

Execution Summary

Status

This summary presents the difference between the original Faculty Plan proposal released for consultation and the Plan that will be submitted to the RoP Governance Board next week. At this stage, there is no formal commitment by the University to the plan. It only moves to implementation when the RoP Governance Board approves it and the VC signs off on it. At the earliest, sign-off will occur around the start of May.

Plan Overview

In the following summary, key proposals from Section 2 of the original rationale are presented in italics with the modified plan version under each. Key points of difference are presented in bold. This plan clearly evolves from the original proposal with changes generally further reinforcing the proposal's strategic objectives.

It is important to reiterate that despite some negative and potentially damaging publicity during the consultation period, there are many far-reaching positive aspects to this plan and the Faculty's future.

Academic Positions

- **Fifteen** continuing academic staff positions are proposed as being no longer required, with four new positions being created in areas of demand and strategic importance. The positions that are no longer required are in two Departments: Mathematics and Computing, and Biological and Physical Sciences. The new positions are in other Discipline areas within Biological and Physical Sciences as well as in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery. The fourth Department, Psychology, has reduced its profile sufficiently already and is not subject to any further changes within this plan.
- **Fifteen** continuing academic staff positions are no longer required with four new positions being created in areas of demand and strategic importance **along with four 3-year contract positions**. The breakdown within the Departments affected by the reductions is unchanged. (Further details of the changed profile are given in Table 1 over page.)

Technical Positions

- *That 3.5 technical staff positions are proposed as no longer required.*
- This is still planned.
- *The proposed new technical staff profile will be re-organised as a coherent and cohesive Faculty resource. Existing services to the Departments will be maintained where demand warrants.*
- The re-organisation is still proposed. However this is independent of RoP and therefore will be implemented over a period of time. There remains no intention in the short term to change the services provided. There has been fruitful discussion with the technical management about the final organisational structure which will be modified in light of those discussions.

Academic Programs

- *Because of low or no enrolments, the Bachelor of Science majors in chemistry, physics, mathematics/statistics, plant science, ecology and sustainability and climatology should be discontinued in the BSc.*
 - *Because of the emasculating impact on the BSc of the discontinuations of most of its majors, this award is to be discontinued, as is any "partner" coursework Masters and the Graduate Certificates.*
- It is still proposed that all offerings, including BSc majors, that fail to meet efficiency measures with respect to student enrolments, not have any further intakes.
- Within the constraints of available staffing and the workload policy, higher level courses with sufficient demand, typically from other programs, will be offered. Courses with marginally insufficient demand may still be offered but using a delivery model with a reduced staff workload. The seven unit teaching specialisation streams will be offered.
- It is still proposed that new replacement offerings from the relevant discipline areas be developed.
- Rather than move to immediate discontinuation of the BSc and associated postgraduate offerings, a review of these offerings will be initiated to identify how to provide professionally relevant (industry supported) awards which increase student demand. This may involve the relaunching of

the BSc or the launching of a new award such as the BTech. Similarly the nature of the postgraduate awards will be reviewed with HECs places being used where suitable. The opportunities in the international market will also be considered as well as the potential to contribute to a cross-faculty teacher education program.

- *The Bachelor of Information Technology in its current or revised form will no longer be offered on campus at Fraser Coast.*
- This is still planned.

Initiatives

General statements were made in the original rationale about the need to minimize damage to the external perception of the Faculty. Unfortunately it can be argued that this need has not been met and it is perhaps even more imperative that the Faculty access discretionary initiative funding to promote the positive aspects of the plan and its objectives to schools, industry and the community generally. In part, this can be achieved by involving representatives from these sectors in the new developments and the considerations arising from the review of offerings. However specific initiatives are also needed. Particularly relevant to this plan are the two 3-year contract positions in the sciences and mathematics/statistics/computing (discussed briefly over page).

Table 1. Teaching staff position changes

This is a modified version of the Table in the draft implementation plan. Where there are differences from that draft, the comments have been extended to explain the change. Proposed technical staff position changes remain as before.

Discipline	Change	Comments
Plant Science	- 3	3 academic positions in Plant Science no longer required
Molecular and Cellular Biology	+2 +1	New broader area to replace Plant Science. 3-year contract to support teaching in the biological sciences in general and to back-fill the positions of staff involved in research centre and academic management positions.
Ecology	-1	No replacement after recent resignation.
Ecophysiology	-1	No longer required. Incumbent may be able to apply for one of the new biomedical positions in human/medical physiology.
Environmental Management	+1	New position to contribute to re-focus of climatology and sustainability programs. <i>It is now proposed that this initially be a 3-year contract position.</i>
Chemistry	-2	No longer required.
Biological Chemistry (medicinal/clinical)	+1	New position to support service teaching but also to better link into biomedical science areas.
Physics	-1	One position no longer required. Astronomy-based position to be retained. Second position funded primarily by teaching into ENG courses and also service teaching in the teaching specialisation.
Sciences#	+1	As further explained following this table, a 3-year contract position is proposed to address strategic directions in service teaching, school liaison and teacher education. This may be a fractional position, 0.6 to 1.0.
Biomedical Sciences/Human Biology/Human Physiology	+2	Two new positions to address workload issues and also associated with strategic directions in medical science and allied health.
Biological and Physical Sciences	-2	Two permanent position reductions* with three 3-year contract positions to be introduced. (* Six permanent positions no longer required in physical sciences.)
Computing	-6	Because it has been discovered that the staff in the current contract positions have been on contract for several years, it is not proposed to address the necessary reductions by terminating all contracts. Instead these two staff will be

