Amalgamation at the University of Sydney, Australia: the institutional viewpoint

Michael Taylor
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Australia: the institutional viewpoint
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by

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Preface

Over the last decade, as a result of financial stringency, combined with demands for expansion of enrolments and improved efficiency, higher educational institutions have been forced to reduce expenditure, seek new sources of funding and improve the utilization of existing resources. This has necessitated changes in the mechanisms, techniques and styles of institutional management. At the same time, higher education has had to cope with increased diversification and new types of students, including adult learners, so as to meet the changing needs of the labour market and foster closer links with industry as well as widen participation through the introduction of distance learning.

The implementation of innovation and change in institutional management, however, often faces obstacles and problems, including internal resistance, inadequate staffing or financial resources to make the change effective, or insufficient time devoted to preparing and planning for change.

It is against this background that in 1990 the IIEP launched a research programme on 'Improving the effectiveness of higher educational institutions' whose purpose was to increase understanding of the process of planning, introducing and implementing management changes in higher education institutions, in order to improve utilization of resources. The project aimed at identifying factors associated with success or failure, exploring ways of overcoming obstacles or problems, and suggesting methods to improve institutional management and increase
the responsiveness of higher education institutions to changing financial, economic and social pressures.

The research programme has several components, i.e. an information base, case studies and training materials and workshops. The case studies were a particularly important element since they were designed to identify the factors and strategies associated with successful innovation and change, and show the obstacles and problems to be overcome. This information was then subsequently used for the training materials and as a major input to the synthesis of the research programme.

Several types of innovation and change were pinpointed for particular study:

(i) Change in the organization of institutions:

- New forms of decision-making structures and information flows.
- The merger of separate institutions, departments or units.

(ii) Changes in financial management and resource allocation:

- Devolved budgeting.
- Resource generation.

(iii) Changes in educational delivery systems:

- From semester to trimester, from block to credit system, rationalization of curricula, double intakes.

(iv) Changes in staff management, including staff development and appraisal.

In total, 14 case-studies and one desk-study were carried out, three each in Africa, Asia and Latin America and five in developed countries. The study published in this volume falls under category (i) above and has contributed to understanding the process of merger at the institutional level, within the context of a self-regulated and accountable system of higher education. It will be recalled that the amalgamations in Australia reduced the number of institutions from 71 to 35. That which
took place at the University of Sydney involved five smaller institutions (two colleges, two institutes and a conservatorium of music). It may be appreciated how complex and sensitive the consultations were since they concerned not only academic and administrative issues, but also negotiation with several staff unions. The experience provides some helpful guidelines on these aspects of mergers.

This study is complemented by IIEP Research Report No. 99 (1993) written by Miriam Henry, on “The restructuring of higher education in Australia” which makes an initial evaluation of the amalgamation process at system level.

The overall results of the research programme will be published shortly in a synthesis of wide-ranging scope which covers the most important domains of university management.

Jacques Hallak
Director
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1. The aims of institutional amalgamation

The process of amalgamations was examined in April 1989 by a Task Force of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), which reported in more detail on the Government’s requirements for amalgamations and its expectations of the results. The benefits were seen to be:

- an expanded range of disciplines and awards;
- increased flexibility of subject choice;
- increased provision for credit transfer;
- enhanced student services;
- increased academic strength of departments;
- expansion and improvement of services for teaching and research;
- savings on administration by elimination of duplication of services and the more intensive use of facilities and equipment.

Other benefits were seen to include the potential for:

- concentration of research and development effort with more intensive use of expensive facilities;
- increased career opportunities for the staff;
- improved facilities and services for students, in health, recreation and counselling;
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- improved access for staff and students to libraries and computing services;
- a more competitive basis for attracting overseas students and visiting staff through the enhanced image of the combined institution.

The Task Force recognised four ways in which institutions could become amalgamated and form part of the Unified National System (UNS) by: (i) redesignation; (ii) sponsorship; (iii) incorporation; and (iv) establishment as a college.

In any case, however, an institution would be required to meet five basic conditions, having namely one: (i) governing body; (ii) chief executive; (iii) educational profile; (iv) fund allocation; (iv) set of academic awards.

The Task Force considered that even above the minimum allowable size of 2,000 Effective Full-Time Student Units (EFTSU), smaller institutions, in the range 2,000-5,000 EFTSU, if they had little prospect of expanding, should consider amalgamation. Institutions in the range 5,000-8,000 EFTSU would be regarded as having a broad range of teaching with some specialised research activity, while it would only be with an enrolment of above 8,000 that an institution would expect to have the resources to undertake research “across a significant proportion of its profile”.

It was recognised by the Task Force that the full effects of amalgamation might take some years to achieve. It was with these expectations and under these conditions that the amalgamations proceeded. As a result of their implementation, the previous pattern of institutions (19 universities and 44 colleges) was dramatically changed, and by the end of 1990 the total number had been reduced to only 35, with a few further amalgamations still under discussion. The majority of the amalgamations were effected between small colleges and larger universities; there were several instances where single large colleges were re-named as universities, and there were some cases where two or more small colleges were combined to form universities de novo.

In New South Wales, before the formation of the Unified National System (UNS), there were 16 colleges of advanced education and 6 universities. After the amalgamations there were 9 universities; two of these had been formed by the combination of three or more colleges, one was created by re-designating an Institute of Technology (with which
other colleges were then amalgamated); the remaining colleges were amalgamated with five of the six pre-existing universities; one university remained unchanged.

