

PRELUDE

Pragmatism versus principle: bringing commercial and economics education to the University of Sydney

The Faculty of Economics established by the University of Sydney in 1920 formalised the availability of Economics and associated subjects in the education it provided. However, this subject had been of concern to the University and its teaching staff from its very inception 70 years earlier. On the eve of enacting the University, the government committee investigating Sydney's need for its own university recognised that although the University started with the then traditional studies of Classics, Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, new fields of study, including history and political economy 'will soon be found indispensable' (cited in Goodwin, 1966, p. 546). The University's foundation Professor of Classics, John Woolley, offered optional lectures in political economy, two of which were published in the 1855 *Sydney University Magazine*. These did not set out its principles but stressed the usefulness of its 'laws' for promoting social harmony and preserving freedom and individual liberty. Woolley invited a Prize Essay on 'The Influence of Political Economy on the Course of History' and asked his Logic students in an examination paper to evaluate critically the proposition that 'Political Economy is the science of social well-being' (Goodwin 1966, p. 547; Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990, pp. 47–49; and Groenewegen 1990, pp. 21–23). His colleague, Morris Birkbeck Pell, a Cambridge senior wrangler and foundation Professor of Mathematics, in 1856 read a paper to the Sydney Philosophical Society on the principles of political economy as applied to railways, a topic he also addressed in the first issue of the *Sydney University Magazine*. Pell in addition did actuarial work and constructed mortality tables in his capacity as a consultant for the colony's life insurance offices (see Goodwin 1966, pp. 286–89, 438–40; Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990, pp. 49–50). Lack of formal recognition of political economy in the new University's syllabus of studies in the 1850s went together with recognition of the subject's importance by the actions of two of its three foundation professors, making its future introduction very likely.

Early formal lectures in Economics and Political Science

Both before and after the establishment of the University of Sydney, Sir Henry Parkes' newspaper the *Empire* lamented the omission of social science teaching from its proposed educational program. An editorial (January 1854) deplored the absence of political science and political economy from the University syllabus, all the more regrettable given the introduction of responsible government in New South Wales, which generated a real need for citizens versed in the art of government. Its success likewise depended on opportunities for being adequately informed on developments in these political subjects. Parkes' pleas fell

on deaf ears. The new University did not offer political economy classes as part of its degree courses until 1866–67, and then for only two years. Lectures were then given by James Paterson, a Sydney LLD who had been appointed ‘Reader’ (that is, part-time lecturer) in Political Economy by the University in 1866 (SM: 6 March 1866). The 1866 *University Calendar* (p. vii) gave some details of this course. It was given during Michaelmas term, one lecture per week on Wednesdays at 8 pm. Paterson, the appointed teacher for the course (SM: 6 March 1866), held four degrees from the University of Sydney: BA in 1857, MA in 1859, LLB in 1864 and LLD in 1866. His interest in economics may therefore have come from attending John Woolley’s lectures.

Why the course was so short lived is not known. Low enrolments are a possible explanation. Paterson’s poor teaching ability is another. A year later, Senate Minutes (6 March 1867) record receipt of an application from Dr Aldcorn for the position of lecturer in Political Economy (La Nauze 1949, p. 18 and n. 13). The *University Calendar* (1866, p. v) mentioned a political economy segment in the courses on logic. Hence duplication with existing courses may also explain the rapid demise of Paterson’s political economy course.

During the 1880s and 1890s, political economy appeared in the University syllabus in two distinct ways. One was the practice of including some political economy in Logic classes, subsequently (1888–89) followed in political philosophy courses. Earlier (in 1886) A.C. Wyllie had offered a course to MA students combining political philosophy with political economy. Texts recommended were Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Mill’s *Principles of Political Economy* and Bastiat’s *Economic Harmonies* and *Economic Sophisms* (1887 UC: pp. 269–70). During the 1890s, the School of Logic continued to offer courses in political economy for the MA, now largely based on the political economy of John Stuart Mill (for example, 1890 UC: pp. cxvii–cl). Under Professor Arnold Wood, these courses also became acceptable for history students (see Crawford, 1975 chapter 7, esp. pp. 129, 140–41).

