Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the study

This study focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in a regional Australian University, and the factors that promote and inhibit the capacity of the Heads to perform their function effectively and efficiently. The study is set in the context of an increasingly commercial and ambiguous policy environment for Australia's higher education institutions.

Australia's universities are undergoing rapid and pervasive change as they make a "dramatic transition .... to a more entrepreneurial, commercial and managerial character" (Harman, 2005a: 80). From 1974 until the mid-1980s, the Australian Government accepted responsibility for the funding of Australian universities (Marginson and Considine, 2000), and during this period, Australian universities generally had "a traditional style of management and governance" (Harman, 2005a: 80). Since the mid-1980s, however, Australian universities have entered a period of significant change in their economic, social and political environments, characterised in particular by decreasing Government funding and increasing competition from other universities, both national and international.

By 2005, Commonwealth Government operating grants were contributing less than half of university income (DEST, 2005a; NTEU, 2005), thereby placing significant pressure on universities to earn an increasing share of their operating costs from commercial activities (Smith, 2005). In order to address the escalating shortfall between Government funding and operating costs, a key strategy for Australian universities over the last decade has been to expand rapidly into the international education market. In 2005, Australian universities catered for over 200,000 international full-fee paying students, with the overseas Higher Education student market now worth around $6 billion to Australia (DEST, 2005b).

In the current 'business' context for higher education in Australia, the survival of universities would appear to depend significantly on the business acumen and expertise of their 'front-line' or 'middle-level' leaders and managers, all of whom are now expected to exhibit high levels of knowledge and expertise in financial and human resource management, planning, strategy, conflict resolution, change management, and industrial relations (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Harman, 2002; Santiago, Carvalho, Amaral and Meek, 2004; Gmelch and Schuh, 2004; Smith, 2005). Yet, claims Smith (2005) and Deem (2001), most university middle-level leaders and managers have little background or training in the important business-related dimensions of their roles, and they are struggling.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, a review of relevant literature and research reveals that little is known about how the rapid transition of the higher education environment to a more entrepreneurial, commercial and managerial character has impacted on Heads of Schools (or Departments) in universities, in particular Australian universities (Kallenberg, 2004; Santiago 2004; Harman, 2005a; Smith, 2005). What little literature and research that does exist in this area focuses almost exclusively on large metropolitan universities where, as detailed in the reports from the *Regional Australia Summit* (2000), the social, economic and educational environments are markedly different from universities in regional and rural Australia. It would seem important, then, to explore how changes in the direction and governance of Australian universities – particularly in regional areas – have impacted on the roles and responsibilities of their front line managers – the Heads of Schools. This is the aim of the present study.

Purpose of the research

This research is limited to a single in depth study of Heads of School in a regional Australian university. The specific purposes of this research study are to:
1. Identify and describe the major current roles and responsibilities of the university's Heads of School;

2. Identify the key factors that are seen to promote or assist the capacity of the Heads of School to perform their function effectively and efficiently;

3. Identify the key factors that are seen to inhibit or prevent the Heads of School from performing their function effectively and efficiently;

4. Identify strategies and approaches that might assist the Heads of School to perform their function more effectively and efficiently; and

5. Provide insights that might assist other universities to understand better the issues, challenges and opportunities associated with the position of Head of School (or Department).

Key terminology

There is significant variation in the way that several terms central to this research are defined and understood across different universities, and sometimes even within the same university. For this reason, definitions for key terminology are provided below in order to ensure that the reader understands the issues discussed in this study from the same perspective as the researcher.

It should be noted that an extensive review of documentation, both print-based and electronic, revealed no clear and consistent definitions for any of the terms. As a consequence, the definitions provided have been inferred by the researcher on the basis of experience and best available documentation.

A *regional university* is one located outside a state capital or its surrounding environment. Although generally servicing students at state, national and international levels, regional universities have a tacit obligation to support the particular student and community needs for the geographic area within which they are located (*Regional Australia Summit*, 2000).

A *Faculty* is the largest unit for the administration of learning and teaching in a regional university. It generally consists of multiple disciplines that are at least loosely associated (for example, Business, Economics and Law). A Faculty comprises two or more Schools or, in some universities, Departments. In most regional universities in Australia, the Faculty is the designated cost centre for expenditure of budgets associated with discipline-based teaching.

A *School* is a teaching and research delivery unit within the Faculty structure, generally consisting of only one or a small number of discipline areas (for example a School of Business, or a School of English, Communication and Theatre Studies). In most regional Australian universities, Schools are not cost centres, although it is at the level of the School that most teaching-related expenditure occurs. Most academics are allocated to a School for the purposes of teaching, research and human resource management. In simple terms, "Schools are where the teaching actually occurs in a university" (Smith, 2005). In some universities, the term 'Department" is used instead of 'School", while in other universities, the term 'Department' relates to an even smaller administrative unit that focuses on a very specific discipline or area of a discipline (for example, a Theatre Department within a School of Creative Arts within the Faculty of Arts).

The *Executive Dean* is the academic and administrative head of a Faculty at the particular university addressed in this research study. In many universities, including regional universities, the term 'Dean' rather than 'Executive Dean' is applied to the person fulfilling this function. At most universities – including the one in this study – the Executive Dean (or Dean) is a full-time administrative position, with the incumbent employed on a performance-based contract.

The *Head of School* is the academic and administrative head of a School. Generally, including at the university for this study, the Head of School holds a substantive permanent academic staff appointment at the university, but the Head of School component is a fixed-term appointment (usually of three-years duration, with the option of renewal). The Head of School position at most universities is a half-time appointment,

with the incumbent expected to undertake teaching, research, and higher degree research supervision for the other 50 percent of their professional workload.

Research design

This study employed a modified Delphi design (Smith, 1982; Adler and Ziglio, 1996; Pollard and Pollard, 2004) for the collection and analysis of information regarding the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in a regional Australian university. The Delphi method is a structured process for collecting and synthesizing ideas and opinions using a combination of interviews, discussions and questionnaires, interspersed with controlled feedback (Adler and Ziglio, 1996).

The five research questions that guided the selection of research design were:
1. What are defined and perceived as the key roles and responsibilities of Heads of School at the university?
2. What are the key factors that assist the Heads of School to perform their job effectively?
3. What are the key factors that inhibit the Heads of School from performing their job effectively?
4. What factors are likely to attract someone to be a Head of School?
5. How might the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School be improved?

Delphi belongs to a field of applied educational research that Taylor (1975) labelled "applied systems analysis". It includes such 'positivist' techniques as scenario building, brainstorming, dynamic modeling, structural modelling, cross-impact analysis, and relevance trees (Smith, 1982; Rea and Parker, 2005). Delphi and related research methodologies essentially consist of two phases: a *scanning phase* in which the range of information and opinion relevant to the issue under study is collected and collated; and an *analysis* phase which assesses the validity of the findings, identifies patterns and

relationships, establishes implications and consequences, and sets the outcomes in the context of known theoretical frameworks and principles (Taylor, 1975).

An important implication of the philosophical underpinning of the Delphi methodology is that it differs from much of the contemporary approach to educational research in at least five significant ways. First, in a Delphi, every attempt is made to ensure that the collection and collation of data occurs 'bias-free' with respect to researcher influence. The researcher does not 'filter' or evaluate the validity of information during data collection and collation because it is considered reasonable to assert that personal bias based on philosophical belief and idiosyncratic experiences could strongly influence decision-making, and thus potentially distort the validity of the information base. Second, in a Delphi, the data collection process and approach is not initially set or 'grounded' within the context of a theoretical framework because it is argued that in doing so, the researcher could introduce a significant but potentially inappropriate bias into the data set. Third, and flowing from the first two points, analysis and critique occurs after all information has been collected, not while it is being collected. It is argued that this has the added advantage of allowing a holistic assessment of the data and the inherent relationships among issues, beliefs and perspectives to be taken into account (Adler and Ziglio, 1996). Fourth, the findings are set in the context of one or more relevant theoretical frameworks as a conclusion, rather than as a prologue, to the study (Smith, 1982). Finally, while the Delphi approach seeks to provide findings and conclusions to inform theory, it has an inherent focus on providing insights and information that can directly influence practice (hence the labeling of the research genre as applied systems analysis). The emphasis on application is not necessarily reflected strongly in some other contemporary approaches to educational research.

The Delphi approach adopted has some important consequences for the presentation of this thesis. First, a primary purpose of the literature chapter in a Delphi study is to identify concepts, perspectives, experiences and issues that can inform the construction of the survey questionnaire. That is, the literature chapter is an inherent part of the data collection process, with the same status as the conducting and reporting of interviews.

For this reason, the chapter explaining the methodology has been placed before the literature review, and the structure of the literature chapter necessarily is somewhat different from 'traditional' literature reviews in order to reflect the focus on identifying material for inclusion in the questionnaire. Second, the presentation and discussion of theoretical perspectives largely is delayed until the discussion of findings and the drawing of conclusions from the study (Chapter 6). Additional literature is reviewed in this chapter in order to allow the determination of appropriate theoretical frameworks for the findings.

The modified Delphi approach used for this study – explained in detail in Chapter Two – comprised the following key steps:

1. Define the research questions to be addressed by the study.

2. Conduct a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews with Heads of Schools.

3. Review relevant documentation and literature.

4. Use each unique idea or suggestion developed through steps 2 and 3 above to construct a questionnaire in which respondents are requested to indicate their 'level of support' for each questionnaire item using a Likert-type scale.

5. Determine an appropriate sample of relevant stakeholders to complete the questionnaire.

6. Distribute the questionnaires.

7. Analyse the responses to the questionnaires, placing an emphasis on the 'consensus' or majority view with respect to each item.

8. Use the combined set of information obtained from interview, document analysis, literature review and questionnaire to prepare the final report and recommendations, including – if appropriate – "setting the identified 'reality' into a theoretical framework for further research" (Smith, 1982:14).

The modified Delphi design was seen to provide a number of methodological advantages in addressing the research questions, and these are discussed in detail in Chapter Two. Among the more important reasons for choosing a modified Delphi design for this study were that it:

- combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques for addressing the same issues, thus "avoiding dependence on the validity of a single data collection and analysis approach" (Scriven, 1991: 356);

- facilitates "the identification and 'deep' exploration of a wide range of views and ideas" (Smith, 1982: 48);

- involves input and feedback from a comprehensive range of involved stakeholders; and

- minimizes "the influence of the personal dispositions of the researcher on the collection and analysis of data" (Smith, 1982: 49).

Approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the university in question to conduct the research. All participants were provided with written information detailing the nature of the study, as well as details of their requested involvement. The written information also made it very clear to participants that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason, and that all information collected through the study would be treated with the utmost confidentiality (see Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6). The names of participants would not be shared beyond the candidate and her supervisors, and all questionnaires (anonymous) and interview notes would be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of five years before being shredded.

Importance of the study

It is suggested that this study makes at least three significant contributions to knowledge and practice.

First, it constitutes the first rigorous study for more than eight years to specifically address the roles of Heads of Schools or Departments in Australian universities. In 1990, Moses and Roe published their study *Heads and Chairs: Managing Academic Departments* based on research conducted in the late 1980s. The most recent study was done by Wolverton, Gmelch and Sarros (1999) who conducted a three-stage comparative

study between 1995 and 1999 into how academic department chairs in colleges and universities in Australia and the United States defined the tasks that exemplify their role. Since then, a number of studies and journal articles have explored university governance and management in Australia (for example, Meek and Wood, 1997; Marginson and Considine, 2001; Harman, 2002; Santiago, Carvalho, Amaral and Meek, 2004, Harman and Treadgold, 2007), but none has addressed in any substantive way the roles, responsibilities and challenges of Australian university Heads of Schools or Departments. As a consequence, it is suggested that the research reported in this study provides important contemporary insights into the nature and contribution of the role of the Head of School in an Australian university.

Second, this study would seem to provide important insights into many of the issues, dilemmas and opportunities associated with the management of change in Australia's universities as they increasingly are required to adopt a more commercial, entrepreneurial and business-like approach to their operation. A particular contribution of this study is to provide feedback on the nature and effectiveness of some of the strategies used 'at the coal-face' to address the rapid transition needed in the thinking and practices of the academic and administrative staff of universities.

Third, it is asserted that this study provides considerable insights into some of the key factors impacting on the operation and management of regional universities in Australia. As highlighted in the report of the *Regional Australia Summit* (2000), the factors that impact on higher education providers in non-metropolitan areas of Australia are often significantly different from those influencing "city" universities (for example, limited local human and physical resources and infrastructure; limited access to commercial opportunities; high expectations about directly servicing local communities; and difficulties associated with the distances students who must travel to their campus). The particular role of the Head of School in a regional university is inseparably linked to these factors, and so it is argued that this study will assist in understanding the nature and impact of the 'regional factors' currently affecting higher education in Australia.

Limitations of the study

There would appear to be five major limitations that impact on the validity of this research study, or on the extent to which its findings can be directly applied in other situations and contexts.

First, the information collected and analysed essentially represents a "snapshot in time" during a period when higher education policy and practice are experiencing rapid, fundamental and pervasive changes. Much of the qualitative and quantitative information collected during this study, therefore, may be dependent on the time it was collected and the particular contextual variables operating at that time. In an attempt to minimise the impact of this phenomenon, the researcher tried to focus the investigation more on the exploration of issues and strategies rather than on particular incidents and events, in the belief that the former are more robust and enduring in times of change.

Second, caution needs to be exercised in seeking to translate the findings of this single-university case study to other Australian universities, both regional and metropolitan. The impact of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and Federal Government higher education policies (especially those linked to funding and performance assessment) ensures that all Australian universities have a range of similarities with respect to many of their operational processes. However, the need to operate in a highly competitive environment in order to achieve very significant income targets from commercial activities in order to 'survive', means that each Australian university also is quite unique with respect to a range of contextual, managerial, academic and administrative functions and goals. As a consequence, much of the data and recommendations from this study may have lesser relevance to the situations existing in other universities.

Third, the findings from this research may not translate as directly as might be assumed to other regional universities that have different academic 'roots' and attendant

management and administrative traditions. Historically, many regional universities began as Colleges of Advanced Education, restructuring into universities under the reform agenda of Commonwealth Education Minister John Dawkins in the late 1980s (Harman, 2005b). The particular regional university used as a case study for this research, however, started as a regional campus of a major metropolitan university, converting to 'stand alone' university status some 50 odd years ago.

Fourth, the researcher for this study works as a School Manager in the university used for the case study, oversighting the day-to-day administrative activities of a School. It is acknowledged that this close association with a particular School and a particular Head of School may introduce a bias that could influence the way that information is collected, analysed, and interpreted for this study. This was one of the major reasons for choosing the modified Delphi design for the research – one of its claimed strengths is that it minimizes "the influence of the personal dispositions of the researcher on the collection and analysis of data" (Smith, 1982: 49).

Fifth, at the time of conducting the study, only one of the Heads of School was female. This severely limited the capacity of the study to investigate any gender-dimensions of issues identified. This may be a significant limitation imposed on the study, given that there is considerable research indicating that gender can have a marked affect on how management and leadership roles are enacted.

Context of the study

The university selected for this research, hereafter referred to as 'the University', was established in 1938 as a regional campus of a major metropolitan university. It attained full university status in 1954 as the first Australian university to be located outside a capital city.

The university specialises in distance education and flexible learning, and is Australia's

longest continuous provider of distance education. Of the 17,000 students currently enrolled at the university, some 15,000 are studying through external mode. In 2006, the Commonwealth Government Learning and Teaching Fund ranked the university seventh in Australia (of 39) for the quality and impact of its teaching and learning. In 2006, the university also was awarded the maximum five-star rating in the *Good Universities Guide* for the overall quality of student experience.

At the time the study was conducted the senior management of the university consisted of a Vice-Chancellor, three Pro Vice-Chancellors (Teaching and Learning, International and Entrepreneurial, and Research) and a Chief Financial Officer.

Although plans for restructuring are now in place, teaching and research at the university currently are delivered through four Faculties: the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the Faculty of the Sciences; the Faculty of Economics, Business and Law; and the Faculty of Education, Health and Professional Studies. Each Faculty is headed by an Executive Dean and supported by a Faculty Office.

Each Faculty consists of a number of Schools, each of which generally focuses on only one or a small number of discipline areas. The number of Schools per Faculty varies from three in the Faculty of Economics, Business and Law to six in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The teaching and learning functions of Schools are supported centrally through a Teaching and Learning Centre, while many of the human resource management functions are also administered through central units. Each School is led by a Head of School, and it is upon this position that this thesis focuses.

Structure of the thesis

This chapter has "set the scene" for the study: it has provided the purpose and rationale for the study and the background as to why the research was undertaken; outlined the

research design employed; defined key terminology used; and discussed the importance of the research and its limitations.

In Chapter Two, the modified Delphi methodology used to collect and analyse information for this study is explained, including the reasons for choosing the approach.

Chapter Three reviews existing university documentation and the available academic literature in order to: identify concepts, perspectives, experiences, issues and findings for inclusion in the questionnaire (Phase Two of the study); provide insights that will assist in understanding and interpreting the findings from the study; and help position the study's findings in a framework based on current management and leadership theory.

This is followed by Chapter Four which presents and discusses the responses and reactions of the Heads of School to questions and issues posed during the structured interviews, and Chapter Five which details the design and distribution of the questionnaires, as well as the findings from the information collected.

Chapter Six analyses the findings from the study, identifies the key issues to emerge, and makes suggestions that have the potential to improve the administrative, academic and personal outcomes of the current position of Head of School. Areas for further research also are identified, and a new paradigm for addressing middle-level decision-making at the university is proposed.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The research methodology considered most appropriate for the collection and analysis of information for the study was a "modified Delphi" approach (Uhl and Hensley, 1974; Smith, 1982; Helmer, 1983; Gordan, 1994; Adler and Ziglio, 1996; Pollard and Pollard, 2004; Williams, et al., 2004). The major reasons for choosing this methodology were that it:

1. combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques for addressing the same issues, thus "avoiding dependence on the validity of a single data collection and analysis approach" (Scriven, 1991: 356);

2. facilitates "the identification and 'deep' exploration of a wide range of views and ideas in relation to the focus issues" (Smith, 1982: 48);

3. involves input and feedback from a comprehensive range of involved stakeholders;

4. minimizes "the influence of the personal dispositions of the researcher on the collection and analysis of data" (Smith, 1982: 49);

5. minimizes obsolescence and subjectivity in the collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of information;

6. has a format that is clearly delineated and understandable to participants;

7. is easily administered;

8. actively promotes the notions of confidentiality and anonymity for participants;

9. has been shown to be a methodology that most participants find interesting and personally useful (Pollard and Pollard, 2004); and

10. has been demonstrated to be capable of achieving a high degree of success (Williams et al., 2004).

The original Delphi method

The Delphi method is a structured process for collecting and synthesising ideas and opinions from a group of relevant 'experts', using a combination of interviews, discussions and questionnaires, interspersed with controlled feedback (Adler and Ziglio, 1996). The Delphi method was originally developed by the RAND Corporation in the

Unites States as a rigorous yet cost-effective way of harnessing and analysing the opinions of 'experts' regarding future events and scenarios, primarily in relation to engineering and technological issues (Smith, 1982).

The original Delphi process consisted of four key steps (Adler and Ziglio, 1996):

1. Selection of a 'panel of experts';

2. Use of an open-ended questionnaire to elicit the views of the experts in relation to the issue (the 'first round questionnaire');

3. Analysis of the first round questionnaire, extracting each unique view or suggestion, and using these as the basis for a 'second round questionnaire' in which the 'experts' are asked to rate their level of support for each questionnaire item ; and

4. Analysis of the second (and subsequent) round questionnaire(s) in order to assess the "consensus view" for each item.

Smith (1982) identifies the five key elements of the original Delphi as:

1. Participation is 'closed', in that a single panel of experts is used throughout the process;

2. All views and ideas are treated 'equally';

3. Anonymity can be maintained for any or all participants throughout the process;

4. Participants are exposed to the full range of views of others (described as 'feedback' by the RAND Corporation); and

5. Outcomes, at least at the level of consensus (majority view), are guaranteed.

Helmer (1977) argues that the most significant criticisms of the original Delphi methodology are:

1. The technique places excessive reliance on the judgment of the 'panel of experts';

2. The use of an open-ended questionnaire rather than face-to-face interviews (in the 'first round questionnaire') does not facilitate a deep or rich exploration of ideas, views and suggestions, and thus may result in simplistic or incomplete analyses of issues and problems; and

3. The views of a significant number of effected stakeholders are neither sought nor

accommodated by the process.