2. Amalgamations with the University of Sydney

The University of Sydney has been concerned with two different types of amalgamations during 1989-90. This section of the Report will deal first (Section 2.1) with the general characteristics of institutions within the binary system; next, (Section 2.2) with the special relationship with the University of Western Sydney; and finally, (Section 2.3) will discuss the various aspects of the amalgamations with the colleges.

2.1 The nature of institutions in the binary system

The consequences of amalgamations must depend very much on the nature of the institutions being amalgamated, and it is therefore necessary to describe some of the features of the institutions with which the University of Sydney has now become associated. Within the previous binary system, as has been indicated, the universities differed from the colleges in several ways. First, by reason of their involvement in research; because of the existence of honours and postgraduate research degrees in universities, 7.4 per cent of their student load was research-related while in the colleges the proportion was only 0.4 per cent. Next, in the different mix of courses offered; colleges did not have the expensive faculties of medicine, veterinary science and dentistry. Finally, their staffing patterns were considerably different.

These differences were reflected in the greater operating costs of the universities. A recent study by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, using data from 1987, found that the direct cost per EFTSU was 45.8 per cent higher in universities than in colleges, (averages $A5,633 and $A3,863, per annum respectively). The costs of institutions were slightly higher for universities than for colleges, but in each case appeared generally to be directly proportional to the number of students in the institution. An earlier study (by CTEC) had indicated that with increasing numbers the indirect cost per EFTSU at first decreased steeply, but then was almost constant for institutions with enrolments of more than 2,000.
The relative funding of institutions in the binary system was also recently analyzed in detail by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, (NBEET). A funding model was constructed with the aim of discovering which institutions were relatively over- or underfunded. For our present purposes it was significant that the study found that approximately 10 per cent of the funding of universities was attributable to the provision of the infrastructure of research; this amounted to approximately 6 per cent of the total funding of higher education. The model apportioned this infrastructure funding among the institutions in proportion to their capacity to attract competitive research funds, (94 per cent to universities, 6 per cent to the colleges). Having allowed for this, and giving proper weighting to the differences in unit costs for the different years of the courses and different ‘clusters’ of disciplines, and for honours and postgraduate research training, this study found that the funding of all types of institutions could reasonably be described in terms of their student enrolments.

As regards staffing, data from 1988, given in Table 1, show that the University of Sydney, in common with other universities, had a far greater proportion of the staff (75 per cent) in the higher academic grades (senior lecturer and above) than did the colleges. The averages were 72 per cent for universities and 32 per cent for colleges. Similarly, the percentages of staff holding Ph.D.’s or other higher degrees were considerably higher for the University of Sydney than for the colleges. This difference reflected the different roles of these institutions within the binary system.

These patterns of staffing reflect the different functions of the institutions, both in teaching and research, in the previous binary system. The University offered courses in ten faculties, at all levels, the minimum course being a three-year pass bachelor’s degree with a further year for an honours degree. In some faculties the courses were longer, (for example, six years for medicine) with honours being awarded on over-all performance. Masters degrees were either by research or by course-work, the Ph.D. being available only by research. The colleges offered diplomas, graduate diplomas (two years), bachelors degrees (without honours, three years), and Masters courses.
### Staffing patterns of amalgamating institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SL+</th>
<th>PhD/SL+</th>
<th>HD/SL+</th>
<th>PhD/L</th>
<th>HD/L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney*</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Institute</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>45**</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Art</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepean</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarthur</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Selected faculties, to permit comparison with the colleges.

** Full-time staff only.

- **N** = The numbers of academic staff (lecturer and above).
- **SL+** = The percentage of the staff of rank senior lecture.
- **PhD/SL+** = The percentage of the staff of rank senior lectured and above who have a Ph.D. or higher Doctorate.
- **HD/SL+** = The percentage of the staff of rank senior lectured and above who have any higher degree.
- **PhD/L** = Percentage of the lecturers who have a Ph.D. or higher Doctorate.
- **HD/L** = The percentage of the lecturers who have an higher degree.
2.2 The Universities of Sydney and Western Sydney

The special relationship which was finally established between the Universities of Sydney and Western Sydney did not involve any actual amalgamation between two institutions, but placed the University of Sydney, through membership of the governing body and of the principal academic committee, in the role of sponsor and adviser to the newly formed university.

The history of this relationship goes back to 1985, some years before the formation of the Unified National System. As has already been stated, the constitutional responsibility for education lies with the States, and in 1985 the New South Wales Government undertook a review of higher education in the western area of Sydney. As a result of this, in 1986 the Government decided, in response to what were seen to be the special needs of a rapidly growing area, to establish a university 'for Sydney's western suburbs'. A University of Western Sydney Advisory Council was established, but the Commonwealth Government, which would have the financial responsibility for the new institution, proposed that it should begin as a University College, opening in 1990 or 1991. In 1987 the State Government established an Interim Council for the new institution, to be known as Chifley University and invited the University of Sydney to assume responsibility for it. The University of Sydney appointed a senior academic administrator as Pro-Vice-Chancellor with particular responsibility for the development of the college, and nominated four members of the Interim Council. Members of the academic staff also contributed to the various working parties which were set up to develop the academic and other programmes. Planning was undertaken in the expectation that funds for buildings and recurrent expenses would allow courses to be offered in 1990. In 1988 the University of Sydney established a Board of Studies, to be responsible for the planning and the approval of courses of study, and by the end of that year the detailed programmes of study had been worked out and were ready for implementation.