Extension Board teaching enacted in 1884 provided a second route for taking political economy courses at the University of Sydney. A.C. Wyllie offered a one-term course in it in 1886. This course was expanded in 1887 into weekly lectures on production, distribution and practical applications over three terms (1887 UC: p. 284). Butlin (1970, p. 8) mentioned that the Professor of Classics, Walter Scott, also lectured on political economy for the Extension Board, as did his successor, Professor Thomas Butler. Scott had in fact been a major force in establishing Extension Board teaching by the University. He was also active in first establishing and then running the Australian Economic Association, writing for its journal, the *Australian Economist* (Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990, pp. 86–87).

Extension Board courses continued during the early decades of the twentieth century (and after), attracting lecturers from within the University and from outside specialists. Among the latter was H.S. Jevons, son of W.S. Jevons, the famous economist and social philosopher. When in Sydney in the 1850s, W.S. Jevons himself had befriended two of the foundation professors of its University, and was acquainted with some of their economic views. H.S. Jevons lectured on political economy in 1904, as part of an attempt to test the water for successful teaching of commercial and economics topics to downtown business people in

this way. His lectures were published by Angus and Robertson, publishers to the University (Jevons 1905).

Political economy, even more than political philosophy, had therefore a mixed reception at the University. Additional to its two-year existence as a separate subject for the BA, political economy was taught as part of the philosophy offerings in the School of Logic, either in Logic or Political Science courses. Moreover, political economy found a home as an Extension Board course taught from 1886. Pressure to provide opportunities for sound commercial training at the University came to a head during the first decade of the twentieth century.

An aborted proposal for a Faculty of Commerce (1903) and further initiatives in commercial education

Moves to have commercial subjects taught at the University in the first instance came from the Sydney Chamber of Commerce. Both its vice-president (George Littlejohn) and its secretary (Henry Braddon) actively supported these moves, best implemented in their opinion by establishing a faculty of commerce at the University. The chamber made its first formal request for this introduction in 1903. Given the University's initial strong opposition, the request was repeated the following year.

The Extension Board also showed an interest in supplying commercial education to the city. Its report submitted to the University's Senate recommended an increased membership to facilitate a new lecture course on commercial subjects 'for the benefit of clerks' (SM: 2 March 1903). Five subjects were suggested: business practice, commercial law, banking and exchange, economic and commercial history, and commercial geography and technology. Both the University Senate and Professorial Board remained cautious about closer University involvement in commercial education. Several of its leading members, including the then chancellor, Sir Normand MacLaurin, described opposition to these moves as 'scotching the snake'.

The press now came to assist the 'city men' from the Chamber of Commerce and other proponents of university commerce teaching. Articles and letters in the *Daily Telegraph* (18 and 19 August 1904) and in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (22 August 1904) drew attention to relevant overseas experience at the universities of London, Birmingham and Manchester. These had all introduced commerce courses and degrees. In addition, articles commented on the need for advanced commercial training in Australia to strengthen protection of Australian business and industry against foreign competition, and thereby to lead them more effectively to victory in imminent trade wars with Germany, the United States and Japan. Cost of the proposal was estimated by an anonymous member of the University Senate as ranging from £2000 to £3000, with a minimum enrolment of 84 students to make such courses viable.

The University responded quickly. A Senate committee, appointed in September 1904, reported in December (SM: 5 December 1904). It proposed a junior commercial



Economics and Commerce III: 1909.

examination and the award of a university commercial certificate, acceptable to both Senate and Chamber of Commerce. Senior and junior commercial examinations were to be introduced in 1905 with an evening course of 30 lectures on economics, accounting, business methods and techniques, to be followed in 1906 with a further evening course of 30 lectures on commercial law, commercial history and geography, and banking and finance. More delays and committees were generated by the New South Wales Teachers Association and resolved over three days in May 1906. As a result, a professorship in economics was to be quickly established for funding by the New South Wales Treasury; a new scheme of commercial education and examination was to be prepared; and business interests in the city were urged to accept both the new commercial education scheme and that its successful students be suitably certified.