Since the mid-1970s, the Delphi method has been adapted to meet the needs of social scientists seeking to understand contemporary, not just future, issues and relationships. In particular, it has been used extensively in the discipline areas of education, public health, communication systems, industrial relations, government, community building and conflict resolution (Adler and Ziglio, 1996; Pollard and Pollard, 2004; Williams et al., 2004). This change in application and focus necessarily has seen the original Delphi method subjected to considerable process modification.

The modified Delphi approach

The modified Delphi approach used for this study followed the model suggested by Smith (1982), Helmer (1983), Gordan (1994), Adler and Ziglio (1996), and Pollard and Pollard (2004). It consists of the following seven key steps:

1. Define the issue(s) or question(s) to be addressed precisely and succinctly so that participants are clear about the area that is being addressed and the parameters within which they are being requested to contribute.
2. Conduct a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews with an appropriate sample of relevant stakeholders in order to obtain a comprehensive set of views and suggestions in relation to the research.
3. Review relevant documentation (policies, rules, procedures manuals, brochures, official reports) and available literature (journals, books, research studies, web sites) in order to identify what is currently known or postulated or believed.
4. Use each unique idea or suggestion developed through steps 2 and 3 above to construct a questionnaire in which respondents will be requested to indicate their 'level of support' for each questionnaire item using a Likert-type scale.
5. Determine an appropriate sample of relevant stakeholders to complete the questionnaire, including all participants involved in the interviews identified in step 2 above, and distribute the questionnaires.

6. Analyse the responses to the questionnaires, placing an emphasis on the 'consensus' or majority view with respect to each item.

7. Use the combined set of information obtained from interview, document analysis, literature review and questionnaire to prepare the final report and recommendations, including – if appropriate – "setting the identified 'reality' into a theoretical framework for further research" (Smith, 1982: 14).

Steps 1 to 3 of the modified Delphi approach are often referred to as the 'scanning phase' (Smith, 1982; Taylor, 1975; Adler and Ziglio, 1996) during which "potentially relevant components of the issue are identified and clarified" (Smith, 1982: 3). Steps 4 to 7 are often referred to as the 'patterning phase' (Smith, 1982; Taylor, 1975; Adler and Ziglio, 1996) during which "the nature of the components are explored and the relationships among them identified" (Smith, 1982: 3).

The methodology for this study

The modified Delphi methodology employed in this study consisted of the following 8 steps:

Step 1: *Clearly identify the aim of the study, and the attendant research questions to be addressed.*

As identified previously, the aim of this study is to identify and explore the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in a selected regional Australian university, and the factors that promote or inhibit the capacity of those Heads of School to perform their duties in an efficient and effective manner. The five research questions to emerge from that goal were:

1. What are defined and perceived as the key roles and responsibilities of Heads of School at the university?

2. What are the key factors that assist the Heads of School to perform their job

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effectively?

3. What are the key factors that inhibit the Heads of School from performing their job effectively?

4. What factors are likely to attract someone to be a Head of School?

5. How might the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School be improved?

Step 2: *Review available policies, rules, procedures manuals, brochures , and official reports to identify the stated roles and responsibilities of Heads of School at the university.*

All policies, rules, reports and procedures manuals for the University are accessible to internal staff via the intranet. Course and general promotional brochures relevant to the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School were collected from Faculty Offices or the Student Centre and the Marketing and Public Affairs office of the university.

The outcomes of this document review process are discussed in Chapter Three.

Step 3: *Review available literature (journals, books, research studies, web sites) in order to identify what is currently known or can be postulated in relation to the five research questions for the study.*

The focus of the literature review was on the identification of key themes or issues that generally appear to be supported by the literature (Adler and Ziglio, 1996; Pollard and Pollard, 2004). The process and its outcomes are detailed in Chapter Three. The literature review also was used in the discussion and conclusion chapters of this study to identify possible theoretical models that might help explain the findings of the study, and to position the findings in terms of general management and administrative theory.

Step 4: *Conduct semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Heads of School at the selected university.*

The size and scope of this study made it impractical to attempt to conduct face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of all academic and administrative staff impacted by the role of the Head of School at the university, particularly as at least an hour is required for each interview. As a consequence, interviews were limited to existing Heads of School, based on the assumption that this group would be likely to generate the range of key issues relevant to the topic.

Interviews were generally of one hour in duration, and were held at a location determined by each Head of School (usually their office). The interviews were structured around five open-ended questions:

1. What do you perceive to be your key roles and responsibilities?
2. What are the key factors that assist you perform your job effectively?
3. What are the key factors that inhibit you from performing your job effectively?
4. What factors are likely to attract someone to be a Head of School?
5. How might the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School be improved?

Responses were recorded by the researcher in written-form only as several Heads of School had registered concern about having the interviews taped.

The University involved in this study has sixteen Schools, and thus sixteen Heads of School. Ten Heads of School participated in the interviews. Of the six Heads of School who did not participate, four were on extended leave (and the staff acting in their position did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable of the role to be interviewed) and one was a new appointment and felt he was not yet sufficiently experienced in the role to provide valid information, and one declined to be interviewed.

The information from the interviews was then critically reviewed ('scanned') by the researcher in order to identify the set of unique issues and viewpoints held by the ten

Heads of School interviewed. The outcomes of this process are reported as Chapter 4 of this study.

Step 5: *Use the set of unique issues and views identified through steps 3 and 4 above to construct a questionnaire.*

It is generally acknowledged that, wherever possible, the number of response items on a questionnaire should be limited to no more than 50 (Eckermann, et al., 2006; Gibbons, 1993; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Scriven, 1991; Vogt, 1993). The level of aggregation of the 'unique issues and views' identified through steps 3 and 4 was, therefore, designed to ensure that the total number of items in the questionnaire requiring a response did not exceed 50.

Each questionnaire contained a cover sheet which outlined the nature of the research study and provided instructions for respondents on how to complete the questionnaire.

Each questionnaire consisted of three sections:

- Section 1 in which respondents provided some general biographic information: academic or administrative level, age, time at the university, Faculty (not, however, specific School within Faculty), time in their position, and gender;

- Section 2, in which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements on a five-point Likert-type scale (SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; and SD = strongly disagree). The statements were based on the set of issues and views identified through steps 3 and 4; and

- Section 3, in which respondents were asked to respond to the open-ended question: *What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?*

<u>Step 6</u>: *Identify the sample of respondents to whom questionnaires are to be distributed, and make minor modifications to the questionnaire so that it is appropriate for each 'group' of respondents.*

The decision was made to distribute questionnaires to four 'groups' of staff inside the University:

- The ten Heads of School who had participated in the face-to-face interviews, in order to explore whether their 'consensus' view matched the range of individual views they had expressed;

- The four Executive Deans (heads of Faculties), to investigate the perceptions of the immediate supervisors of the Heads of School;

- A randomly chosen sample of 40 academic staff (four from each of the Schools associated with the ten Heads of School who had participated in the study), in order to obtain the views of the academic staff directly influenced by the decisions and actions of Heads of School; and

- A random sample of 20 administrative staff (from Schools, Faculty Offices and Central Administration), in order to obtain the views of the administrative staff directly influenced by the decisions and actions of Heads of School.

Slight modifications were made to the biographic section of the questionnaire to accommodate the particular role differences of each of the four groups used in the study.

Questionnaires, with an explanatory cover sheet inviting people to participate in the study, were posted through the internal mail system of the university to the respondents identified for the sample. Addressed return envelopes were included in the package to allow individuals to return completed questionnaires without the possibility of identification through School-badged stationery.

A copy of each of the four different questionnaires is provided in Appendices 3 to 6.

<u>Step 7</u>: *Analyse the questionnaire responses*

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to collate and analyse the quantitative information collected through Sections 1 and 2 of the questionnaires. Assistance was sought during this phase from an experienced statistician to ensure the integrity of the process and the appropriate interpretation of statistical information.

The *median* was used to provide a measure of the level of agreement or disagreement of respondents with each item on the questionnaire. In each case, an overall median was calculated for the sample, as well as medians for the sample partitioned by group (Head of School, Executive Dean, academic staff, administrative staff), gender, age group, Faculty, time at the university, and time in current position. The median was chosen in preference to the mean or average because the information collected from a Likert-scale is ordinal, and thus a non-parametric measure of central tendency should be used (Eckermann, et al., 2006).

Frequency distributions were produced for each item, in order to provide an indication of the 'degree of spread' of opinion, and in particular, to identify any bi-polar distributions that may represent significant differences of opinion within the sample in relation to particular statements.

Cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistics were produced for each questionnaire item, in order to determine if there were any significant differences in the way people responded to each statement. Variables used for the cross-tabulations were group (Head of School, Executive Dean, academic staff, administrative staff), gender, age group, Faculty, time at the university, and time in current position.

The decision was also made that, providing the return rate of questionnaires was sufficient to meet validity requirements (Overall and Klett, 1972; De Vellis, 1991), a factor analysis would be conducted on the responses to Section 2 of the questionnaire. The purpose of conducting a factor analysis is to assist the researcher to understand "the 'factors' or 'variables' that underlie the way in which respondents have reacted to the

statements contained in the questionnaire" (De Vellis, 1991: 92). In this way, factor analysis helps the researcher to better understand and describe the topic under investigation (Vogt, 1993), and can help to identify important factors that would not otherwise be identified by other methods of scanning information (Smith, 1987).

For Section 3 of the questionnaire, respondents had been asked the open-ended question: *What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?* This section was analysed by listing each unique suggested action, and the number of respondents who had made each suggestion.

The analysis and discussion of information collected through the questionnaires is provided as Chapter Five of this study.

Step 8: *Combine all of the information generated (qualitative and quantitative) to provide an holistic understanding of the issues as the basis for future action and/or research.*

The researcher sought to 'synthesise' themes, issues and 'messages' that appeared to be supported through all four information sources: document review; literature review; interview; and questionnaire. Scriven (1991: 364-365) refers to this as the process of 'triangulation' – "the attempt to get a fix on an issue or phenomenon (and, derivatively, an interpretation) by approaching it via several different routes, each of which is reasonably independent of the others".

The process of synthesising issues, drawing conclusions and identifying messages to guide further action and research is provided as Chapter Six of this study.

