

Realising our Potential Implementation Plan Template for the Program Portfolio Review and Renewal Project – Faculty of Sciences

Sections 1, 2 and 3 are generic to all Faculty Plans.

4. TIMEFRAMES AND RESOURCES

Key milestones/deliverables for completion (including HR implementation phases and activities)

- a. Phasing out low enrolment program streams
- b. Introducing new program and program streams to pursue higher enrolments
- c. Staff re-profiling according to shifts in demand and program innovation
- d. Introducing service-oriented technical support organisation.

Timeframes for achieving each milestone/deliverable

- a. Mostly during 2008 with some course teach out beyond 2008.
- b. Major effort completed 2008 and 2009 then standard program and course review and revision.
- c. Substantially completed by July 2008
- d. Completed during 2008

Resources required to achieve milestones/deliverables

- a. The possible use of casual and contract staff to support teach out.
- b. The possible use of casual/contract staff to support development efforts; marketing advice; promotional support
- c. Resources required are in accordance with the HR Change Management Principles and Implementation Framework (support for affected staff; HR advice)
- d. Support for staff development

Monitoring/reporting on achievement of milestones/deliverables

- a. Successful changes with minimal student complaints and other negative reactions.
- b. Indicators of positive response in market assessed against prevailing trends.
- c. Re-profiling to be completed in advance of 2009
- d. Successful service provision under new arrangements

5. CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE

Current 'in scope' FTE employee effort for project

Table 5 (a) provides the profile for the Faculty's academic fixed-term and continuing positions up to the current point. The proposal considers only substantive positions. Hence the cross faculty positions identified in the ORMP are not considered in the proposal.

Table 5(a). FoS Staffing Profile Contract and Continuing Positions

		2007 ORMP Oct-06	2008 ORMP Oct-07	Currently Identified Changes to 2008 ORMP Profile as at 29/02/2008		2008 ORMP plus Identified Changes
Biological and Physical Sciences	A	3.5	2.00			2.00
	B	4	4.00			4.00
	C	7.75	7.80	-1.0	Resignation	6.80
	D	5.7	3.60			3.60
	E	1	2.00	+0.2	Resignation replaced with 0.2 transition during late 2008	2.20
Total		21.95	19.4			18.6
Mathematics & Computing	A	3	3.00	-1.0	Fixed-term contract expiration	21.00
	B	12	10.50	-0.5	Internal transfer to another Faculty	10.00
	C	13.25	13.00	1.0	Resignation	12.00
	D	3	3.50	-1.0	Resignation	2.50
	E	1	1.00			1.00
Total		32.25	31			27.5
Nursing and Midwifery	A	3	4.42			4.42
	B	9	9			9
	C	6	3.92			3.92
	D	3	4			4
	E	1.1	1	0.5	0.5 externally funded position	1.5
Total		22.1	22.34			22.84
Psychology	A	1	1			1
	B	8.6	10.1	-1.0	Separation	9.1
	C	5	4.6	-1.0	Retirement	3.6
	D	4	4	-1.0	Resignation	3
	E	3	2	1.0	Incumbent returned to substantive position in Faculty	3
Total		21.6	21.7			19.7
Cross Faculty	C	1.5	0.4			0.4
	D	0.5	1.9			1.9
Overall	A	10.5	10.42			8.42
	B	33.6	33.6			32.1
	C	33.5	29.72			27.72
	D	16.2	17			15
	E	6.1	6			6.7
Total		99.9	96.74			89.94

Table 5(b) below summarises the recent ORMP technical staff profiles

Table 5(b). Technical Staff Profile

	2007 ORMP	2008 ORMP
HEW		
2	0.93	
3	0.75	1.67
4	1.53	1
5	8	8
6	5	5
7	2	2
8	1	1
9	1	0
10	0	1
	20.21	19.67

Current broad functions/activities and location of 'in scope' positions

Academic teaching, including development, delivery, assessment, moderation, review and revision; research and scholarships; service to university, profession and community where applicable.

Technical support for the delivery of teaching, the execution of student projects, research training and research.

Current budget allocated to 'in scope' project activities (eg employee costs, operating costs, other costs)

Estimated 2008 Academic (teaching and technical including casual) Salary Budget: 11617355 (28/2/08 estimate).

It is to be noted that this estimation is complicated by such factors as joint appointments, clinical teaching arrangements and secondment to non-teaching positions such as Heads of Centres.

6. REVISED STAFFING STRUCTURE

Future 'in scope' FTE employee effort for project (target)

There is no change to the overall structure of the Faculty.

There is a shift in resources within the existing structure to satisfy the University's budgetary requirements, to restore a more acceptable balance between demand and positions across the Faculty's disciplines and to establish a framework for on-going sustainability, responsiveness and ultimately additional growth. The changes result in a reduction of 15 FTE academic positions.