In November 1906, a Senate committee unanimously approved implementation of this scheme. Commerce and Economics would become a subject of instruction for the BA. Commerce courses were to be given over three years and were to be open to non-matriculated students as well as to ordinary degree students. Non-matriculated students who had completed the three courses satisfactorily were to be awarded a Diploma of Commerce. The proposed first-year course, Commerce I, was to start in 1907. It was to include lectures on the principles of economics, accountancy, business methods and technology, commercial geography and the economic position of Australia. Four teachers in the new course were to be appointed (Report of the Senate, 1906, p. 311). Butlin (1970, p. 8) concisely outlined the next phase in the story:

Working out of details passed to the Faculty of Arts which gave the scheme a rough passage. MacCallum (Professor of English and later Sir Mungo), having lost a motion to approve courses in Economics only, succeeded with one approving three years in 'Economics and Commerce' from which 'the more technical and professional branches of economic study' should be excluded. An amendment to reject the entire proposal was defeated only on the Dean's casting vote. What finally emerged was a programme for a three-year, part-time, Diploma of Economics and Commerce, and a Department of the same name, within the Faculty of Arts. In adopting this in November 1907 the Senate appointed six part-time staff, headed by Irvine ... Arts was still unhappy and having failed in its demand for a full-time professor or lecturer in Economics urged transfer of the unclean thing to Law.

Despite fears expressed by the newspapers about a possible lack of students, the diploma was a success. It attracted 84 students for its first year of operations in 1907. By 1913, enrolments had more than doubled to 174, and reached their peak in the immediate post-war years of 1919 and 1920 with 298 and 296 students.

Opposition from the Arts Faculty meant that the Department of Economics and Commerce was initially housed in the Law Faculty. During 1912, it shifted to the Faculty of Arts, as originally intended. This remained the case until 1920, when commerce teaching found a permanent home in the then newly created Faculty of Economics. A BEc degree course came into effect in 1913. Only matriculated students were eligible for this degree, which mainly drew on courses offered by the Department of Economics and Commerce.

Two original appointees for teaching the Diploma of Commerce courses participated in the teaching of the Faculty of Economics on its establishment in 1920. The first was Henry Braddon, who for some years taught the Business Principles segment of the BEc degree; the second was Robert Irvine, the first dean and professor in the new faculty. They had been staunch allies in the downtown fight for the introduction of commercial teaching at the University. Braddon had done so in his capacity as secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, and Irvine did so from his involvement in the education and training of public servants for the New South Wales Public Service Board (*Union Recorder*, 10 July 1941, p. 21). Some background on these founders is interesting, starting with Braddon.

Henry Braddon (1863–1955) was born in India, and educated in Germany (Dusseldorf) and Dulwich College (London) with a year in Caen (Normandy) in between. In 1878, he joined his father in Tasmania, worked briefly there in one of its banks, then worked for a bank in New Zealand before returning to Sydney in 1884 as a member of the New Zealand rugby union team. There he stayed, making a career with Dalgety's, marrying, and being actively engaged in the Sydney Chamber of Commerce. This brought him into the fight to introduce commerce teaching at the University of Sydney (McCredie 1979, pp. 380–81). From its commencement he taught Business Principles and Practice for the Diploma of Commerce and later for the BEc degree as well (1907–23). He published a text on the subject (Braddon 1909), which stayed in print until the 1930s. In addition, he wrote on money, credit and banking, delivered two Joseph Fisher lectures on commerce

(Braddon 1912 and 1925), and published a volume of essays and addresses (Braddon 1930) which included an interesting study of the French assignats (the paper money issued by the French republic during the years following the French Revolution of 1789). Braddon was knighted (KBE) in 1920, he was a member of the University's Senate during the 1920s, served as a member of the Legislative Council from 1917 to 1938, and on his retirement from Dalgety's in 1928 he held a number of directorships in financial enterprises, giving freely of his time to many charities. His political and economic views tended to be on the conservative side and it is interesting to speculate how he got on with Irvine, his comrade in arms in the struggle for commerce education at the University, after the publication of Irvine's rather heretical views on monetary subjects (Irvine 1916, 1933). An account of Irvine's career is given below.