Chapter 3: Review of Documentation and Literature

<u>Introduction</u>

As identified in the previous methodology chapter, the purpose of this chapter is to review existing University documentation and the available academic literature on academic Heads of Schools in order to: identify concepts, perspectives, experiences, issues and findings for inclusion in the Phase 2 questionnaire for the study; and to provide insights that will assist in understanding and interpreting the findings from the study.

The review of University documentation is constrained by the paucity of official documentation specifically relating to the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School. Numerous University policies and clauses in the *Academic Agreement* reference the Head of School as the person responsible for implementation, monitoring or review, or for 'recommending approval'. There is, however, only one University policy document that specifically addresses the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School (a *Position Description* of less than two pages in length), and the position of Head of School is not specifically addressed in the *Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2003-2006*.

Similarly, there is a dearth of academic literature specifically relating to the position of the Head of School (or Department) in a university (Kallenberg, 2004; Santiago, 2004; Smith, 2005). This is somewhat surprising, given the significant quantum of both qualitative and quantitative research into the management of higher education over the last forty years (Walvoord et al., 1997; Bolton, 2000; Harman, 2002; Kellenberg, 2004) and the generally-supported view that "it is within the basic academic units of departments/schools ... where change in management practices will have the most fundamental impact on the structure and character of higher education institutions" (Santiago, 2004: 3).

The review of the literature presented in this chapter is structured around the following sequential questions: What does the University under study currently

require and expect of its Heads of Schools? What are the key features of the higher education environment in Australia? What leadership and management approaches are evident in that environment that impact on the role of Heads of Schools? What would appear to be the role of Heads of Schools in the current context for higher education in Australia? What are the factors that appear to assist or impede the role of Heads of Schools?

University Documentation: Requirements and expectations of a Head of School

The *Position Description for Head of School* at the University in this study (Appendix One) states that a Head of School "shall be responsible to the Executive Dean for the academic and administrative leadership of the School and for the management of its physical, financial and human resources". The use of the word "responsible" in this statement seemingly identifies a university expectation that the leadership, administrative and managerial dimensions of the role will all be performed at a very high level of competence – a significant expectation given that the *Position Description* further states that the "Head of School will be expected to maintain an academic and research profile".

The official documentation from Human Resource Services at the University describing the role of Head of School is limited to the *Position Description*, although as stated previously, a range of other policies and regulations refer various actions to Heads of School for implementation. The *Position Description* allows for the addition of extra roles and responsibilities, under Clause 9 which states that the Head of School will "perform such other duties as the Executive Dean may assign to the Head of School from time to time". There is no indication in the policy documentation that such additional duties necessarily are subject to negotiation between the Executive Dean and the Head of School – an issue addressed later in this thesis.

In Chapter Four of this thesis it is reported that Heads of School are concerned about the lack of detail regarding their role – a not surprising complaint given that the *Position Description* is less than two pages in length! Further, the roles of the Head of School in the *Position Description* are not described in terms of expectations and

processes, but rather in terms of accountabilities, and indeed are labelled under that term. That is, the *Position Description* primarily describes what the Heads of School are required to do, but provides little information as to how they are expected to operate, how they will be supported, and how their activities are seen to intersect with the educational mission of the Faculty and University. In this sense, the *Position Description* – the formal description of the role of Head of School at the University – is a management and administrative document, and consequently sets the Head of School primarily in an administrative and managerial, rather than a leadership, context.

Nine areas of accountability are listed in the *Position Description for Heads of School* (see Appendix One). Among the key 'accountabilities' are:

- assist in the development of the Faculty Strategic Plan, and ensure that School-level initiatives and procedures are in accord with that plan;

- assist in the development of Faculty management policies and procedures;

- "manage the School's physical, financial and human resources under delegated authority from the Executive Dean in accordance with legislative requirements and Faculty and University policies";

- "provide and facilitate leadership for and promotion of excellence in teaching and research in areas of the School, including through effective quality assurance mechanisms, budgeting mechanisms, and personal advocacy";

- provide a "safe, healthy, equitable and harmonious working environment" for staff and students;

- represent the School on "relevant Faculty and University bodies"; and

- provide relevant information and advice as required to people and agencies both inside and outside the University.

The strong managerial focus of the role of Head of School is inherent in the individual 'accountabilities'. For example, while prescribing 'leadership' in teaching and research as a role expectation for the Head of School, the *Position Description* identifies that the processes for providing leadership should focus heavily on managerial approaches such as "quality assurance mechanisms" and "budgeting mechanisms".

The fourth listed 'accountability' – "manage the School's physical, financial and human resources under delegated authority from the Dean in accordance with legislative requirements and Faculty and University policies" – provides a good example of the significant and potentially onerous expectations placed on Heads of School at the University. Few Heads of School, whose professional background is almost always primarily as a discipline-based academic, would have the knowledge and experience to be sufficiently conversant with the range of "legislative requirements and Faculty and University policies" required by this accountability. Indeed, the University employs full-time professional administrative staff exclusively for this purpose, yet expects half-time Heads of School to have the same levels of knowledge and understanding!

Two of the 'accountabilities' – numbers 5 and 6 – explicitly refer to the role that the Heads of School have in promoting and implementing "University values". This would appear highly problematic for the Heads of School, given that a detailed search of the University web pages and associated links reveals no clear and precise statement regarding what the University's values actually are.

In summary, then, the University provides little formal information regarding the roles and responsibilities of its Heads of Schools, and little information regarding the processes they could or should employ to fulfil their (albeit loosely) defined roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, it defines quite onerous 'accountabilities' for the Heads of Schools regarding the outcomes to be achieved. The seemingly clear expectation is that the Head of School primarily will be a 'front-line manager', particularly as there is only a scant and what would appear to be superficial focus in official University documentation regarding the leadership and change management roles of Heads of Schools.

Key features of the higher education environment in Australia

The last two decades have seen rapid and pervasive changes in the strategic direction, operation and management of Australia's universities as they necessarily respond to

fundamental changes in their political, social and economic environments (Crossman, 2005; Harman, 2005a; Smith, 2005). There is considerable agreement among the literature that the three most significant environmental changes that have impacted Australian universities since the 1970s have been a government-sponsored move from an elite to a mass higher education system, a marked reduction in government funding to the university sector, and the exposure of Australian universities to market forces, including from private institutions and overseas universities.

Between 1950 and 1973, there had been only a 0.8% growth in the percentage of the Australian population attending university (ABS 2002: 56). In 1974, however, in line with its policy of increasing access for all to higher education, the Whitlam Labor Government abolished tuition fees for university courses and assumed full funding responsibility for higher education (Harman, 2005a). In just one year following this decision, enrolments in Australian universities increased by 91%, or from 1.2% to 2.2% of the total population (ABS, 2002: 56). However, by the mid-1980s, and in the face of a continuing rapid increase in student enrolments in higher education and a decline in Australia's economic and social outlook, the Hawke Labor Government began to change its policy direction to place a greater responsibility on universities to generate a greater proportion of their own income (Harman, 2005a; Marginson, 2005). In 1989, the Commonwealth Education Minister, John Dawkins, introduced the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) which requires students to make a personal financial contribution towards their university education, and conjointly, introduced provisions to allow universities to recruit full-fee paying post-graduate domestic students (Harman, 2005b). This latter initiative saw a further jump in university enrolments of 10% in the following year (ABS 2002: 56).

Since 1990, then, Australian universities have operated in an environment characterised by a steady increase in student numbers and a steady decrease in government funding (ABS, 2002; Crossman, 2005). Government higher education strategy during this time appears to have focused on a policy of extending "the scope of market forces to promote a more efficient and responsive system" (Sotirakou, 2004: 348) in which university learning and teaching is "embedded in a corporate context, driven by market needs" (Crossman, 2005: 23).

One of the most overt consequences of this situation has been on academic workloads. Between 1994 and 2000, for example, student/ teaching staff ratios in Australian universities rose by almost 25%, from 14.7 full time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff in 1994 to 18.3 in 2000 (ABS, 2002: 36). The steady increase in workloads largely can be attributed to "effectively zero growth in FTE academic staff numbers in the face of steadily increasing student numbers" (Smith, 2005: 1). The significant and continuing increase in academic workloads has been a source of increasing industrial concerns to university academic staff unions (NTEU, 2005).

Government real contribution per university student since 1995 has fallen by some 13%, such that Australian universities in 2005 are now relying on private sources for around 60% of their income. Further, real funding to universities in the period 2006 - 2008 is likely to fall by a further $337million (DEST, 2005; NTEU, 2005). In the face of this trend of significantly decreasing government funding to higher education, Australian universities have had no alternative but to markedly increase their income from commercial and entrepreneurial activities (Mollis and Marginson, 2002). Indeed, as Crossman (2002: 24) suggests, "without the strategies of business [for increasing revenue], universities would be experiencing a grim future in a world where western governments generally appear to be turning their faces to the wall". Universities, then, have "tried to compensate for diminished government revenues through liaisons with business and industry, through partnerships focused on innovative product development, and through the marketing of educational and business services" (Sotirakou, 2004: 348).

The trend in recent times has been for higher education to be "a market place with knowledge as a commodity" (Zepke and Leach, 2002: 314). The major source of funding available to, and sought by, Australian universities in this 'market place' has been international students. The number of international students enrolled in Australian universities has doubled in the last decade alone, from 111,300 in 1995 to over 200,000 in 2005 (ABS, 2002: 58). This represents a massive 10% of the total higher education market world-wide (OECD, 2002). The overseas student market now is worth around $5.2 billion to Australian universities (DEST 2004: 31). A major consequence of the dramatic increase in international entrepreneurial activity, however, has been significantly increased competition among Australia's universities

for what appears to be emerging as a saturated international market (Harman, 2001; Marginson, 2005). Harman (2003: 4) argues that competition among Australian universities has also been strongly supported by government because it is seen as a way of "improving performance and productivity, and leading to improved customer service". There is, however, evidence that as competition has heightened among Australian universities for commercial dollars, so too has "the level of discernment amongst employers, international students and their governments" (Crossman, 2005: 24). The 'market' increasingly is looking for more than a qualification: "cutting edge teaching, learning and research will ultimately be the issue on which the existence of our universities will stand" (Crossman, 2005: 24). For a university to thrive and survive in an increasingly competitive 'market place', it will need "to respond quickly and in untraditional ways to these demands" (Crossman, 2005: 25).