Early in 1988, however, there was a change of Government in New South Wales, and planning for the development of higher education in Western Sydney was deferred pending reconsideration by a joint State-Commonwealth committee. As a result of that review, the plans for Chifley University and its college were abandoned at the end of 1988.
In accordance with the Commonwealth Government's policy for a Unified National System it was decided that the new university in the western area of Sydney would be created by amalgamating two colleges of advanced education which already existed there. One version of this proposal would have included the University of Sydney in the amalgamation, leading to the development of a very large multi-campus institution.

The University of Sydney did not support such a scheme, but agreed nevertheless to continue to provide academic support to the new institution. It also agreed to make available the reports and recommendations of its various working parties which had been preparing material for the Chifley University College.

The legislation which established the University of Western Sydney was enacted at the end of 1988, giving effect to the creation of the new institution from January 1st 1989. The Act provided that the University of Western Sydney would initially consist of a federation of two campuses, one at Nepean and one at Hawkesbury, together with such other members as might be established from time to time. In fact, in 1990, a third campus, Macarthur, was added. The whole institution was to be autonomous and governed by a Board, but this Board was to contain four members appointed by the Minister on the nomination of the Senate of the University of Sydney. The university was to have a Vice-Chancellor, but the three campuses were to have their own chief executive officers (initially the principals of the amalgamating colleges) who would be responsible, under the Vice-Chancellor, for their management. There was also to be an Academic Board, of which 40 per cent of the membership was to be appointed by the University of Sydney. This arrangement was to be reviewed before the end of 1994.

The Act also provided that until a Vice-Chancellor was appointed, the Board should appoint an Acting Vice-Chancellor, and that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney was to be a member of the Board. The Board, at its first meeting, decided that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney should also be the Acting Vice-Chancellor, an arrangement which continued for nine months.

Four appointments of members of the academic staff of the University of Sydney, including the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman of its Academic Board, were made to the University of Western Sydney’s Board, and a further fourteen to its Academic Board.
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The University of Sydney has thus played an important part in the development of the new university since it began operations in 1989. This has been particularly the case with respect to staff selection, promotions, course development and assessment, and the development of research.

The University of Western Sydney, at the time of its formation, had approximately 8,150 EFTSU (Hawkesbury 1780, Macarthur 3,000 and Nepean 3,370) and is expanding rapidly, with very substantial amounts of funding being provided for capital works.

The interests of the three institutions which make up the University of Western Sydney are listed below, with indications of the corresponding Faculties of the University of Sydney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College school or department</th>
<th>Corresponding faculties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawkesbury</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and rural development</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business and land economy</td>
<td>Economics, science (geography)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and environmental sciences</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing and community services</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macarthur</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and general studies</td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and welfare studies</td>
<td>Arts (social work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and language studies</td>
<td>Arts, education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nepean</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Studies</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and applied science</td>
<td>Arts, science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>Engineering, science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and performing arts</td>
<td>Arts (fine arts, performance studies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Sydney is therefore in a strong position to provide support in all areas of study in the new university. In considering this contribution it is however also necessary to be aware of the location of the campuses of the University of Western Sydney. The city of Sydney
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is spread over an area roughly 60 km by 60 km. In relation to the University of Sydney, which is close to the central business district of the city, the three campuses of the new University are located as follows:

- Hawkesbury 50 km NW.
- Nepean (45 km W).
- Macarthur (45 km SW).

The central administrative offices of the University of Western Sydney are located near, but not on, the Nepean campus. Participation by staff of the University of Sydney in the affairs of the other university has therefore involved very considerable travelling, since it takes at least an hour to drive from the University of Sydney to any one of the campuses. The dispersed nature of the network has also been a source of many difficulties for the new institution.

2.3 Amalgamations with the university of Sydney

As a consequence of the announcement of the Unified National System, the University of Sydney was approached by several of the colleges of advanced education, to explore the possibility of amalgamation. Detailed discussions were pursued with four of these; the Sydney College of Advanced Education, the Cumberland College of Health Sciences, the Sydney College of the Arts and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. The eventual mergers followed two of the routes specified by the Task Force. In one instance two components of an institution were completely incorporated within the University; in three others institutions became attached to the University as colleges, and retained a certain degree of autonomy.

The Cumberland College of Health Sciences, located about 18 Km from the University of Sydney, was the largest of these institutions. It enrolled its first students in 1973 and by 1988 it had approximately 2,300 EFTSU and ten Schools or Departments dealing with a range of subjects in the health sciences, including nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and medical radiation technology. Courses were conducted over a range of levels from diploma to Masters level.
The Sydney College of Advanced Education had itself been formed some years previously by combining several existing colleges, and in 1988 consisted of five Institutes and the Guild Centre (which prepared teachers for non-government schools.) It was spread across eight campuses, and had a total student load of about 5,200 EFTSU. With the advent of the Unified National System, the College entered into discussions with several universities. As a result, the Sydney Institute of Education and the Institute of Nursing Studies, both of which were located on and near its main campus, came to the University of Sydney; the remaining three Institutes were consolidated with three other universities in Sydney. The Sydney Institute of Education was the largest unit of the College, with approximately 1,600 EFTSU. It was concerned with the full range of teacher education for both primary and secondary schools, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Institute of Nursing Studies was also a substantial unit, with approximately 1,200 EFTSU. It conducted courses at both undergraduate and post graduate levels.