From Department of Economics and Commerce to Faculty of Economics

When in 1911 the Diploma of Economics and Commerce courses had been running for four years with enrolments just under the 100 mark (McLeod 1955, p. 41), Irvine, the sole teacher of its substantial economic content, was appointed to the Public Service Board. He had been associated with its work before taking up a lectureship in economics and Commerce in 1906, and intended to resign his university teaching position in order to accept the new appointment. Irvine was persuaded to stay on as lecturer with the prospect that a chair in Economics and Commerce would be created in the not too distant future. At the start of 1912, the state government provided the additional £3000 needed to establish the chair to which Irvine was appointed on the motion of the vice-chancellor (SM: 4 March, 1 April 1912). Irvine accepted the new position that same month and commenced professorial duties at the start of Lent term 1913. He spent the second half of 1912 in visiting major schools of economics in North America, Great Britain and Europe, to inform himself on developments in economics and commerce teaching in other parts of the world.

The Diploma of Commerce at this stage required unmatriculated students to take Economics and Commerce I, II and III as compulsory courses (1910 UC: p. 145). Until 1912, lectures were given in the evening at the Law School. Economics and Commerce I involved one lecture a week in Introductory Economics and in Accountancy for the whole year, for two terms in Business Principles and Practice and in first term in Economic Geography. Economics and Commerce II required one lecture a week in Economics II (dealing with finance, trade, business cycles and associated issues); one lecture per week for two terms in Accountancy II, and in Commercial Law I and History of Elementary Technology and Commercial Products for one term. For Economics and Commerce III, students took one lecture per week in Economics III on the theory of distribution, the labour movement, combinations and monopolies, public finance and commercial and industrial history; one lecture per week for two terms in Accountancy III, and one lecture per week for one term in Commercial Law II and the choice of either statistical methods, insurance, banking practice and accounts, and local government. Teaching staff had grown to eight, all part-

time with the exception of Irvine (1910 UC: pp. 145–47). This course structure, less of a hotchpotch` than that improvised at the start of the Diploma of Commerce, contained the seeds for the course mix later offered by the Faculty of Economics for its degree.

Not long after his appointment as professor, Irvine drafted new by-laws for a revised curriculum in the Department of Economics and Commerce. These were gazetted on 21 January 1913 as Chapter XVIB of the University by-laws. They provided for a degree of Bachelor of Economics, open to all students who had passed the matriculation examination for university entry. Two of its subjects had to be completed at a 'higher standard', of which one had to be either French or German. Students had to complete ten courses to graduate: Economics I, II and III, three Arts courses, of which one had to be either French or German, and two courses combining the two half courses Commercial and Industrial Law and Economic Geography, and those in Accountancy I and Business Principles and Practice. The remaining two courses were either another Arts course not previously attempted, or combining two commercial half courses; or by combining four commercial half courses from the following: Commercial and Industrial Law [II], Accountancy [II and III], Technology and Commercial Products, Principles and Practice of Banking, Methods and Application of Statistics, Public Administration (including Local Government), Business Technique and Organisation of the Principal Australian Industries, Principles of Company and Industrial Organisation and Management (1913 UC: pp. 54–55). Students intending to take Actuarial Studies were advised to take Insurance Mathematics. No more than four qualifying courses for the degree could be taken per annum, making three years the minimum time for completing.

The new by-laws also enabled conversion of the Diploma of Commerce into a new BEC degree, by exempting holders of the diploma from taking commercial courses already completed for the diploma, including Economics I–III. They were, however, required to attend lectures on public finance, economic history and the history of economic thought not included in Economics I–III as taught previously for the diploma (1913 UC: pp. 55–57). BEc and diploma courses were now given as evening lectures within the Faculty of Arts, but only the three economics courses as revised were acceptable for BA students. By then, the Department of Economics and Commerce was housed 'in a cramped corner of the old Geology Building' (bordering Parramatta Road) where some of its classes were also held (Butlin 1970, p. 9).

Details of the revised Economics I–III courses were provided (1913 UC: pp. 180–82). Economics I now dealt with the Theory of Production, Consumption and Exchange (Part I), and with the Evolution of the Industrial System (Part II). Economics II covered Value and Price, Money, Exchange, Crises and Business Fluctuations, Speculation, and Australian Foreign Trade (Part I) and Economic History (Part II). Economics III added Public Finance and History of Economic Thought to its previous treatment of labour, socialism and other forms of the social organisation of industry. Segments of Economics III made Irvine unpopular with more conservative University elements and in downtown business and financial circles.