Increased competition among higher education providers has highlighted the issues of quality and quality assurance among government, universities and the wider Australian community (Woodhouse, 1999). Harman and Meek (2000: 1) define quality in the context of university education as

> *a judgement about the level of goal achievement and the value and worth of that achievement" and quality assurance as "systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by a higher education institution or system to monitor performance and to ensure achievement of quality outputs or improved quality.*

Meek (2002: 256-259) argues that a strong quality assurance framework embedded in government policy is seen as a way

> *to make higher education more relevant to national economic needs and priorities ... It is a reform agenda much influenced by the economic rationalists where market competition and consumer control replace strong government regulatory frameworks, on the one hand, and traditional institutional values on the other.*

In March 2000, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). AUQA is an independent, not-for-profit national agency designed to

promote, audit, and report publicly on quality assurance in Australian higher education (AUQA website, 2006). The public scrutiny and explicit meeting of standards associated with the introduction of a formal quality system for Australia's higher education system enhances the capacity of Australia's universities to position themselves in the international student market, but also places increased procedural costs, both in terms of money and time, on individual universities.

Approaches to leadership and management in Australian universities

The last two decades have seen major changes in the environment for Australia's universities, with a significant decrease in public funding, significant increases in student numbers and academic staff workloads, increased accountability to governments and the public, and above all, a dramatic increase in the income required from commercial and entrepreneurial activity. It follows that in order to respond to this pervasive suite of changes, university administrators have been required to make significant changes to the way in which they approach leadership and management, particularly as universities are publicly funded institutions that are under considerable pressure to demonstrate a "value for money" outcomes oriented operation, and leadership and management is viewed as a critical factor in organisational performance and effectiveness (Meek and Wood, 1997; de Boer, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2004).

Over the last decade in particular, Australian universities have adopted a persona that is less that of a scholarly community and much more that of a corporation. Indeed, asserts Kuiper (2005: 13), the change has been "a radical one. The institutions called universities are now primarily managed entities. Institutional values are management values. The discourses that prevail at the institutional level are management discourses". Many writers describe this as a move to a 'new managerialism' (Deem, 1998, 2001; Harman, 2002; Harman and Treadgold, 2007; Hartley, 2000; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Meek and Wood, 1997; Santiago et al. 2004; Smith, 2002). 'New Managerialism' is seen to entail interrelated organisational, managerial and cultural changes leading to a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control which is radically different from bureau-professionalism (Deem, 2002). The

dilemma, argues Kuiper (2005: 14), is that there must now be "two cultures existing under the same institutional roof: the management culture and the academic culture" and that "the two cultures frequently talk past each other and both seem barely to see the relevance of the other".

The emergence of dual leadership and management cultures in the university sector is not unique to Australia. Mallon (2004) has used the term "disjointed" to describe university governance in the US as a tense layering of new forms on old. "Institutions have added these new governance mechanisms incrementally, without dismantling pre-existing structures—even if those original forms are ineffective" (Mallon, 2004: 62). The situation also is reflected in the United Kingdom where 'managerialism', public accountability and entrepreneurialism are seen to be in conflict with 'traditional' academic culture, values and imperatives (Knight and Trowler, 2000: 71).

Kuiper (2005: 14) notes that

> *one of the most remarkable aspects of the growth of the two cultures is that those in the management culture are almost all former academics ... the corporatisation of universities has been implemented from within as much as from without. The agents of change ... were nurtured in the university system which was, at the time, antipathetic to managerial culture.*

As a result, university leaders and managers consistently now find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to attempt to balance what they know to be important commercial and business imperatives with what they inherently feel to be extremely important academic values (Gmelch, 2004). The situation is exacerbated by the reality that university leaders "frequently come to their positions without leadership training; without prior executive experience; without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their roles; without recognition of the metamorphic changes that occur as one transforms from an academic to an academic leader; and without an awareness of the cost to their academic and personal lives" (Gmelch, 2004: 78). Nevertheless, as Crossman (2005: 25) notes, "tension in a climate of change is not unexpected and indeed may be a necessary force for clarifying the issues and contributing to discussions about how resources and processes can better serve learning in innovative ways".

Gmelch (2004: 69) argues that "one of the most glaring shortcomings in the (academic) leadership area is the scarcity of sound research" into appropriate leadership and management models for universities in a rapidly changing and commercially-orientated environment, and as a consequence, the tendency is to borrow from other types of enterprises, particularly business enterprises, that may differ quite fundamentally in purpose and nature from universities. Similarly, Ramsden (1998) argues that while universities have sought to respond rapidly to their changing political, social and economic circumstances, they have not in doing so managed to create a model of leadership that recognises the important differences between universities and other organisations. As a consequence, Moses (1995: 13) suggests that universities have

> *adopted a management style borrowed from industry and have largely*
> *replaced the collegial model of decision making with a managerial one. A*
> *loose accountability arrangement has been replaced by clear line-*
> *management responsibilities.*

Generally, universities have responded to the significant changes in their environment by employing "various management tools borrowed from the private sector, e.g. strategic plans, performance indicators, quality assessment systems, benchmarking activities, etc." (Sotirakou, 2004: 349). The problem, argues Drucker (2001: 19), is that there is a plethora of research that supports the position that "grafting innovation onto a traditional enterprise simply does not work". Drucker's proposition is that universities need to transform themselves – corporately and academically – into enterprises that create change rather than simply respond to change in an *ad hoc* manner.

The rapid transition of universities to a more business-like administrative and leadership culture has been strongly criticised inside universities as an attempt "to control academics and remove their academic freedom" (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999: 17) and to unpack collegial processes (Mok, 2003). Meek (2003: 180) suggests that university governance and management are "increasingly characterised by deepening conflict and bitterness between the managers and the managed" while Crossman (2005: 23) proposes that

> *faculty are reputedly experiencing a sense of grief for the loss of an ideal*

and uncertainty about their roles ... They are uncomfortable about
commercialism.

Consequently, Hubbell and Homer (Hubbell and Homer, 1997) believe that Heads of School often turn to a strategy of appeasement to be successful in both dealing with Deans and with the staff in their school. Appeasement is an understandable course of action for a Head of School when it is likely they will rejoin their colleagues at the end of their term. Gmelch notes that: "65 percent of department chairs return to faculty status after serving in their administrative capacity and therefore are wise to protect their scholarly interests". (Gmelch, 2000: 3).

The irony, argues Crossman (2005: 23), is that "reform strategies involving quality assurance, performance evaluation, financial auditing and corporate management, all designed to enhance the quality of education, have in fact been interpreted as having a negative and quite opposite effect". Marginson (1996 : 119), however, cautions against moves to return to traditional forms of collegial governance in universities, arguing that they were "elitist, hierarchical, unaccountable outside the college, exclusive of junior academics and of general staff; and exclusive of women". He further asserts that they were also

> *inefficient: slow to respond, and unable to initiate new things. People rarely*
> *took responsibility for the good of the institution, or each other, preferring to*
> *focus on themselves and their departments to the exclusion of all else. It is*
> *not surprising that collegial systems have been so readily by-passed.*

The management and leadership of Australia's universities, therefore, would appear to be a difficult and potentially unrewarding enterprise. On the one hand, as Coaldrake and Stedman (1998: 145) assert, it is "very much about setting directions and guiding, that is, about being strategic in nature and in intent" because universities no longer have the luxury of holding on to the status quo. However, the capacity to focus primarily on strategy and future direction is countered by the reality that "political, social, and economic circumstances have often provoked changes far more quickly than universities have been able to respond" (Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, and Tucker, 1999) and that, as Ramsden (1998: 370) argues, academic managers and leaders in universities still need to stay close to the mundane realities of teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and the attendant administrative, quality assurance and financial

requirements, if they want "to bring out the best among academics". Bennis and Thomas (2004: 166) suggest that in such a situation, the 'critical skill' for managers and leaders in higher education is what they term 'adaptive capacity' – an "almost magical ability to transcend adversity, with all its attendant stresses, and to emerge stronger than before. It's composed of two primary qualities: the ability to grasp context, and hardiness". The ability to grasp context implies "the ability to weigh a welter of factors... and to put a situation in perspective". Hardiness is "the perseverance and toughness that enable people to emerge from circumstances, no matter how devastating or complex or seemingly insoluble, without losing hope or commitment".

The role of Heads of Schools

As previously identified, there is a paucity of research addressing the roles of Heads of School in universities, particularly Australian universities (Gmelch, 2004; Kallenberg, 2004; Santiago et al. 2004; Smith 2005), even though, as Santiago et al. (2004: 3) note,

> *it is within the basic academic units of departments/schools and faculties where change in management practices will have the most fundamental impact on the structure and character of higher education institutions as a whole.*

In similar vein, Carroll and Wolverton (2004: 3) note that while Schools are the primary focus of intellectual organisation and administration in universities, and the point where most teaching and research activities are organised, little rigorous research has occurred into the position of Head of School and the broad range of accountabilities the position embraces. Much greater consideration, they argue, "should be paid to who these people are, the path that leads them to the position, and the challenges they face in this role".

Walvoord et al. (1997) contend that research generally has tended to investigate the organisational structures, rather than the people who head them, with the research largely focused on the usefulness of organising Higher Education by Departments/ Schools, the differences among Departments/ Schools, the factors that contribute to a

Department's/ School's success, or Departmental/ School 'culture'. Further, Bolton (2000: 1) argues that the research into university Departments/ Schools primarily has involved "analysis from a central institutional perspective".

Most of the existing literature and research directly relating to the roles of the Head of academic Departments or 'Schools' was produced during the 1990s. Indeed, there is only one recent rigorous research study that provides information directly relevant to the roles of Heads of Schools in Australian universities, and that was undertaken by Santiago, Carvalho, Amaral and Meek in 2004, and had as its primary focus the role of Deans, not Heads of Schools.