The Sydney College of the Arts was founded in 1975, and offered courses in the visual arts, design and the crafts, at diploma and undergraduate levels as well as courses for Masters degrees. In 1988, in accordance with the decisions of the New South Wales Government, the College, was combined with two other units, the City Art Institute and the National Art School. This arrangement did not last long, and as part of the process of amalgamations the units were separated again; the School of Design was transferred to the University of Technology, Sydney, and the School of Visual Arts, under the name of Sydney College of the Arts pursued amalgamation with the University of Sydney. The College had an enrolment of about 350 EFTSU, and was located on two campuses about 5 Km from the University.

The New South Wales Conservatorium of Music began taking students in 1915 and at one time possessed two branches outside Sydney. The one in Woollongong had been merged with the university in that city in 1952, while as part of the present amalgamations it had been decided that the branch in Newcastle would amalgamate with the University of Newcastle. The principal campus of the Conservatorium is located in the City of Sydney, and it had an enrolment of approximately 480 EFTSU.
This group of institutions thus offered a wide range of subjects, but all were compatible with the disciplines already represented in the University, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Corresponding faculties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>Dentistry, medicine, science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
<td>Arts, education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Nursing Studies</td>
<td>Medicine, science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of arts</td>
<td>Arts (especially fine arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>Arts (especially music)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 The formal procedures for amalgamation

(a) State government legislation

In February, 1989, the State Government, in accordance with the creation of the Unified National System, and after discussions with the institutions, announced its decisions on amalgamations. The University of Sydney’s negotiations were therefore conducted in the knowledge that legislation would soon be enacted to bring these decisions into effect; the starting date for the new arrangements was to be 1 January 1990.

The State Government’s announcement, in addition to specifying which institutions were to be amalgamated, and in what way, spelled out the general provisions which the new legislation would contain. These included:

- abolition of certain educational institutions;
- dissolution of their governing bodies;
- transfer of assets and the control of land;
- preservation of rights of staff and students;
- repeal of by-laws;
- saving of delegations;
- financial matters including existing investments.

The assets of amalgamating institutions were to be transferred to a university, but where Crown land was involved ownership was to remain with the Crown, though the University was to have ‘the control and management’ of it.
A very important provision was that which preserved the rights of staff. It was to be enacted that staff of a former institution should become members of staff of the corresponding institution “on terms and conditions as to remuneration and duration of employment not less favourable than those on which he or she was employed at the former institution”.

Similarly, the rights of students were to be protected. A student of a former institution was to “become a student of the corresponding institution and be enrolled in a course of study that is substantially the same, in academic content, as that in which the student was enrolled at the former institution”.

The question of delegations was important; the legislation was to include a provision that delegations made by the governing bodies of former institutions were to remain in force as if they had been made by the governing body of the corresponding institution, though they could be revoked by that body.

The legislation was passed into law in the middle of 1989, at which time the Government also amended the University of Sydney’s Act to provide for the creation of the three Colleges of the University, and for the appointment of their associated Advisory Councils. In addition it provided for the possible creation of other colleges in the future.

(b) Negotiation of heads of agreements

In order to provide the basis for later discussions, it is necessary at this point to set out briefly the academic structure of the University, and to explain the nature of the hierarchy of bodies: the Departments, Faculties, Academic Board and Senate.

Departments

Academic staff (both teaching and research) are assigned to Departments by the Vice-Chancellor, who also appoints one of them (a Professor or Associate Professor) as Head of Department for a period of up to four years. The Head of Department is advised by a Departmental Board, which consists of all the academic staff, together with at least one student and, in some cases, members of the general or technical staff.
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Faculties

Before amalgamation there were ten Faculties. Each consisted of the academic staff of all the Departments teaching courses for the degrees of that Faculty, together with student representatives and other members who might be chosen from outside the University. The Dean has a range of delegated responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Vice-Chancellor, to administer the devolved financial and other affairs of the Faculty. In this the Dean is obliged to consult a Faculty Management Committee, the membership of which includes the Heads of Departments.

Academic Board

The Academic Board consists of all the Professors, Deans and Heads of Departments, together with a proportion of other elected members of the academic staff and students. The Academic Board is the principal academic forum and receives recommendations from Faculties on academic matters and courses of study; it is thus the source of all academic advice, although it is the Senate as the governing body which makes the final determinations.

Senate

The Senate is the governing body and has the ultimate responsibility for the management of the University; its composition is prescribed by the University's Act. Before the amalgamations, it consisted of 31 people, but as part of the general reorganisation of the universities the State Government reduced the size of all governing bodies; in the case of the University of Sydney this resulted in a new Senate of 21. The membership is partly by election by convocation (the graduates of the University), partly by appointment by the Minister, partly by election by the staff (academic and general) and by the students. The Vice-Chancellor as chief executive officer is a member ex officio. The Senate is presided over by the Chancellor of the University, who may be elected from the members of Senate or from outside.

The starting point for the consideration of any amalgamation was the fact that negotiations were being conducted between autonomous entities. Each institution had its own governing body, established by Act of
Parliament and legally responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the institution. The Senate of the University of Sydney, therefore, in dealing with the questions of amalgamation, established joint committees in each case with equal representation from the University and the College concerned. The task of the committees was to work out a Heads of Agreement which, if ratified by both governing bodies, became the basis on which the amalgamation would proceed.