		treated like permanent staff in a general round of reductions. Considering positions already lost, this round will have a target of two positions. A position vacated by a recent resignation will not be filled. The 1.5 position commitment at Fraser Coast will be reduced to one 0.5 although the other 0.5 may be made up by contribution to distance delivery and assessment.
Mathematics	-3	Three academic positions in Mathematics no longer required.
Statistics	-2	Two academic positions in Statistics no longer required.
Maths/Stats/Computing#	+1	As further explained following this table, a 3-year contract position is proposed to address strategic directions in service teaching, school liaison and teacher education. This may be a fractional position, 0.6 to 1.0.
Mathematics and Computing	-11	Eleven permanent position reductions with one 3-year contract position introduced.
Nursing and Midwifery	+2	To address workload issues and to support new strategic initiatives.
Total Nursing and Midwifery	+2	
Psychology	0	Resignations and pre-RoP separation will reduce staffing by 2 from RoP census staffing profile. <i>These are not part of this plan.</i>
Total Psychology	0	
Total Faculty	-11	-13 if 2 in Psychology included

It is proposed that discretionary initiative funding from the University be sought to fund two 3-year contract positions in the physical and biological sciences and in the computational sciences. It would be reasonable to expect that the incumbents longer term will also seek external funding for relevant initiatives. The purpose of these positions will be to seek to increase student numbers and engagement in the relevant disciplines through the design, development, implementation and delivery of strategic directions in three inter-related threads, as detailed below.

Service Teaching:

- To pursue opportunities across the University, and externally, to increase the demand for the service teaching supplied by the relevant disciplines;
- To contribute to the on-going development of the quality, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of service teaching.

School Liaison and Teacher Education:

- To pursue opportunities to strengthen productive links between the disciplines and schools (at all levels);
- To contribute to the on-going development of initiatives around enhancing teacher education, partnering with teachers for professional development, provision of activities etc to enhance the teaching in the relevant disciplines.

Process

This plan is a modified version of the Faculty of Sciences proposal under the Realising Our Potential Academic Program project that was rolled out for consultation and further consideration. A range of scheduled meetings have taken place commencing with pre-rollout briefings of all staff most directly involved and a Faculty Assembly. This was followed by a sequence of subsequent meetings with groups, sub-groups and individuals, including meetings with all available Faculty staff at the Fraser Coast and Springfield campuses. While there has been substantial commentary in all media on aspects of the proposal, only a few actual submissions were received. All comments, and particularly submissions, have been considered in deriving this plan. Some submissions received related to individual staff members and their contributions. These submissions have not influenced the changes to the original proposal evident in this plan. The restructuring is not due to the quality of the staff in any area or that of their contribution in the prevailing context, nor is it about performance issues.

During the consultation period, the Dean has been seeking clarification and, in the end, some modification of the budgetary constraints addressed by the original proposal. In particular, these

modifications involve refinement of the forecast methodology to include service teaching carried out in courses that are attributed to another Faculty.

The core objective of those constraints and the source RoP Academic Program remain valid and unchanged, namely the sustainability and viability of the University's and, for this specific plan, the Faculty's academic programs. In order to comprehensively and productively (re-)engage with school communities and beyond, the Faculty will be seeking to access part of the discretionary funding freed up by the RoP process for strategic initiatives.

The Dean has also sought clarification of the situation with respect to untied research funding, fortuitously, at a time when the University itself was considering this matter. The University is moving to a different distribution of this funding including some direct allocation to the Faculties. (It is to be cautioned that any such income does not resolve the Faculty's budget situation. It is performance based, and therefore variable, funding that will have to cover non-salary components such as postgraduate student support. It will also need to be used strategically to "seed" future research productivity and further funding.) The University has agreed to half fund the headship of the Centre for System Biology. (This amounts to 25% of a full salary.)

These changes do not mitigate against the general thrust of the original proposal. It was always the case that significant restructuring in response to the prevailing financial exigencies would be required in order to avoid a further restructuring round in the near future. This would be extremely detrimental both internally and externally. Both the original proposal, and this resultant plan, reflect how critical it is that the staffing and program alignments, and the associated strategic directions, are put in place. The critical strategic objective to better align the allocation of the Faculty's academic staffing resources, teaching and technical, with the current areas of demand and future strategic developments also remains unaltered. Independent developments during the period of consultation, such as substantial further federally funded places in nursing, the potential for a partnership with the medical program of another university and progress with the introduction of the single, cross-faculty Bachelor of IT, have reinforced the approach taken to address this objective.