligation to deliver the required changes. In previous years, the development days required for the provision of Government reporting compliance was around 500. The HESA/HEIMS changes have been have been costed at a minimum of 8,000 developments days (at a joint cost to Callista client universities of more

than \$10 million). The scope, complexity and cost of this work is placing financial strain on the Universities and the business relationship with CSS.

The future reliability of service from CSS and the viability of the Callista system itself, is a major concern for Monash. A due diligence exercise earlier this year illustrated clearly that CSS had significant cash flow and other financial difficulties. Monash has been working closely with other Callista client universities to broker a solution with CSS and Deakin to deliver the software required for the HESA/HEIMS changes. At the time of writing, an agreement is being finalised for the delivery of the first part of this work and a robust implementation plan is already in place. However, there is still significant risk involved in this project as delivery is based on five software releases from CSS over a very short timeline. In acknowledgement of the inherent risk involved Student Systems and Student Administration has also developed a Business Continuity Plan to be invoked in the event of non-delivery or failure of the software.

Negotiations will re-commence soon between CSS, Deakin and the Callista client universities regarding a future business model for Callista which would ensure future viability of CSS and the continuity of service from the Callista system itself.

6.2.3 International Campuses Systems & Service Provision

Student administration services and systems are available to all campuses of Monash although overseas campuses have some local business requirements that have required differing student administration and systems solutions. At times, these have been achieved through local procedures, locally developed screens, forms and reports within Callista. A number of staff from the Student Administration and Systems units have visited both South Africa and Malaysia to support the set up and ongoing requirements.

The Web Enrolment System has been used by students at the Malaysia campus for a number of years and this year the Monash South Africa students were able to utilise this facility on a significant scale. Enabling access to the system across many campuses has resulted in a need to partition and establish workflows within the system to ensure students on all campuses only have access to the areas relevant to them.

Student Systems, Student Administration and Client Services units have functional responsibilities to the student services teams at Monash South Africa and Monash University Malaysia. It is acknowledged that these relationships require regular monitoring and review.

6.3 Business Improvements Projects

The Business Improvements Projects (BIP) Team brief is to identify service delivery enhancements and to provide a coordinated approach to the delivery of service improvements. The team has expertise in project management, including the development of project documentation, communication strategies, business process re-engineering, assessing change impacts and the analysis of system functionality. The team has a Group-wide focus and is an important part of the Services and Systems Group structure as it affords the Group the opportunity to deploy change management and technical skills for new initiatives with a small group of staff who also have sound knowledge of the business. Since evolving from the Callista Change Management Team, BIP has moved on to lead the Syllabus Plus project, the ask.monash



inquiry system implementation and to play a key role in business process re-engineering of faculty processes in the first two years of the Caulfield Service Centre Project.

The BIP Team is also involved in the Teamsite Content Management System project looking particularly at the related INCORE project which explores ways to manage content stored in multiple repositories and published in a variety of information touch points eg. Web pages, ask.monash, handbooks etc.

Other BIP projects being considered for 2005 include a change management exercise in data management in Community Services, INCORE and, possibly, work with other stakeholders on a prospective students interface for the ask.monash system.

6.4 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of Core Services

6.4.1 Access Monash Program

Monash University Council has decided that HECS charges/Student Contribution Amount (SCA) charges from 2005 will be set at the maximum levels for most courses, with 20% of the extra revenue raised to be directed into new equity programs. A suite of these new equity programs comes under the title of Access Monash. (See Appendix 16 for a full summary). The programs take the form of scholarships and bursaries, a student loans scheme, secondary school activities, and special admissions and pathways. It has been proposed that the Services and Systems Group should assume responsibility for the Access Monash initiative, on the grounds that:

- Existing units are already involved in scholarships and bursaries and will necessarily be more so from 2005
- Existing governance structures (Admissions Committee, Coursework Scholarships Committee, and the Student Loans and Grants Committee) are well placed to provide guidance on each of the four areas contained in the package
- The Group has strong links with Faculties and other Divisions (e.g. Prospective Students Office, Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, Equity and Access, Campus Managers, etc) which would continue when developing implementation of the scheme.