These amalgamations represented very large changes in the autonomy of the joining institutions; some of these were to lose their independence altogether, while others would retain a certain degree of self-management as Colleges. Not surprisingly, therefore, the negotiations in some cases took several months, beginning at various times between August and November, 1988, and concluding between April and September, 1989. An exception was the agreement with the Conservatorium, which was delayed until December, 1989, because of uncertainty about the sources of funding.

The task of the Senate throughout was to create a single university, with one governing body (the Senate) and one chief executive officer, the Vice-Chancellor. On academic matters the Senate would be advised by one superior academic committee, the Academic Board. The academic and other procedures of the University were to apply to the joining institutions; where there were differences, the University’s practices and policies were to prevail. It was intended that, as far as possible, the administrative and service functions of the joining institutions, would be integrated into the central administrative structure of the University. The staff would all be employed by the University and, further, the students would all be enrolled as students of the University of Sydney, graduating with its degrees or diplomas.

The extensive nature of the discussions can be seen from the following list of matters which had to be dealt with. Some, but not all of them, were common to all five Agreements; the Agreements concerning the Institutes, since these were not to have the status of Faculties, differed somewhat from those concerning the Colleges.

**Status**

The joining institution to be defined as a College or an Institute of the University.
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Governance

The Senate to be defined as the governing body of the University, with the Vice-Chancellor as chief executive officer of the University. A College to have a status equivalent to a Faculty in the University. The chief executive officer of the College to have the title College Principal, (or Director of an Institute), to have certain delegated powers and to assist the Vice-Chancellor in the administration of the College. On the transfer of the joining institution to the University, the functions and governance structures of the College to become the functions and governance structures of the University. Under the authority of Senate, a College Advisory Committee may be appointed, advisory to the chief executive officer of the College.

Participation in governance

The staff and students of the college or institute to have the same rights as all other members of the university to stand and vote in elections for the Senate and the Academic Board.

A college board to be created, having the powers and functions of a faculty; the composition of the board to be determined as part of the process of implementation of the agreement.

Delegations

The Vice-Chancellor may delegate certain responsibilities to the College Principal.

Staff

On amalgamation, all staff, both academic and general, to become staff of the University, with no loss of salary or entitlements. There are to be no compulsory retirements or redundancies. Where existing salary scales do not correspond to University scales, staff are to move to the next highest point on the salary scale, provided that this does not involve movement through a barrier. Staff to have titles corresponding to their University salaries, except for those at levels above Senior Lecturer. In
those cases, the University to consider conferring the title Professor or Associate Professor. Staff were not to be compelled to transfer their place of work because of the amalgamation.

Students

On amalgamation, students of the college or institute to become students of the university, and not to be adversely affected in their studies, provided that they graduate within a period of four years. Their awards to indicate their membership of the college or institute. The university and the college to consult with appropriate student organisations, as part of the implementation of the Agreement.

Educational profile

The educational profile to be drawn up in accordance with the University’s policies and incorporated in the university’s profile. The missions and objectives of a college to be preserved, as far as possible, in the university’s mission statement.

Educational resources

Students and staff of a college and the university to have reciprocal rights of access to resources. Particular aspects of the operation of libraries to be considered as part of the process of implementation.

Finance and funding

On amalgamation all expenditure to be consistent with the accounting procedures of the University Finance Committee and the Senate. The college to participate with other parts of the university in advising the Vice-Chancellor on the allocation of the university’s resources. In common with the faculties of the university, a college to receive a single line grant, for allocation by the College Board. A college to be entitled to develop other sources of funding apart from Government recurrent grants.
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Property and liabilities

On amalgamation, the university to become vested with the assets of the college, and to assume its liabilities and obligations.

Consolidation implementation

Under these Agreements, the Senate to establish joint committees, to examine and make recommendations for carrying out the agreement.

(c) The consolidation implementation committees

The draft Agreements having been approved by the governing bodies, and with the legislation enacted, it was necessary to work out the details of how the new arrangements would function after the appointed day of transition, 1 January 1990. This was the task of the Consolidation Implementation Committees (C.I.C.'s); these had equal membership from the University and from the joining institutions. The C.I.C.'s also invited other people to serve on working parties on the details of arrangements concerning particular groups and topics, such as those listed below:

- Academic staff.
- General staff.
- Academic matters.
- Administration, finance and properties.
- Delegations of authority.
- Library.
- Student organizations.
- Health and welfare services.
- Legislative requirements.

It was the University's position that the amalgamations should result in the formation of a single, more or less homogeneous institution, with the same standards and procedures applying throughout. Therefore, although the details of the negotiations varied from case to case, the main points of disagreement occurred, as might have been expected, in relation to the extent to which the joining institutions, and the people within
them, could retain the independence and status which they formerly enjoyed.

(d) Implementation of the agreements

Under the agreements the following amalgamations were made:

*The Cumberland College of Health Sciences,* became a college of the University, with the administrative status of a faculty; the office of College Principal was equated with that of the Dean of a Faculty.

*The Sydney Institute of Education* remained as it was, but as an Institute of the University, with the Director having the status of a Head of Department. It was agreed that within not more than five years from the date of amalgamation the Institute would become part of the Faculty of Education. At the time of preparing this Report it appears likely that this integration with the Faculty of Education will occur in 1992.