The restructuring of the teaching staff profile and the realignment of program offerings requires consideration of the associated technical staff profile. The technical support positions for the "general sciences" are to be reduced by 3.5 FTE positions to align with the changes to the academic structure.

Future broad functions/activities and location of 'in scope' positions

Table 6(b) gives details of the proposed changes.

Table 6(b). Proposed Teaching staff position changes

Discipline	Change	Comments
Plant Science	- 3	3 academic positions in Plant Science no longer required. Positions transition to a new broader focus on Molecular and Cellular Biology, Biotechnology, Bioinformatics#
Molecular and Cellular Biology, Biotechnology, Bioinformatics#	+3	
Ecology	-1	No replacement after recent resignation.
Ecophysiology	-1	No longer required. In accordance with the HR Implementation framework, incumbent may apply for one of the new biomedical positions in human/medical physiology.
Environmental Management#		Three year contract position. New position to contribute to re-focus of climatology and sustainability programs. <i>It is not proposed to fill this position immediately.</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. Incumbent may apply for Medical Sciences position. Astronomy-based position to be retained. Second position focussed primarily on teaching into ENG courses and also service teaching in the teaching specialisation.
Medical Sciences#	+0.5	New position to address potential growth in medical sciences/medical physics area, both with respect to service teaching into nursing and biomedical sciences as already happens, but also new potential directions such as radiology. Will also contribute to CASR regional sciences project and to teacher specialisation stream delivery. It is anticipated that this position will be fractional (~0.5) initially.
Sciences#	+1	Permanent position. As further explained in Appendix A, this position is proposed to address strategic directions in service teaching, schools 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
Computing	-6	Staff in the long term contract positions will be treated like permanent staff in a general round of reductions. Considering positions already lost, this round will have a target of two permanent FTEs. 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
Statistics consultation and training#	+1	New permanent position that will focus on consultation support for research and research higher degree students. Once established, this will be funded by service fees and service levies.
Maths/Stats/Computing#	+1	New permanent position that will address strategic directions in service teaching, schools liaison and teacher education. This may be a fractional position, 0.6 to 1.0.
Student consultation#	+0.5	New permanent position that will focus on providing direct (in-person) and electronic student consultation substantially for the students in the major service teaching courses. This position may attract enabling loading funds.
Nursing and Midwifery#	+2	To address workload issues and to support new strategic initiatives.
Psychology	0	Resignations and pre-RoP separation will reduce permanent positions by 2 from RoP census staffing profile. <i>These are not part of this plan.</i>

These positions are all tied in with initiatives to address current demand and to grow future demand. (Some more details are given in Appendix A). For some of these positions, funding outside the operational budget will contribute to covering their cost. If demand for the services of a position is not sustained, the need for the position will be revisited under standard HR policy.

Table 6(c) details the proposed changes in the Technical staff profile. **The only positions affected by the proposed changes are the general sciences technical support positions.**

Table(c). Technical Staff Profile

HEW	2008 ORMP	Target number of positions
2		0
3	1.67	1.67
4	1	0
5	8	8
6	5	3
7	2	2
8	1	1
9	0	0
10	1	1
	19.67	16.67

Proposed budgetary savings (target) (eg employee costs, operating costs, other costs)

There will be no direct savings in 2008 due to the transfer of any salary savings to the funding for staffing transitions. During the transition period and extending into the duration of teach out, there may be an increase in casual/contract teaching expenditure but this will not be substantial relative to the on-going salary savings.

In 2009, if the indicated changes are achieved, the budget objective of no operational deficit will be achieved.

Rationale for proposed structural changes

See Appendix A and original proposal rationale (substantially unaltered).

Interdependencies of positions in this structure with other RoP project outcomes

Through these position changes, the Faculty will have addressed the 2009 budget objective specified by the University. It therefore expects minimal further losses to be required of its resources. **The Faculty expects that any savings additional to the target, such as indicated by an academic salary margin less than the target will be used for teaching and technical staff to support its strategic directions in allied health, service teaching and professional education in the relevant disciplines.**

7. HR TRANSITION PROCESSES

Refer to the Human Resources Change Management Guiding Principles and HR Implementation Framework. For specific Faculty of Sciences transitions, the following process will occur:

- Positions substantially unchanged - equal number of employees and positions:** employees confirmed in current roles (employees advised via email communication that implementation plan has been endorsed).

Appendix A. Positions substantially unchanged – more people than positions, and Positions No Longer Required: consistent with agreed HR Implementation and Transition Processes, discussions and consultation with affected employees to consider all options including re-training and re-location will commence and continue throughout implementation of RoP, followed by either or both an expression of interest process or a voluntary severance process. If after these steps there are more FTE employees than positions, possible move to redundancy processes. **New positions:** expression of interest process initially and then if not filled, standard appointment process.