In 1990, Moses and Roe published their report *Heads and Chairs: Managing Academic Departments.* This was based on research they conducted in the late 1980s, and is generally recognised as the first rigorous study in Australia on the issue of managing university departments. Moses and Roe identified 40 'functions' that fell into the domain of a Head of School, which they analysed into five general categories of activity: administration, staff and student affairs, budget and resources, professional development of staff, and own academic activities (Moses and Roe, 1990: 33). A pertinent issue identified by Moses and Roe (1990: 210) was that Heads of School demonstrated significant reluctance to being functionally identified with the management term 'administrators' – a perspective that recent research suggests is still prominent among contemporary Heads of Schools (Bolton, 2000; Smith, 2002, Santiago, 2004;). It appears from what limited research has been undertaken that Heads of school generally hold the view that they are academics managing the academic side of university operations, rather than managers of academics as has previously been discussed as the emerging paradigm for contemporary university administration. Deem (2001), Smith (2002) and Santiago et al. (2004) comment on the personal tensions that this dissonance creates for Heads of School, coining the term "manager academics" to reflect the increasing pressures for the role to reflect the changes in higher education governance to greater managerial control or "new managerialism" being imposed on universities externally and from within.

In 1995, Gmelch and Miskin undertook research into the roles of academic leaders and managers in universities. Their work built on earlier research and publication by

Tucker (1992) in the United States and Creswell and England (1994) in Great Britain. Gmelch and Miskin (1995) identified four key roles for Heads of Schools, which they termed: faculty developer; manager; leader; and scholar. Their work identified two additional roles for Deans of Faculties: boundary spanner; and program developer. It is important to note that their work did not specifically address the Australian context, and that generally in Australia, and certainly at the University for this study, the role of 'program developer' usually is prescribed for the Head of School, in large part at least.

Gmelch and Miskin (1995) developed the term "swivel" as an overarching descriptor for the position of Head of School. The term is designed to convey the dynamic balance that a Head of School must achieve among the varied and often non-complementary roles they must fulfil: "they must learn to 'swivel' without appearing dizzy, schizophrenic, or 'two-faced' " (Gmelch and Miskin, 1995: 133). Gmelch and Miskin alleged that the range of responsibilities of a Head of School, and the dynamics of the interactions among those roles, has no parallel in business or industry – an important observation in the context of universities increasingly be required to demonstrate more business-like behaviour at all levels.

In 1996, Ramsden (1998) surveyed Heads of Departments/ Schools in tertiary institutions in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australian and New Zealand with a view to identifying the key challenges they believed they would face over the subsequent decade. The research identified 'management and leadership of staff at a time of rapid change' as the major challenge. Ramsden (1998: 306) concluded that Heads of School represent "... the critical coupling between conventional academic culture and the needs of the innovative university". Much of the findings reported by Ramsden, however, are philosophical positions about change itself or the role and priority for higher education as a sector, and thus provide little insight into the actual roles such as performed by the Heads of Schools.

Between 1995 and 1999, Wolverton, Gmelch and Sarros (1999) conducted a three-stage comparative research study into how academic department chairs in colleges and universities in Australia and the United States defined the tasks that exemplify their role. They grouped their tasks into six general categories: administration,

resource management, leadership, personal scholarship, faculty development, and dealing to some extent with generating external resources. A key finding from the study was that academic productivity was significantly higher for Australian chairs. The authors attributed this finding to the fact that "Australian chairs established strategies to keep their scholarship active. For instance, many Australian department chairs employ department managers or assistants who attend to the majority of day-to-day administrative duties." (Wolverton et al., 1999: 348). They claim the Australian chairs "thought of idea solicitation as an administrative task, thereby relegating it to a limited place of addressing the minutiae of daily problems that surface", unlike the chairs in the United States who saw it as a function of leadership.

Analysing some 25 years of research and scholarship in the United Kingdom into the roles of Heads of Academic Departments, Greene, Loughridge and Wilson (1996) found that Heads of Departments traditionally were appointed to the position primarily to provide academic leadership, with their research record being of critical importance. They argued, however, that the traditional role was changing, with the emerging role in the 1990's being "to provide academic leadership to his or her colleagues and that, functionally, the Head was responsible for managing the budget and syllabus, defending and promoting the department, and giving research guidance to younger colleagues".

In their 1999 book *The Department Chair as Academic Leader*, Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, and Tucker argued that the role of Head of Department/ School was rapidly becoming more important and more complex in the context of a rapidly changing higher education environment. Their work added yet another key dimension to the role of Heads of Departments/ Schools: legal issues – the fact that what Heads of Departments say and do can have major legal implications and consequences. Hecht et al. (1999: 7-8) identified four "major characteristics" of Chairs of academic departments: they generally are drawn from faculty ranks; they generally lack preparation for what is a major change in professional roles; they enjoy, at best, limited financial rewards; and they generally serve for a relatively short period of time (rarely more than about six years).

The research by Hecht and her colleagues, found that the emerging role of Head of

Department/ School during the 1990's gave 'new priority' to activities such as conducting performance reviews, overseeing budgets, carrying out strategic planning, and negotiating their School's identity within highly complex institutions that must respond to government policy changes. Heads of Schools, they argue, have become "academic managers" who are expected to perform in an increasingly complex, diverse and changing environment in which they serve more than one constituency and assume multiple roles. They are not only responsible for a "safe, healthy, equitable and harmonious working environment" (Hecht et al., 1999: 8) but they also must implement university policy and strategic goals, anticipate markets, be effective advocates, negotiators, team builders, and financial experts able and willing to handle a broad range of leadership and management functions for which they are seldom prepared – all while continuing to carry out their own teaching, research and service commitments.

The researchers (Hecht et al., 1999) clearly point out the paradoxical nature of the role: "One distinctive characteristic of the chair's role is its paradoxical nature. Department chairs are leaders, yet are seldom given the scepter of undisputed authority. Department chairs are first among equals, but any strong coalition of those equals can severely restrict the chairs' ability to lead."

Following their extensive and recent research into the role of university Deans, Santiago et al. (2004) have concluded that the role of the Head of School (and Dean) is very different and much more diverse than it was even a decade ago. The emerging trends identified by Hecht, Gmelch and others during the latter part of the 1990s have, according to Santiago and his colleagues, become a stark reality in contemporary universities. "Traditional forms of academic management", they argue, increasingly "are seen as obsolete and inefficient, progressively being replaced by practices based on the criteria of economic rationality" (Santiago et al., 2004: 1).

In a study reported on the internet in 2003, Hecht (2003: 2) suggests that "how a department carries out its mission professionally will be affected by its nature as a social body". In this context, she argues that the critical characteristic of an effective Head of School in the modern environment of universities must be high-level people management skills because a central role for the Head of School has become

"bringing the schools members together so that both the individuals and the collective enterprise thrive".

The limited research into the role of Heads of Schools, then, paints a very complex and fluid picture. Heads of Schools are simultaneously required to be effective line managers and innovative leaders, agents of change and maintainers of quality, supporters of colleagues and nationally (if not internationally) recognised academic teachers and researchers in their own right, mentors of colleagues and policy enforcers, and a font of all procedural knowledge with the wisdom of Solomon. Yet further, as (Hecht et al., 1999) note, all of these competing roles with their complex and uncertain interactions must occur within an environment of continuous change in which the academic and organisational visions are, at best, highly ambiguous.

Factors assisting or impeding the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School

A review of the literature reveals little scholarly investigation into the factors that enhance or inhibit the capacity of Heads of Schools in universities to successfully undertake their roles. Nevertheless, a number of factors do emerge from the literature – albeit with limited elaboration – that would appear to impact on the roles and activities of Heads of School, and these are discussed below.

Deem (2001) notes that the effectiveness of Heads of Schools is significantly correlated with the level, nature and extent of their previous experience in business and human resource management, particularly in an educational context. Deem (2001), Smith (2002), Hecht et al. (1999), and Walvoord et al. (1997) all report, however, that over two-thirds of the Chairs or Heads of Schools in their studies had no prior administrative experience before assuming their position. As Gmelch and Schuh (2004: 1) note, the Head of School

> is responsible for leading the fundamental academic unit of the institution, but in most cases, the person has virtually no preparation for the position and probably did not decide on a career in higher education with the idea of becoming a [Head of School].

Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) further highlight the significant role change of Head

of School from academic manager to manager of academics, and the necessity for those undertaking the role now to have demonstrable expertise and experience in areas of 'business management' such as personnel management, strategic and financial planning, conflict resolution, and fundamental accounting. They argue that failure to acknowledge the importance of prior genuine expertise and experience in business administration and human resource management has been "a 'blindspot' in policy terms for many universities and in discussions of policy changes within the sector" (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999: 164).

Conway (1998) argues that a commitment to the role is a critical factor for a person to be an effective Head of School. Meek (2003) observes that few Heads of School would have envisaged that managing personnel and financial resources, rather than managing academic programs, would constitute the greater part of their role. He suggests that the dissonance between expectation and reality is a critical factor in determining the level of commitment, and in turn effectiveness, of Heads of School. As Moses (1990) noted, the position of Head of School is a particularly onerous one if there is not genuine commitment to all dimensions of the role, and in the rapidly changing landscape of university management, Heads of School who do not have genuinely high levels of commitment are unlikely to achieve a high level of success in the role.

Writers such as Smith (1996, 2002), Hecht et al. (1999), Deem (2001, 2003), Conway (2002), and DeWitt and Ward (2003) highlight the importance of quality initiation and on-going professional development as a critical factor in determining the 'success' of a Head of School. Quality induction and professional development programs not only are seen to be a way of addressing knowledge and skill 'gaps' among Heads of Schools, but also a mechanism for addressing the continuous and pervasive changes in administrative policies, procedures and strategies within each university. These writers, however, caution that when professional development programs are made available to Heads of School through universities, the content frequently is not contextualised to the particular challenges and issues of the role. Further, they note that professional development programs frequently are not mandatory, and often are not scheduled consultatively to ensure maximum possible attendance. Similarly, the DEST report *Meeting the Challenge* (2002) comments:

"The growing corporate nature of universities requires a greater focus on strengthening the management skills of senior staff" and suggests that it is strongly in the interests of universities to develop robust and effective professional development programs in this area, including for Heads of School. The issue of inadequate and inappropriate professional support for Heads of School was raised in the AUQA Report for the university in this study (2004: 8) which stated: "The Audit Panel ... notes also that the position of HoS has some very specific responsibilities that could be beneficially addressed through the provision of specific support". The AUQA Report (2004: 8) further comments that "there has been no formal induction process for HoS, who regard this as a weakness given the significant additional responsibilities that each new HoS assumes". Although a number of Australian universities offer orientation workshops for new Heads of School, the University investigated for this study does not, at least as yet. This also was noted in the AUQA Report (2004: 8): "Regular HoS Forums were initiated in 2002 but typically these focus on administrative issues such as handling complaints (rather than conflict) and deadlines rather the role itself". Other options available to Heads of School include the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee training programs for academics, and overseas study tours run by commercial companies for senior academic managers, but these are not promoted and require self-funding. The reality, therefore, is that becoming an effective Head of School – at least at the University involved in this study – is largely a process of self-education.