*The Institute of Nursing Studies* also remained as it was, and became an Institute of the University, with the Director having the status of a Head of Department. It was foreseen, at the time of the amalgamation, that this Institute would in due course become a Faculty in its own right, or join in some other grouping of the health and medical sciences. In the event, the Institute became a Faculty at the end of 1990, with the Director becoming Dean.

*The College of the Arts* became a College of the University, the administrative equivalent of a Faculty, the Director having the status of a Dean.

*The Sydney Conservatorium of Music* became a College of the University, the administrative equivalent of a Faculty, the Director having the status of a Dean.

The discussions were complicated by the need to consult the many people involved, since apart from academic and administrative issues there were industrial agreements which had to be considered.
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(i) Academic

The academic staff of the existing University was represented by one union but the staffs of the joining institutions were represented by two others: the academic staff of the former colleges had a separate union, while the staff of the Conservatorium and the Institute of Education were covered by a union consisting principally of schoolteachers. The members of the general staff were represented in some cases by the union which already covered staff of the University, but in others by a separate organisation concerned with employees in the public service.

An important issue, which has been mentioned in Section 2.4 (a), concerned the status of the staff. Where the joining institution was to have the status of a College, that is, to be similar to a Faculty, it was decided that the appropriate title of its chief executive officer would be college principal. Where the institution was an institute, the chief executive officer was to be called director.

The salary scales for college academics were not identical with those of the University, and in particular included some classifications not used by the University. In accordance with the Act, all staff of the colleges were to become staff of the University, but on terms no less favourable than those they currently enjoyed. As was indicated in Section 2.4(b) they were therefore transferred to the equal, or next highest, point on the appropriate University salary scale.

There remained the sensitive question of academic titles, since while lecturer and senior lecturer posed no problems, being the same in all institutions, principal lecturer was not a title used in the University though the salary for such a grade was similar to that of associate professor. Consideration had also to be given to the status and titles of the existing directors and principals. The University of Sydney did not follow the practice of some other universities and automatically grant the title of professor or associate professor in all cases. It was agreed instead that it would be open to principal lecturers and other senior members of college staff, to apply to have the title conferred. In the event, not all eligible people applied, and not all applications were granted.

The academic staff promotions have also needed special attention. Applications for promotion are considered by a University committee, but it has been necessary for the committee to take into account the different
duties and roles of the staff of the Colleges, particularly where professional work, as in the arts, is concerned.

On joining the University, the colleges were required to adopt the administrative procedures and structures of the University. This has not been accomplished without some difficulty, since it has involved a considerable reduction in the previous autonomy of the Colleges. It has meant that where the equivalent of Departmental boards do not exist they have to be set up. College boards, being the equivalent of faculties, also have to be created and to become accustomed to new procedures. Recommendations for courses now have to be approved by the Academic board. Staff appointments are now made after consideration by University committees, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and containing the Chairman of the Academic Board; they are thus no longer solely the responsibility of the college. The role of the college principal, although still very influential, is not as independent as it was. Two of the three former principals have resigned or retired.

(ii) Administrative

The Office of the Registrar is proceeding with the integration of the student records and enrolment systems, which are to be centralised. The same is true for the examination system. Graduation ceremonies are now all arranged as University functions, though students from the Colleges graduate together in the same way as do the various Faculties. Since all students are students of the University, matters of discipline are handled by the Vice-Chancellor or through other University procedures.

In the Bursar’s Office, the integration of the accounts has been a complex matter and has required the expenditure of a great deal of staff time, since the joining institutions had different financial management systems. In particular, the Conservatorium was funded substantially by the State Government and its accounts were kept within a Government Department; the transfer of the information to the University was very difficult. While it might be thought that it ought to have been possible to do away completely with the Colleges’ own accounting systems, this has not proved to be the case. As they are remote from the University campus, it has been necessary to maintain a certain amount of financial and accounting capacity in the Colleges. Further centralisation will be possible in the future, as staff positions become released by retirements.
The University's Research Office has been expanded, and all applications for outside research grants are handled through it; the Colleges, in common with the Faculties have their own Research Committees, which advise on the research work of the College and send reports to the University's central Research Committee. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for research also consults with the Colleges.

The integration of College libraries with the University's main library has not yet been accomplished, though where the catalogues are held on computers these can be reached through a network.

The role of the student organisations and the provision of student services has proved to be difficult, and separate organisations still exist at the Colleges. Discussions are continuing.

3. Effects of the amalgamations

To the extent that the aim was to amalgamate five colleges or institutes with the University of Sydney, it has succeeded, though since the University was already the largest in Australia, the process has resulted in rather more change for the joining institutions than for the University. The effects of the recent additions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Effect of amalgamation in terms of staff, students and budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff*</td>
<td>1 192</td>
<td>1 623</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General staff</td>
<td>2 580</td>
<td>3 039</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (EFTSU)</td>
<td>17 316</td>
<td>24 147</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual budget ($M)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>**227</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Full-time equivalent academic staff, lecturer and above.
** Expressed in equivalent 1989 Australian dollars.
From these figures it can be seen that after the amalgamations the size of the University has increased by 36 per cent in academic staffing and 39 per cent in student load, while the budget has increased by only 28 per cent, in real terms.