6.4.2 Scholarships

Within the Services and Systems Group, responsibility is taken for Coursework Scholarships. Responsibility for Research Scholarships resides with Monash Research Graduate School. There are a variety of other scholarships offered by faculties, and administered either by faculties or by HR Services. This presents a disjointed approach across the University in relation to the perception, publication, management and budgeting of scholarships. This has been recognised by the University and a review has been established to investigate if the administration of scholarships might be more effectively organised. The recommendations for Services and Systems to accept responsibility for both the Access Monash Program and additional scholarships is being considered by existing internal decision-making bodies and is therefore considered out of the scope of this Review.

6.4.3 Caulfield Service Centre

On the basis of the CSC Review report, it was agreed that there was a need to redefine the service model for the Caulfield Service Centre. Discussions of the model with the Deputy Vice-



Chancellor (Resources), Deans and senior Faculty staff led to the development of a 'back office' faculty presence to be co-located at the Caulfield Service Centre.

Consideration should be given to the overall future relationship of roles performed by faculty and client services regarding the provision of services by Client Services on faculties' behalf. The establishment of the Caulfield Service Centre provides a model for adoption at all other Victorian campuses for the further establishment of a network of service centres, with Caulfield as the call centre component and the locus of ask.monash administration, while all campuses provide a face-to-face counter service. Issues that have surfaced at the Caulfield prototype should be further clarified before extension of the model, but it is suggested the rollout should occur as soon as possible to ensure maximum benefit.

Recommendation 12:

That a further extension of the application of the service model provided by the Caulfield Service Centre be pursued at other campuses.

The Gippsland Service Centre has been established by the successful consolidation of services previously provided by the Facilities and Services Division and those offered by the Client Services section of the Services and Systems Group. Further development of the model at Gippsland is contingent upon the Gippsland Precinct Development where the Self Review Panel considers Client Services as the logical providers for a wide range of services.

Recommendation 13:

That Client Services become service providers to the Gippsland Precinct Development as needed.

The Self Review Panel identified the future of the Callista Student Management System as the greatest uncertainty that could impact on student administration and systems delivery

Recommendation 14:

That while Monash continue to work with Callista Software Services and Deakin to ensure the ongoing production of the Callista system, the University must also monitor the viability of CSS as a systems provider and actively source alternative vendor solutions for the medium term.



7 Human and Physical Resources including IT

7.1 Recruitment

Student Administration and Systems units adhere to the clearly defined University recruitment policy which includes a standardised approach to position descriptions and classifications. However, the nature of the work in Student Administration and Systems areas has changed significantly over the last ten years and as the University has moved into a more competitive environment across the sector, the expectations of administration have increased significantly. The reliance on complex administrative systems, knowledge management strategies, change management skills and the advent of high quality service imperatives have required the University to recruit highly specialised staff in these areas. This has been a challenge in a number of areas where these skill sets are rare. University administrative units now require an advanced and varied set of skills that is often better remunerated in the corporate sector. This presents a challenge to universities to recruit the staff their clients and systems demand.

7.1.1 Induction

All staff commencing within Student Administration and Systems attend the *Introducing Monash* workshop offered by the Staff Development Unit. This course welcomes new staff to the University and provides orientation by organising for other Monash Staff to present on a variety of topics.

The establishment of the Caulfield Service Centre and the consequent employment of a number of Client Service Officers in 2003 provided the opportunity for Student Administration and Systems to implement a comprehensive recruitment and induction process. The recruitment process involved an initial short listing, phone screening, a group interview, an in tray exercise, reference checking and an interview. On commencement of employment the new staff underwent an eight week induction and training period. This involved training on a range of Callista modules, SAP HR Display, overviews on functions such as Enrolments, Fees, Admissions and Scholarships etc. The program was managed by the Manager, Service Centres and was considered highly successful by participants and management. It will be used as a model for further recruitment and induction processes and includes a range of documents related to this process such as the training schedule, interview questions.²⁰

7.2 Staff Training and Development

Student Administration and Systems values and encourages professional development for staff. As mentioned previously, development and training activities for staff are usually decided on during the annual update of an individual's Performance Management Plan in consultation with the individual's Manager. However, development activities and training are not limited to what is outlined in these plans.

