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Professor William Lovegrove
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Dear Vice Chancellor:

Redundancies at USQ

In response to media reports of possible redundancies at USQ members of the Statistical Society of Australia Inc have raised concerns that this may impact the provision of research and teaching of statistical science at USQ.

The SSAI, driven by concerns of key employer groups including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, CSIRO and leading pharmaceutical companies has had serious concerns about the shortage of properly trained statisticians at all levels for at least the past decade. These concerns led to a major review commissioned by the SSAI that was finalized in its 2005 report *Statistics at Australian Universities* available at (<http://www.statsoc.org.au/Review0405/ReviewofStatsFinalReport.pdf>). This report formed a large input into the December 2006 report *Mathematics and Statistics: Critical Skills for Australia's Future* commissioned by the National Committee for the Mathematical Sciences of the Australian Academy of Science.

The SSAI in particular, and the Mathematical Sciences community in general, has lobbied the Federal Government for a long period of time to alter the funding formula for mathematics and statistics courses in Australian universities. The announcement in the May 2007 Budget that funding for such courses would increase substantially was welcome news for all Departments of Mathematics and Statistics around the country, giving rise to optimism that the trend to eliminate or reduce programs in mathematical sciences would now be arrested.

As I understand the situation at USQ, the Statistics group contributes to the intellectual life at USQ in service teaching, offering of a Statistics major and Masters coursework program, in assisting research colleagues across the campus with statistical advice and working with Schools particularly through the Poster competition. This range of activities is very common for statistics groups or departments throughout the Australian and international universities. The capacity to deliver all of these various parts is essential for the proper functioning of a statistics group and removal of core majors at the undergraduate and postgraduate level can seriously weaken the ability to provide much needed high quality service teaching and research support to other disciplines.

Yours sincerely

William T.M. Dunsmuir
President, Statistical Society of Australia Inc.