The University, before amalgamation, conducted undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in ten Faculties; it was also engaged in a very wide range of research and attracted large amounts of research funding from national grant-giving bodies. Given the relative sizes of the original and the joining institutions, it is therefore not surprising that the process of amalgamation has had relatively little direct effect on the original academic components of the University. An exception is the Faculty of Education, which is shortly to incorporate the former Institute of Education, the staff of which will outnumber the original members.

One of the benefits which the Government hoped for from the amalgamations was saving on costs of central administration. In the present case, the reduction of staff in this area has had to depend upon the rather limited success of a scheme of voluntary early retirement; under the Agreements, there could be no compulsory redundancies. Since the payments made under this scheme have now to be recovered, no savings from this source can be anticipated for two or three years. In addition, it has been necessary to preserve some unavoidable duplication of administrative functions in those Colleges which are remote from the main campus.

The benefits anticipated by the Government must therefore be sought largely in changes with respect to the joining institutions. The benefits to their academic staff are and will be considerable. The grade of Principal Lecturer, (which was at the equivalent salary of Associate Professor), was available in the former colleges only by appointment to an established post, not by promotion. Promotion to Associate Professor in the universities is available by promotion on merit. In addition to these improved opportunities for promotion, there will be increased access to special studies programmes (sabbatical leave) and to internal sources of funding for research. It is certainly true that by the addition of the equivalent of four Faculties and one very large department (the Institute of Education), the University has increased the range of courses available to its students. But since these were already available through the colleges under the previous arrangement that has been of no very great advantage to the public. However, it would not be surprising if it
were seen as a benefit to graduates of the colleges that they will in future be graduates of the University of Sydney.

To the extent that it was the aim of the Government to transform colleges, which did not have a defined role in research, into universities which do, the outcome has yet to be seen. As has been discussed in Section 2.1, the colleges had patterns of academic staffing which differed from those in the University, both in the proportions of staff in the different grades, and in the proportions of staff with higher degrees and research qualifications. As a result of the amalgamations, the academic staff has been increased by more than 400 equivalent full-time posts, in the proportions of one at the grade of senior lecturer or above, to three at the grade of lecturer. The increase in supporting staff is considerably less. With respect to the academic staff, it is to be expected that in the course of time, through the development of research programmes and the expansion of honours and postgraduate work, this group will come to have the same percentage distribution of posts as in the pre-amalgamation university. It may also be anticipated that there will be a concomitant increase in the numbers of supporting staff. The effect on costs will be considerable, leading to an increase of at least 7 per cent in the salaries component of the University's budget. At present there is no indication that the level of funding for the system as a whole will be increased sufficiently to provide for this.

As colleges come to have a greater involvement in research and research training, there will be an increase in honours and postgraduate student load, with consequent increases in operating costs. It is to be presumed that the distribution of funding to institutions will follow such changes in their 'profiles', but, once again, there is as yet no indication that any increase in total funding will be made available to meet such a general increase in costs. There are, indeed, suggestions in Government policy that as far as funding for the support of research is concerned, this will be selective; as was stated in the White Paper, "no institution will be guaranteed funding for research across all its fields, and only those with a demonstrated capacity will be funded for research across the broad range of their programmes".

The time which it will take for a college or other new component of the university to become fully transformed into the equivalent of a 'former' university faculty or department, will depend upon the extent to which the role of the staff is expanded to include the conduct of research,
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and the extent to which research infrastructure can be developed. The research capacity of the staff will also depend to a considerable extent upon the recruitment of people with research experience, and so, depending upon the rate at which vacancies occur, it may require a number of years before there are any great changes. It remains to be seen what will be the university’s ability to meet the costs of this change in staffing.

The University’s management and monitoring of the financial consequences of the amalgamations will be partly through the central administration and partly locally, at the faculty or college level. Centrally, the allocation of resources within the University will, in future, depend on the development of a funding model. It should be pointed out that the funding model recently developed by the Government (discussed in Section 2.1) was designed for the particular purpose of examining relative funding levels; it is not known, at this stage, whether the Government intends to make further use of this model for the ‘formula funding’ of institutions.

The University’s funding model will undoubtedly be influenced by the one developed by the Government, but will be designed to reflect the particular characteristics and functions of the various parts of the institution. The model will be applied, for the first time, as a part of the determination of the budgets for 1992. At the Faculty or College level, as has been outlined in Sections 2.4 (b) and 2.4 (e), once the allocation has been determined centrally, its further distribution to units and departments within that Faculty is devolved to the Dean. In the same way that the University’s funding model may come to depend upon the characteristics of the NBEET model, no doubt the allocations within Faculties will in turn be influenced by the characteristics of the University’s model. Once mechanisms of this kind have been brought into operation, it will not be easy to make allocations which depart very substantially from the expectations to which the models give rise.

It is also appropriate under this heading to include the question of capital works. The Government has recognised that the expansion of the tertiary education system will involve considerable additional capital expenditure, some of which is definitely related to the amalgamations. When institutions are brought together as they have been in this process, questions of accommodation are inevitably raised. Where activities are conducted on several sites, it may make sense to combine them; where
they are remote from the main campus it may make sense to relocate them. This may require substantial alterations to buildings or even new buildings. In this University, for example, the Faculty of Education is to be greatly enlarged by the incorporation of the Institute of Education, and a large new building is about to be constructed on campus to house it. Considerable sums are at present also being spent on the housing of the Faculty of Nursing. These funds were already committed before the amalgamations occurred, but if in the future it is decided to bring together the two separate schools of nursing which the University now has, (one at Cumberland and one very near to the main campus) then further capital funds will be required.