Staff are encouraged to nominate for courses and activities which are relevant to their position as they arise. While much of the staff training and a significant portion of the development activities are provided by the University's Staff Development Unit, many staff focus their

²⁰ Caulfield Service Centre Induction Program
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professional development activities on attendance at the various conferences which support their area of professional activity.

The Self Review Staff Survey conducted as part of the review process found that 90.1% of staff reported that they were in a learning environment. This pleasing result is supported by other results:

- Further Study - Approximately 19.4 % of staff are undertaking further study which they believe will enhance their existing role or develop a future role within their work area.
- Professional Development - Approximately 64.8% of staff reported having undertaken professional development courses within Monash
- Work Related Conferences - Since 2003, 46.5% of staff within Student Administration and Systems units have attended conferences including the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) Middle Managers Conference, Callista Conference, Annual Australasian Syllabus+ Reference Group meeting and the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee Student Administration Conference. While staff have attended as participants many have also presented papers. This involvement is seen as very important to the Group in developing professional networks and knowledge of the sector.

7.3 Physical Resources and Infrastructure

The office environment for Student Administration and Systems comprises both enclosed and open plan office space. Open plan offices are considered effective for much of the teamwork undertaken by the various work units although space constraints make it less than desirable for some roles requiring a quiet work area, eg. systems analysis, policy and report writing or other functions requiring a work space free of distractions.

All workstations are ergonomically designed and are in line with Occupational Health and Safety requirements. All PCs are leased over three years in line with the University's leasing policy except for a few highly configured PCs required for some Student Systems functions.

The Self Review Staff Survey illustrated that inadequate space allocation is a significant issue, particularly for some sections of Student Administration and Student Systems. The statement 'My physical environment (hardware, space, furniture, etc) is adequate' recorded the lowest mean, 3.47 and the lowest Broad Agreement, 72.0%. Comments also reflected concern over cramped working conditions, the noise level and the impact on work. Although working conditions are currently tolerable, additional staff will need to be appointed in 2005 to assist implementation of changes arising from the Higher Education Support Act, thus placing additional pressure on the working environment.

7.4 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of Human & Physical Resources

The Self Review Panel considers the staff skill set of the Group as vital to the future quality of student administration and systems delivery. While there has been significant progress to date in attracting and retaining high quality staff, the Self Review Panel flags ongoing recruitment, induction, staff training and development together with physical resources and infrastructure strategies as key factors in future success.



Recommendation 15:

That options for appropriate remuneration and recognition of key staff be further explored.

The Self Review Panel wrestled with the various options for ensuring continuity of critical skill sets within the Group's staffing cohort. The first aspect of this was to ensure that the Group could cover the loss of key staff by understudying vital functions. Further documentation of procedures in these areas was also identified as a risk minimisation strategy along with the multi-skilling of a range of alternative staff. Succession planning, in terms of leadership was also discussed. The Self Review Panel felt that management functions were appropriately collaborative and shared such that any one manager's departure would not seriously impact on University operations.

Recommendation 16:

That points where critical skill sets are vested in a single person are identified and options for ameliorating risk of a single point of failure are pursued.

Seeking additional accommodation for staff currently in Building 3C would be desirable to free up much needed space for Student Administration units and possibly provide an area to bring the Business Improvements Projects Team on to the main campus in building 3C.

Recommendation 17:

That an alternative location be sought in the Clayton Campus Centre for a purpose-built Service Centre complementary to the Caulfield Service Centre infrastructure and purpose.

There is a critical space problem at Monash University Business Park with the lack of accommodation for the Student Systems section. The Self Review Panel considers this as a high priority for action.

Recommendation 18:

That the Student Systems unit remain at Monash University Business Park within the Integrated Administrative Systems Group but that additional space be sought to better accommodate the unit, particularly during the period of introduction of the HESA reforms.