8. IMPACTS ON WORK ALLOCATIONS AND BUSINESS AS USUAL

Impact on employee workloads during implementation

It is not anticipated that any of the proposed changes will contribute to significant changes in workload. The Faculty is rolling out a comprehensive workload policy. Activities such as the development of new programs, program streams and courses are academic "business as usual" workload. For major development initiatives the practice of obtaining additional discretionary funding will continue. None of these changes are expected to be significant and will be communicated and managed by the Faculty so as to minimise disruption.

'Business as usual' activities to continue during implementation

'Business as usual' will continue during the implementation phase. Casual or contract staff will be used to cover any contingencies.

9. COMMUNICATION* and EMPLOYEE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Internal stakeholder consultation activities

- Implementation discussions with individual staff members as required.
- Meetings with individual and/or groups of staff affected by any structural changes (as required)
- Departmental meetings and other meetings with internal groups
- Faculty Assembly, Faculty Board
- Dean available at scheduled times for appointments with individuals and groups.
- Appointments by phone available for staff at other campuses.
- Dean to visit the other campus for "in person" discussions during implementation phase
- Written communication via email, Faculty newsletter as required

- The Project Management and Governance team, in consultation with the ROP Communications team, provide regular input to ROP Project communications to keep internal stakeholders within and outside the Project across progress and next steps.

- Students to be informed of implementation and any consequences for them.
- Implementation discussions with individual students as required.

External stakeholder consultation activities

- The Project Management and Governance team, in consultation with ROP Communications team, provide regular input to ROP Project communications to keep relevant external stakeholders informed about the project's progress and next steps as appropriate.
- Promotion of initiatives associated with new positions to relevant external stakeholders

Staff will be reminded of the various support services offered by Human Resources and encouraged to access these.

Other support will be coordinated through USQ HR as needed

10. EVALUATION

Methodology for evaluating outcomes

- Timely completion of change process.
- Successful development of initiatives associated with new positions
- Budget situation
- Staffing situation – retention of staff and successful attraction of new staff
- Multifaceted indications of positive staff morale
- Stabilisation of student numbers
- On-going invitation to engage with external stakeholders especially schools, professions, community and industry because this will indicate the retention of a positive perception and reputation

Appendix A. Rationale and review

The core objectives that underpinned the original Faculty Plan proposal remain valid and unchanged. These are to address:

- **budget constraints arising from insufficient demand through initiatives to grow demand;**
- **significant un-balance in academic workload due to resources not aligned with demand through initiatives to support growing demand; and,**
- **future viability and sustainability, that is, the capacity to maintain and grow demand through proposals to increase resources, manage initiatives and engage stakeholders.**

The one major change between the versions of the proposal, as it has evolved over the consultation period, is an increased focus on new positions to support new initiatives. For some of these positions, funding outside the operational budget will contribute to cover their cost. If demand for the services of the position is not sustained, the need for the position will be revisited under standard HR policy.

Plan Overview

In the following summary, the 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.

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 breakdown of 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.*
- At the end of the implementation phase, the Faculty will have **lost 18 academic and 3.5 technical positions** identified in the original RoP census. Losses will have occurred by natural attrition and positions no longer required. **11 new academic positions** will be introduced that are each tied to specific initiatives to address current demand or to grow future demand.

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 organisation structure which will be modified in light of those discussions. In all cases, the nature of the proposed technical reductions has remained the same.

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 continue to 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 increased 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

New academic positions are proposed to:

- address current demand and provide some capacity to pursue new initiatives in biomedical sciences and nursing;
- provide the capacity to revitalise and develop new offerings in a range of areas such as molecular and cellular biology, biotechnology, bioinformatics, biochemistry and medical sciences;
- provide the capacity to enhance learning support for the key service teaching activities;
- provide the capacity to pursue new initiatives in statistical consultation and training for research and research training; and,
- provide support for improved capacity and quality of service teaching, school liaison and teacher support partnerships.

General statements were made in the original rationale about the need to minimise 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 permanent liaison positions in mathematics/statistics/computing and the (physical) sciences.

It is proposed that discretionary initiative funding from the University be sought to fund these two permanent liaison positions in the physical and biological sciences and in the computational sciences. It would be reasonable to expect that the incumbents will also longer term 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, namely:

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.

Schools 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 the scheduled meetings have taken place commencing with pre-rollout briefings of all staff most directly involved and a Faculty Assembly. This was followed by subsequent meetings with groups, individuals or sub-groups, including meetings with all available Faculty staff at the Fraser Coast and Springfield campuses. While there has been substantial commentary across the media on aspects of the proposal, only a few actual submissions were received. All comments and particularly submissions have been considered in revising 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 an adjustment of the salary margin percentage and a refinement of the forecast methodology to include service teaching carried out in courses that are attributed to another Faculty.

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 if restructuring in response to the prevailing financial exigencies was not carried out, it would leave the Faculty highly likely to have 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 and indeed is strongly reinforced within this final plan. 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 the progress with the introduction of the single, cross-faculty, Bachelor of IT, have reinforced the approach taken to address this strategic objective.