The future housing of the College of the Arts and of the Conservatorium may also pose problems for the University. In many ways it would be appropriate to move each of these operations into new accommodation which would be built on the main campus. The State Government however has a proposal to refurbish the historic buildings of a former mental hospital, and to create a new location for both the College of the Arts and the Conservatorium. The Commonwealth is only prepared, at this stage, to contribute limited amounts of capital funds for this development; it is very unlikely to fund the construction of new buildings on campus.

4. Conclusions

The higher education system in Australia has undergone great changes in the last two years, with the abolition of the distinction between universities and colleges of advanced education. This process has involved the amalgamation of many institutions, and while the full effects of these developments have yet to become apparent, there are several observations which can be made.

(1) It must first be said that the nature of a change in a higher education system must depend very much on what outcome is desired. The Australian Government's intention, as expressed in the Green and White Papers, was to abolish the binary system and create in its place a Unified National System, consisting of institutions offering a wide diversity of courses, with greater flexibility of enrolment and transfer of credit, and greater selectivity and concentration of research resources and
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activity. This was to be achieved by the wide-spread amalgamation of institutions, particularly involving the smaller colleges.

(2) It is important to note that the Government quite specifically required that amalgamated institutions should be completely integrated, both academically and administratively. There was to be one ‘profile’, one governing body and one Vice-Chancellor. The institutions were all to negotiate their funding directly with the Commonwealth, through the Department of Employment, Education and Training, and operate within approved ‘profiles’, in accordance with the policies specified by the Government in a variety of matters. The Government clearly did not wish to deal separately with components of a ‘federation’. Indeed, although this was not stated as an aim, the Government may well have seen that a great reduction in the number of institutions would simplify its own administrative load.

As might have been anticipated, the effects of complete integration have varied, depending on the circumstances of an amalgamation. In the case of the University of Sydney, given the relative sizes of the various participants, it was natural that the joining institutions should be required to adopt the practices and policies of the pre-existing University. It nevertheless reflects considerable credit on the goodwill of all concerned that the amalgamations have been achieved with a minimum of disharmony. On the other hand, in the formation of the University of Western Sydney, the three institutions involved, being of comparable size and status, have not found it at all easy to reconcile their previous autonomy with the fact that they are now all components of a single university. The powers of the Vice-Chancellor of that university, vis-à-vis the principals of the three former colleges, have not been easy to define.

(3) The expectation that the creation of a Unified National System would produce a greater diversity of courses has not, at least as far as the present examples are concerned, yet been fulfilled. The situation will, however, change with the development of greater opportunities for research work in the former colleges, and the consequent growth of postgraduate enrolments for higher degrees by research.

(4) Finally, it is necessary to comment upon the financial aspects of the amalgamations. Some of the costs of these are apparent immediately, but it is important that provision also be made for others which will emerge over a longer period.
(a) Among the immediate costs are those required to provide compatibility of computer and accounting systems, library catalogues, and telephone and data systems; all of these may require the purchase of new equipment. Some special funding was available for the support of such things, but the changes nevertheless have involved the unfunded expenditure of a great deal of staff time. Amalgamations may also bring with them schemes for the early retirement of staff. This was the case in this University, and, while, in the longer term, there may be some savings to be achieved through the integration of administrative and service staff, there are substantial sums which have to be spent immediately.

Another source of immediate costs is for the provision of accommodation since, as a consequence of amalgamation, the integration of activities is likely to require the relocation or rehousing of staff. The necessary modifications to existing buildings or the erection of new ones may be very expensive. In Australia the funds for such purposes come by way of special capital grants for which universities must make requests in an order of priority. The needs arising from the process of amalgamations have placed additional demands on these funds, both at the national and the institutional level.

(b) In the longer term, allowance must be made for the fact that the abolition of a binary system can be expected to lead to the transition of institutions or parts of institutions from the academic functions and structures of a college to those of a university. These expectations have been discussed above. If they are realised, there will be changes in the patterns of staffing, both academic and general, which will lead to substantial increases in the total cost of salaries. The developments will inevitably be accompanied by additional needs for equipment and supplies, and for increased infrastructure generally, including the provision of additional space. Unless these costs are foreseen and allowed for, the satisfaction of the expectations which have been aroused by the formation of the Unified National System will only be possible at the expense of the resources previously available to the former universities. If that should occur the Unified National System will encounter many problems.
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The book

This case study on the University of Sydney is part of a research programme directed by Bikas C. Sanyal. It reflects the short and very recent experience of amalgamation of five small institutions with a large university, which began only in 1988 and had to be legally completed by January 1990. It recounts the process of complex negotiation and drawing up of heads of agreements. The major problems encountered were the extent of independence to be granted to the amalgamating institutions and the status of their staff. The first benefits of centralization of administration and of better conditions for the staff are just beginning to be felt though it is acknowledged that several years yet must elapse to allow time for integration of one institute into a faculty and for moves on to the central campus, before the full effects will be known.

The author

Michael Taylor was Deputy Vice Chancellor (now retired) of the University of Sydney, Australia. He is a well-known figure in the field of higher education, being an active participant in the OECD IMHE programme for which he wrote on funding models. His first-hand experience of amalgamating five other institutions of higher education into his own university provides some very useful guidelines for institutions contemplating or having to undertake a similar process.