Irvine, who had been born in Scotland in 1861, was educated in New Zealand (BA in 1883, MA in 1888) and had subsequently worked there as journalist and in temporary academic posts at Canterbury University College. He migrated to Australia in 1891 and initially worked as a teacher before joining the New South Wales Public Service in 1897 as secretary to the Board of Examiners for the Public Service Board. He had actively cooperated with the Chamber of Commerce and others in promoting university-provided commercial education, and became a University Extension Board lecturer in History and Economics. When appointed to the chair, Irvine's few publications included an 1899 article on Impressionism in art; a joint 1902 book (with O.T.J. Alpers) on progress in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, and a 1913 report for the New South Wales government on the housing of workers in Europe and America. From 1914 to 1921 he published two or three items a year: on town planning, the importance of social science teaching at a university, war finance and public finance, money, contemporary labour issues and newspaper articles for the *Sunday Times* (McFarlane 1966, pp. 48–49 gives a detailed bibliography). Irvine saw his teaching role as important, both within the University and in the wider community. He later described his students as 'youthful comrades ... cheerful, sociable, keen and open-minded ... [who endured] ... our texts and far too many tedious lectures on top of them ... [so that class discussion was frequently substituted] for some of the lectures' (Irvine 1933, pp. 2–3). His ideas differed greatly from those of the 'conventional' economists and his teaching became more and more heretical in content (Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990, pp. 57–60).

Few BEc degrees were awarded by the University during the seven years following their establishment. The first was conferred as early as 1914, surprisingly, given the type of subjects offered by the Economics and Commerce Department, to a woman student, Edith Swain. Eight BEc degrees were conferred in 1916, in 1917 only three; and so on. Twenty-five BEc degrees were conferred prior to the formal establishment of the Faculty of Economics in 1920, a small fraction (15 per cent) of the Diplomas of Economics and Commerce awarded over these years. In all, 170 diplomas were awarded during the decade of its existence, with the maximum annual award of 24 achieved in its first year, 1910, and again in 1919 (UCS). Seven women (4 per cent of the total) received a diploma as did a future faculty teacher of Business Principles, W.J. Cleary. Little else can be said about these diploma and early degree students. Were they 'the clerks' mentioned by the Senate in its discussion of Extension Board endeavours to expand into commercial education or, more likely, middle-grade employees from banks, other financial institutions and segments of the world of business, or from the public service? Such details cannot be gleaned from the names recorded in the student records.

Staff for the Economics and Commerce courses continued to grow. Apart from Irvine as professor, Atkins was added as lecturer in Economic History, H. Dunstan Vane and Braddon continued to teach Accountancy and Business Principles, F.A. Russell taught Commercial and Industrial Law, F.B. Guthrie Technology and Commercial Products, E.M. Moors (a former—1887–1908—assistant lecturer in Mathematics) Actuarial Mathematics and Statistics, and G.M. Allard taught Banking Practice. In 1914, J.D. Fitzgerald lectured on

Local Government (Law and Administration); and G.S. Beeby in 1915 lectured on public administration (a course then added to the list of half courses for the BEc and the diploma). From 1917, public administration was taught by P.R. Watts and F.A. Bland (1915 UC: pp. 47, 450; 1916 UC: pp. 346–47).

To encourage their students, some lecturers offered prizes. The first such prize (introduced in 1910) was one of two guineas for Business Methods donated by Braddon; Russell in 1914 donated a one guinea prize to the student most proficient in Commercial and Industrial Law, while Irvine donated several prizes (all initially worth a guinea) for the best students in Economics I, II and III and for the diploma course as a whole (1916 UC: pp. 346–47).

The list of half courses on offer continued to expand. New half courses for 1918 were Business Techniques, Organisation of the Principal Australian Industries, Sociology (for the University teaching of which Irvine [1914] had made a cogent plea), Political Science and Constitutional History. The last was described as of special significance for Commerce and Economics students, given the growing importance of sections of the Constitution for trade, industry and commerce (1917 UC: p. 147).

A new degree was added by the Department of Economics and Commerce with the introduction in 1916 of the MEc as a postgraduate degree. No MEc degrees were conferred prior to the establishment of the Faculty of Economics, with the first masters awarded to Bradney William Goodwin in 1925 (1965 UCS: p. 312).