8 Professional and Community Activities

Student Administration and Systems staff participate in a range of Professional Groups in a variety of capacities. Many are members of professional groups such as the ATEM, the Australasian and Victorian Syllabus Plus Reference Groups, VTAC Liaison Officers Group, the Callista Client Strategy Group, and the Higher Education Information Management System Advisory Committee (HEIMSAC).

Managers also participate in reference groups with their counterparts at other Universities including:

- Admissions Managers Group
- Fees Managers Group
- Enrolments Managers Group
- Heads of Student Administration

These professional associations and groups provide further networking opportunities for greater liaison between institutions, sharing of ideas and benchmarking opportunities.

8.1 Self Assessment of the Effectiveness of Professional Activities

In addition to students, Student Administration and Systems has many other internal clients but as a group focused on the internal facets of the University, its opportunities and requirements for interaction in the wider community are limited. For these reasons, the Self Review Panel is strongly committed to fostering these involvements with external networks.

9 Summary of Recommendations

Organisational Structure

Recommendation 1:

That a 'Handbook' unit, located in Student Administration within the Services and Systems Group, undertake editorial and technical responsibility for the Handbook (online and hardcopy) and the Student Resource Guide.

Management

Recommendation 2:

That opportunities be further explored to reduce a duplication of effort in central and faculty processes and to reduce unnecessary variation to common business processes across the University.

Recommendation 3:

That the current planning methodology be continued and adapted to the Monash Excellence and Diversity Strategic Framework.

Recommendation 4:

That an annual Student Administration and Systems staff workshop be incorporated into the annual planning cycle with particular emphasis on staff contribution to the planning process.

Recommendation 5:

That Group plans incorporate a focus on emerging campus planning imperatives and particularly on providing consistency in the quality of services across all campuses. This should include an ability for students to travel between campuses in Australia or internationally to study in any one semester and retain service privileges.

Recommendation 6:

That, as part of project scope considerations, provision be made in long term cost forecasting to provide budget and staff in recurrent funding for ongoing support functions as the implementation of projects is completed.

Recommendation 7:

That a revised budget base be sought for the area's annual budget allocation, beyond the allowance made for salary increases, so that the area is appropriately resourced to cover externally imposed costs. This is particularly relevant in the areas of VTAC contributions, exam accommodation at the Caulfield Racecourse, and the provision of Distance Education exams where cost increases are out of the University's control.

Recommendation 8:

That Business Continuity Plans be implemented progressively across all major Student Administration and Systems processes.

Quality Assurance and Improvements

Recommendation 9:

That Service Level Agreements be reviewed periodically in consultation with clients to ensure service standards are appropriate. Key Performance Indicator measurement methodology should also be regularly reviewed.



Recommendation 10:

That the Group explore benchmarking opportunities with Australian and New Zealand universities.

Recommendation 11:

That all staff from HEW Level 5 and above have Performance Plans in place by June 2005 and that these link to higher level University Plans. Performance Plans should also be adapted for HEW Level 4 staff and below.

Core Services

Recommendation 12:

That a further extension of the application of the service model provided by the Caulfield Service Centre be pursued at other campuses.

Recommendation 13:

That Client Services become service providers to the Gippsland Precinct Development as needed.

Recommendation 14:

That while Monash continue to work with Callista Software Services and Deakin to ensure the ongoing production of the Callista system, the University must also monitor the viability of CSS as a systems provider and actively source alternative vendor solutions for the medium term.

Human and Physical Resources including IT

Recommendation 15:

That options for appropriate remuneration and recognition of key staff be further explored.

Recommendation 16:

That points where critical skill sets are vested in a single person are identified and options for ameliorating risk of a single point of failure are pursued.

Recommendation 17:

That an alternative location be sought in the Clayton Campus Centre for a purpose-built Service Centre complementary to the Caulfield Service Centre infrastructure and purpose.

Recommendation 18:

That the Student Systems unit remain at Monash University Business Park within the Integrated Administrative Systems group but that additional space be sought to better accommodate the team, particularly during the period of introduction of the HESA reforms.