Holbeche (2004) asserts that the personal attributes of Heads of School – their leadership and management 'styles' and their personal credibility and charisma – represent an essential factor for effectiveness in the role. Leadership, she argues, is nevertheless the most important attribute for a Head of School, because it is the leadership capacity that instils confidence, optimism, trust and direction. Supporting this contention, Gaither (2002) argues that management capacity and credibility at least is a skill which can be developed and taught with a reasonable degree of success through appropriate induction and professional development, but genuine leadership at the level of Head of School largely is an attribute that needs to be present at the time of assuming the role. Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) and Ramsden (1998) present a different view, however, arguing that leadership and management attributes, both critical for a Head of school, can not be separated: quality management now

requires strategic leadership through visionary and innovative processes and procedures, and quality leadership involves careful accommodation of requisite managerial functions, particularly in relation to quality and accountability. In similar vein, Whetten and Cameron (1995: 16) propose that:

> *The primary requirement now for a [Head of Department] is for a person who combines academic credibility with vision, leadership, and strategic planning skills. [Heads of Department] need not be the most able academics in their respective departments, but it is important that they do have academic credibility and they must be able to lead in both a strategic and a managerial sense.*

Whatever view different writers may hold regarding the relationship between leadership and management, and whether both or either can be learned 'on the job', all writers appear in agreement about two things: strong leadership and management as 'personal attributes' are essential factors for an effective Head of School, and that "scholars and administrators alike speak about a great leadership crisis at all levels in higher education" Gmelch (2004: 69).

Several authors (Deem, 2001; Gmelch and Miskin, 1995; Gmelch, 2000; Smith 2002) have cited a 'lack of time' to effectively address all of the dimensions of the role as a major inhibitor for Heads of Schools. Smith (2005) comments that Heads of Schools generally "have insufficient time to think, to reflect, to plan, to do", while Wolverton et al. (1999) and Smith (2002) focus on the lack of available for 'dealing' with staff, completing the enormous volume of work (particularly paperwork), and accommodating family needs, all while undertaking the quantity and quality of research needed for promotion. Further, Gmelch (2000: 1) notes that most "department chairs would spend more time on their own academic endeavors if they could, but find it virtually impossible because of the demands of leadership duties. Nixon (2004) alleges that the stresses imposed on Heads of Schools by a lack of time have been exacerbated by the increased pressures to engage in entrepreneurial activity. Commenting on these issues, Gmelch (2000), Nixon (2004) and Smith (2005) allege that the issue is not only about insufficient time, but also about the capacity of Heads of School to prioritise their professional activities in an efficient and productive manner, and their capacity and willingness to delegate. Moses and Roe (1990: 147) allege that "delegation is a skill which some of those in authority are

totally unable to exhibit" but which, they argue, is central to a Head of School maintaining a manageable workload. Supporting this perspective, Nixon (2004: 1) nevertheless warns that what is delegated is also a critical issue, asserting that as Heads of School "spend more time on entrepreneurial activities, the day-to-day operations of the school may become secondary". Harman (2002), however, while noting the increasing involvement of Heads in consultancies and entrepreneurial activities, reports from two studies that Heads of Schools often regard their work as more interesting than traditional professors because of their involvement these activities, implying that sometimes increased time pressure can be at least partly beneficial to those in the arduous role of a Head of School.

The lack of clearly defined expectations regarding the nature and function of the role of Head of School in the context of contemporary universities is identified by several writers as a major impediment to the efficient and effective performance of incumbents. The Australian Universities Quality Agency audit of the University of South Australia (AUQA, 2003), for example, notes the discrepancy between the expectations of the role of the Head of School by senior managers, by staff and by Heads themselves: senior managers consider the Heads of School as part of the line management structure of the University, staff in schools see the Head as their representative who should act as an advocate for the interests of the School, and the Heads generally see themselves as the nexus where top down directions and local initiatives meet (Moodie 2002). Complicating the matter is the assertion based on research by Benoit and Heiman (2002) that Chairs rarely have performance expectations clarified by their immediate supervisors. In this context, Walvoord et al. (2000) assert that contemporary Heads of School must wield ambiguous powers to complete ill-defined tasks while being torn among multiple allegiances in their ascribed quest to be strategic visionaries and leaders of change. Similarly, Carroll and Wolverton (2003: 6) describe the position of Head of School as being "rife with challenges" arising from the multiple expectations placed on them and their role by different "groupings" within the university. It is not surprising, then, that Meek (2003: 180) suggests that university management is "increasingly characterised by deepening conflict and bitterness between the managers and the managed".

Hecht (2004) identifies the efficiency and general competency of School

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administrative and other support staff as being powerful determinants of success for a Head of School in a university. Administrative support staff, she alleges, significantly influence the effectiveness and efficiency of the Head of School role through their capacity to draw on institutional history to assist decision-making, their knowledge of important deadlines, and their capacity to draw on their experience and expertise to improve time management. Quality administrative support, says Hecht, allows a Head of School to devote more time to the strategic, people management and entrepreneurial aspects of the role. As Conway (1998: 31) suggests: "the idea that administration was too important to be left to the administrators is outmoded, with administrators now recognising themselves as holding significant professional expertise in running and managing departments and faculties".

Tucker (1993: 44-5) argues that the status of the position of Head of School in the university hierarchy, and the attendant 'power' this provides, are important determinants of performance. Seagren et al. (1993) suggest that Heads of School draw on two primary sources of power: the authority outlined in formal job descriptions and the informal influence of personal characteristics, expertise, and ability to capitalize on opportunity. "Chairs must understand the political forces and processes of the institution and must skillfully maneuver groups and coalitions to achieve the autonomy and control necessary to develop a strong department" (Seagren et al., 1993: 2). Supporting this viewpoint, Moses and Roe (1990: 214) found in their research that Heads of School "admitted a preference for being in control rather than being controlled".

Benoit and Heiman (2002) argue that the length of time the incumbent has been in the position of Head is another major determinant of success. They argue strongly against the practice in some universities to have a "rotating Head" position, believing that the complexity of the management environment takes time and experience to understand and master. "To routinely leave the job to inexperienced administrators raises questions about whether or not universities are using their resources in the most efficient manner" (Benoit and Heinman, 2002: 10). Nevertheless, as Deem (2001) and Meek (2003) point out, the role of Head of School traditionally has been associated with 'collegialism' and a sense that the Head of School was still clearly a member of staff, rather than a member of the university's management team. Nevertheless,

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writers such as Coaldrake and Stedman (1999), Deem (2001), Newton (2002) and Santiago (2004) contend that these "traditional academic norms and values" (Meek, 2003: 180) are no longer sustainable for the role of Head of School in a university context increasingly characterised by the 'realities' of 'new managerialism'. As DeWitt and Card (2003: 23) discovered, "Chairs in this study now have aligned themselves with the administration rather than School staff in terms of how they perceive they perform their roles."

While there is abundant professional literature relating to resource management, little has been written regarding the impact of resource management on the role of managers inside universities, and in particular, at the level of Head of School or Department. This would appear to be a major gap in research and scholarly activity, given the priority now being included in job descriptions for university managers for effective resource management. Graham, Heiman, and Williams (2003), however, conducted a study of American universities examining the impact of budget cuts on Departments and how heads responded. They found that resource constraints led to lower per-student expenditure, increased staff-student ratios, a relative decline in conditions of work; and more fixed-term (non-tenured) appointments. Graham et al. (2003) also highlighted the importance of accessible and accurate financial and enrolment data in effectively and efficiently managing a Department. This issue also was highlighted in the AUQA Audit of the university in this study that noted information provided by the university to assist with planning "either is not readily available to Heads of Schools or is inadequately disseminated" (AUQA, 2004: 11).

Summary

The review of the literature has revealed a dearth of conceptually sound scholarly debate and rigorously-conducted academic research into the position of Head of School or Department Chair in a university, particularly in the context of Australian universities. Nevertheless, the research and scholarship that has been undertaken paints a consistent picture of the Head of School role as one of "supporting, managing, developing and inspiring academic colleagues whilst acting as an agent of change in teaching, research and administrative practice" (Ramsden, 1998: 4). The

literature, however, may also be interpreted as suggesting that the role of Head of School in a university is one characterised by a range of ambiguities and a range of tensions.

The literature suggests that the responsibilities and accountabilities of the position of Head of School generally are ill-defined and highly ambiguous, largely because of the absence of clear and sufficiently precise policy statements and procedures within universities. Further, much of the role is open to interpretation and circumstance, leaving the incumbents feeling vulnerable to criticism and lacking sufficient support from both senior management and academic colleagues in the School. The rapid and pervasive nature of change, both in the external and internal environments of universities, further exacerbates the level of uncertainty and ambiguity for Heads of Schools, as does their generally limited previous experience – and thus developed expertise – in both educational and business management and leadership.

The role of Head of School also is characterised by a series of tensions. First, there is a tension between the designated roles as both manager and leader. Much of the management role of the Head of School is about "coping with complexity ... and pursuing quality, compliance and order" (Kotter, 1990: 103), "allocating scarce resources against organizational objectives" (Weathersby, 1999: 5), and "exercising authority and influence to achieve levels of performance" (Pascale, 1996: 60). Alternatively, leadership is about "coping with change" (Kotter, 1990: 103), about "making happen what wouldn't happen anyway" (Pascale, 1996: 61), about "getting people to *want* to do what needs to be done" (Bennis, 1994: 110), and about "developing a vision" (Peters, 2005: 133). Most writers argue that both management and leadership are vital for the role of Head of School in a university (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999; Moses and Roe, 1990; Ramsden, 1998), The processes that underpin management and leadership, however, are markedly different: "Managers push. Leaders pull. Managers command. Leaders communicate" (Bennis, 1994: 102). It is primarily these significant process differences that the literature suggests creates significant tensions for Heads of School.

A second source of tension for Heads of School identified in the literature is the often competing expectations of senior management and School staff. The suggestion is that

senior managers generally consider Heads of School to be part of the line management structure of the university, and thus have a primary expectation that Heads of School will disseminate and support policy, procedures and strategic directions 'passed down from above'. Alternatively, the literature suggests that staff in Schools expect the Head of School to act as an advocate for the interests of staff in the School, both individually and collectively. As a consequence, a difficult tension emerges for the Head of School when the interests, beliefs and agendas of senior management conflict with those of staff.