Further changes to the Bachelor of Economics degree were gazetted in 1918 as part preparation for transforming the Department of Economics and Commerce into a faculty. Moves for professional faculties had begun in 1918 with a proposal from the Professor of Engineering Science, Samuel Barraclough (later Sir Samuel), for the creation of a separate Faculty of Engineering. Eventually six additional faculties joined Arts, Law, Medicine and Science in 1920 (Butlin 1970, p. 9): Economics, Engineering, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Agriculture and Architecture.

The new BEc degree requirements were succinctly stated in Chapter XVIB of the by-laws. First of all, they increased the minimum period for completing the degree to four years. First-year students had to complete Economics I, one Group A subject (that is, Mathematics I, French I, German I or a Science), and one Group B course (English I or II, Modern History I, Philosophy I or II or a Group A course not already selected). Mathematics I was compulsory for those intending to take a full course of Insurance Mathematics. Second-year students took three of the following four course combinations: (1) Economics II; (2) the two half courses Business Principles and Practice and Economic Geography; (3) a half course in Statistics and one, or two, half courses in Accountancy I, the students taking the second Accountancy course being exempt from taking History of Economic Thought in the final year; (4) Insurance Mathematics I. Third-year students completed (1) Economics III or Insurance Mathematics II; (2) Economic History; and (3) Commercial and Industrial Law. Finally, fourth-year students completed (1) either Public Administration or two from the half courses Principles and Practice of Banking, Technology and Commercial Products, Economics of Transport, Elements of Political Science, Municipal Administration,

Philosophy II (Sociology) if not already taken or Philosophy I (Psychology) if not already taken; (2) a subject not already taken from Group A or Group B or Accountancy II (including Auditing); and (3) the History of Economic Thought (unless exempted by having taken the additional Accountancy I course during second year). In addition, the fourth-year examinations would test student proficiency in translating either French or German if they had not completed French I or German I.

Compared to later regulations and by-laws of the Faculty of Economics, this degree structure had some remarkable features. Three years of compulsory Economics studies were not required for those taking Insurance Mathematics I and II. Those intending to become professional accountants were only advised to take Accountancy II and Auditing, but not the two Accountancy I courses offered in second year and the Commercial and Industrial Law course. Thirdly, Political Science and Public Administration were courses available to BEc students but not from a single department within the faculty. Two social sciences (Sociology, Psychology) were also included for the BEc degree. The course structure for students taking the Diploma of Commerce and Economics was also revised, but its status as a course which could be completed in three years continued.

Chapter XVIB of the by-laws was amended in 1917 to provide for a Board of Studies in Economics and Commerce. The chair of the new Economics Board was the Professor of Economics, 'but in his absence, the members then present shall elect a chairman from among themselves'. Its membership comprised 'all lecturers in the subjects primarily prescribed for degrees in Economics'. The chancellor, vice-chancellor and the University warden and registrar were ex officio members (1918 UC: p. 51). Similar boards had been created for the other five 'professional' departments which were given faculty status in 1920. This new organisational structure was therefore little more than a halfway house to full faculty status.

From the preserved record it appears that the Board of Studies in Economics and Commerce met only once (15 November 1917) at the University Chambers in Phillip Street. This was the same place where Faculty of Economics meetings were held for several years from 1920. Five members of the board attended: Irvine, who took the chair, together with F.A.Bland, G.W.Cotton, F.B.Guthrie and P.R. Watts. The meeting discussed the changes in the by-laws outlined previously and the mechanics by which students enrolled in first year in 1917 could transfer to the new structure in 1918. In addition, and probably suggested by Bland, it decided to add Municipal Administration to degree and diploma syllabus.

A consequence of the general improvements in university commercial and economic education was the expansion of the array of university clubs by a new society. The 1912 UC (pp. 560–61) recorded that an Economics and Commerce Association of New South Wales had been registered under the Companies Act in March 1911

to stimulate interest and research in the Economics of Industry and Commerce by granting fellowships, prizes and scholarships and by the holding of lectures ... It would also collect and diffuse information on all such subjects [including the printing, publishing and circulation of papers], establish a library and a reading

room, provide rooms and other facilities for holding of meetings ... [and] prolong and sustain the interest of students in Economics after the completion of the University course.

The new association provided four categories of membership. Honorary members included every professor at the University and any other persons whom the council of the association chose to admit to this status. Fellows included the teaching staff in Economics and Commerce and any diploma holders who had contributed by research 'to the general stock of economic knowledge'. Associate members included all those who had successfully completed courses in Economics and Commerce either for degrees or diplomas subject to approval by the chief lecturer in the department or any other persons deemed fit by the council to be an associate member. Finally, there were student members subject to approval by the council. Ironically, given his attitude to university commercial education, Sir Normand MacLaurin (the chancellor) was listed as patron of the association; its president was Professor Irvine, there were four vice-presidents (of whom two were teachers), two honorary secretaries, an honorary treasurer and seven councillors. This very ambitious university club seems not to have lasted long, if it in fact ever started. No records of any of its meetings appear to be extant. Subsequent *University Calendars* do not mention its activities, and from 1918 dropped all references to its existence. It seems to have gone the way of many such organisations, started with the best of intentions but with far too ambitious a program and set of objectives to be ever effectively realisable.

Concluding remarks

Systematic economics and commerce teaching at the University of Sydney was a product of the twentieth century. Despite the interest in economics of two of its foundation professors, university economics teaching when tried in the nineteenth century was either a short-lived failure, or occasionally included as part of the Logic and Political Philosophy syllabus or, more frequently, in tutorial classes and similar courses offered to the outside public by the University's Extension Board. Demands for university teaching of commerce, economics and related subjects had been made by business and political leaders even before the establishment of the University in 1852. Nothing came of this until strong pressure from the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, those involved in public service education and especially the press, produced action from the University. This was done initially by establishing a Department of Economics and Commerce for organising such teaching, despite opposition from University leaders, including the chancellor and a majority of Faculty of Arts members.

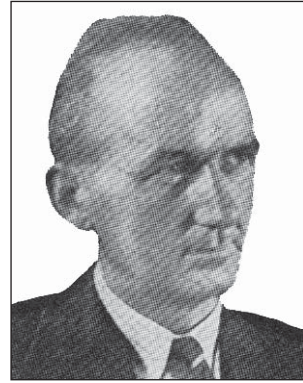
Early teaching of economics and commerce was therefore conducted under the auspices of the Faculty of Law. Only after a Professor of Economics and Commerce was appointed did this teaching move to the Faculty of Arts. The range of Commerce courses introduced from 1907 could initially only be taken by Diploma of Commerce students. From 1913, they could also count towards a BEc for matriculated students. Hence a specialised economics degree preceded the start of a faculty of economics by seven years. A masters degree, MEc,



Robert Francis Irvine
(1858–1941)



Richard Charles Mills
(1886–1952)



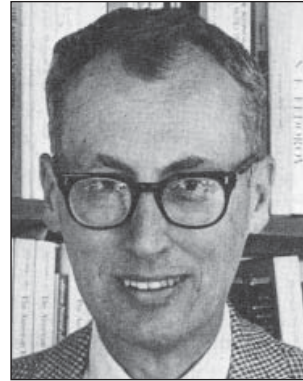
Syd Butlin
(1910–1977)



Richard Spann
(1916–1981)



Geelum Simpson-Lee
(1921–2001)



Stephen Salsbury
(1931–1994)



Murray Wells
(1936–)



Terry Walter
(1947–)



Peter Wolnizer
(1950–)

Eight deans (and one acting dean): 1920–1999.

was introduced in 1916. Their naming as economics degrees is explained by the fact that calling them commerce degrees (as in Melbourne) would not have differentiated them sufficiently from the diplomas also offered by the department. As acceptance of university-provided teaching for professional qualifications grew, the push for professional faculties additional to Medicine and Law grew with it. Engineering launched the first plea to turn its department into a faculty, and the departments of Dental Science, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Architecture and Economics and Commerce soon followed. After serving brief apprenticeships for their imminent faculty status by way of boards of studies, these six areas of professional education became fully-fledged faculties in 1920. The teaching of economics and associated commerce, business and public administration subjects was by then firmly entrenched at the University of Sydney. Its teachers and syllabus were preserved in the new faculty structure to a significant extent. 'Scotching' the commercial snake proved not to be a long-term option for university traditionalists.