The tension between required deliverables and available resources constitutes a third area of tension for Heads of School. As identified above, the level of government funding to universities is decreasing, and simultaneously increasing levels of competition mean that access to commercial resources also is becoming more difficult. As a consequence, sustaining desired levels of activity and performance is becoming increasingly more difficult for Heads of School who must juggle decreasing budgets, increasing output demands, and ever increasing pressure on staff workloads.

A fourth area of tension is the one existing between the performance expectations associated with the position and the levels of management/ leadership expertise and previous experience held by most Heads of Schools. As identified in the literature reviewed above, Heads of School are expected to be highly effective academic managers, business managers and educational leaders, even though they generally have little previous experience in those areas, and are provided with little preparation for the roles. This dissonance between performance requirement and performance capacity can create significant stress for incumbents.

Finally, there would appear to exist a significant area of tension between the current and previous role of a Head of School as an 'academic' and the increasing necessity for them to be an 'entrepreneur'. In this context, traditional university values centred around the primacy of learning and the discipline come into conflict with market forces and the increasing pressure for universities to be more business-like in their operation. The resolution of this dilemma is difficult if not impossible, but it is the Head of School who is positioned at the nexus with a primary brief to cope with the resultant tensions.

The next two chapters of this thesis provide further insights into the issues identified from the literature by providing qualitative and quantitative information from Heads of School, as well as a sample of their academic and administrative colleagues.

Chapter 4: Head of School Interviews: The Findings

This chapter is structured around the responses and reactions of the Heads of School interviewed to each of the five open-ended questions noted in Chapter Two (pp. 17-18). To assist with accurate and 'rich' description, quotations from individual Heads of School have been included. It is important to note that where a quotation reflects the general view of those interviewed – that is, it reflects the comments of a majority of the Heads of School – no attempt is made to identify the particular individual who made the statement. Where, however, the quotation is not necessarily reflective of the general view of those interviewed, a statement providing background on the person making the comment has been included, although the level of detail will be tempered to ensure the anonymity of participants for this study is maintained.

One overarching observation that should be conveyed here about all of the comments made by the Heads of Schools interviewed is that generally they did not convey any real sense of enthusiasm for the realities of their current role. Indeed, at the completion of the interviews, the researcher was left with a pervading sense that this group of middle managers generally are overwhelmed by the depth and breadth of the dimensions of their role, and spend much of their time in crisis management rather than looking optimistically to the future.

Key Roles and responsibilities

1.   General management of academic staff

The consistent view expressed by all of the Heads of School interviewed was that the primary function of a Head of School is "management and leadership of human, financial and physical resources within their School". Heads of School consider themselves to be "the critical link between theory and practice; expectation, mandate and implementation; and policy and procedure in the University". They see themselves as bridging the gap

between University management and academic staff, between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives, yet they feel they "are often squeezed and drained by the demands of both". All of the Heads of School commented on the difficulty and frustration and often despair of being "the intermediary expected to work across the interfaces between school staff and senior management (particularly Executive Deans)" when those interfaces frequently are fluid and ill-defined.

The management of academic staff is seen to be a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School, particularly in larger Schools and Schools that are comprised of multiple and sometimes essentially unrelated disciplines. One School at the University, for example, has more than 70 full-time equivalent staff, while another consists of six distinct and diverse discipline areas.

2.   Workload allocation

There was general agreement among those interviewed that one of the most important tasks for a Head of School in managing academic staff is the allocation and monitoring of workloads, especially in the continuing higher education environment of tight budgets and less than desirable staffing levels.   In order to fulfil this function, Heads of School argue that they are required to balance finances and financial priorities, existing and predicted student load, identified areas for curriculum growth or contraction, staff expertise and experience, significantly differing staff "work ethics", research and consultancy commitments of both individual academics and the School in general, and University and community obligations such as committee membership and working party participation.

In managing workloads for academic staff, it also was asserted that Heads of School have to balance the "business imperatives of the School with the industrial relations agendas and compromises of the Academic Staff Agreement (Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2003-2006)". Inevitably, managing staff workloads requires Heads of School to address situations in which staff are significantly less productive than their colleagues

or where significant questions have arisen – usually from students but sometimes from other academics – regarding their "competence or academic effectiveness".

3.   Managing conflict

All Heads of School asserted that their responsibilities with respect to workloads are an on-going source of tension and conflict between themselves and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools. This is seen to impact, to varying degrees, on their capacity to fulfil another major role for the Head of School – managing conflict situations among academic staff. The existing Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2003-2006 at the University requires the Head of School to be the first 'port of call' for staff who are in conflict with each other by providing or facilitating 'informal' attempts at mediation and/or arbitration. If the conflict cannot be resolved readily and one or more academic staff members decides to proceed through formal grievance procedures, then the Head of School is directly involved in the subsequent steps of the process that is managed by the University's human resources area.

4.   Ensuring compliance with University policies and procedures

Heads of School indicated that they are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with University policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2003-2006. Among other things, this includes ensuring that staff complete relevant travel and leave forms, provide assessment results on-time in the required format, and fulfil all obligations to students. Where staff do not comply, Heads of School are required to engage in timely and appropriate counselling, and if necessary, disciplinary action. This function can be a source of considerable conflict and emotional stress for the Head of School. "The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, even though most of the decisions have actually been made further up the hierarchy and the Head of School basically has been 'dumped' the no-win job of implementation" (long-term Head of School).

Some staff are great colleagues who can see the overall picture and

therefore work in well. Others don't. They are egocentric. Those motivated
by self interest are very difficult if not impossible to manage.

Some Heads of School indicated that many of their staff "don't understand the pressures on a Head of School from a Dean because they don't understand the sandwich role. They simply don't give the Head of School a fair go" (relatively new Head of School, social sciences).

5.   Financial management

Heads of School are responsible for the cost-effective management of their Schools. They are held accountable for all expenses relating to the delivery of academic programs, student support, staff support, staff development, staff travel, staff expenditure, and general administrative support. The role, however, is complicated significantly by the fact that while the Head of School is held accountable for financial management at the School level, Faculties – not Schools – are the designated cost centres. In simple terms, then, Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they have limited or no direct control. The situation is complicated by the reality that very few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management. Nevertheless, Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations – both at the School level and for individual staff – within the tight budget allocations for their Schools.

6.   General administration

Heads of School are responsible for the "general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems". The capacity of the School to maximise "its teaching and research effort, and levels of student and teacher support, as well as its interface with the Faculty and the University generally" depends to a large extent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the general administration activities in the School. As a consequence, the Head of School has an important overall responsibility for ensuring the effective conduct of key administrative functions such as

"filing, mail systems, general communication, travel bookings, (and) maintenance of data bases".

7.   <u>Leadership</u>

The leadership role of Heads of School is both confounded and problematic. There is a "clear and overt expectation" by School staff and students, and the University generally, that Heads of School "exert strong and strategic leadership that supports the University in maximising its position as a leader in higher education in a rapidly changing world". Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality. Further, Heads of School formally are ascribed responsibility for working with all School staff to develop annual goal setting statements and associated implementation strategies.

Effective, strategic, outcomes-oriented leadership is "an inherent assumption of most of the prescribed roles and responsibilities" of Head of School, yet leadership is not formally identified in job statements for the position. Some Heads of School see this as "a control strategy by senior management rather than an omission or undervaluing of the job" (long-standing HOS); that is, there is a perception among some Heads of School that they "can be asked to lead when appropriate or convenient to senior management yet excluded when there is a belief they may oppose or try to redirect particular agendas". Whatever the reason, it seems reasonable to assert that Heads of School unanimously agree that there is a clear expectation that they will provide effective and timely leadership of their School but that there is a lack of any real clarity regarding what that leadership should encompass.

8.   <u>Professional development of staff</u>

Heads of School are "held accountable by the University for the appropriate professional development of their staff, both academic and administrative". There are several agencies

in the University that assist in this role by offering seminars and specific training in aspects of teaching, learning, research and administration. This includes study leave:

> *The purpose of the study leave program is to strengthen the University by fostering the intellectual and professional development of its academic staff through providing an opportunity for a period of professional development.*
>
> (University Study Leave Policy).

Heads of School generally consider the programs offered to be "relevant and worthwhile", but express difficulty in encouraging "the staff that need the programs most to attend". "Senior management has the quite idealistic view that all a Head of School has to do is incorporate the necessary professional development into a staff member's goal setting discussions for the year and all will be fixed – it doesn't work that way. Some people will always find a way around that system" (long-term Head of School).

Heads of School also see a significant professional role for them in "informal mentoring of staff regarding their performance and of ways in which they might be able to improve performance". One reported, however, that "while this might be great in theory, the reality is that the staff that are your biggest problem – whose performance attracts the most complaints and generates most concern regarding quality – will either refuse to engage in such discussions, or accuse you of 'bullying and harassing them' if you mention anything negative at all about their performance".

The Head of School also is responsible for encouraging and supporting, financially and administratively, the attendance of staff at relevant national and international conferences.

9.   School research performance

The Head of School is responsible – "if not explicitly, then certainly implicitly" – for the overall research performance of their School, that is, promoting a research environment which is conducive to generating high quality publications and research funding. This

means that the Head of School must encourage experienced researchers "to chase research grants and consultancies", and inexperienced researchers "to work in mentoring arrangements with experienced people, and to go for at least university-level research funding". It also means that some Heads of School must "grapple with the very real issue of the significant number of academic staff who have no research background, who do not see themselves as researchers, and who simply do not want to do research", particularly as this means that "in a number of Schools, the very high expectation for quality research is being carried by a relatively small number of people".

Research performance also encompasses the publishing of refereed journal articles and conference papers, and so Heads of School must find the time to encourage staff to publish in their area of expertise, including joint papers with higher degree students.

10. Quality of teaching and supervision

Heads of School are responsible for both the overall standard of teaching and higher degree research supervision in their School, as well as for the quality of teaching and supervision by individual academic staff members.

Generally, Heads of School expressed frustration at their incapacity "to properly execute this basic responsibility because of the lack of any 'teeth' in the policies", and "the lack of support from the University when we try to do anything about poor performers".

Student feedback on staff teaching and curriculum development in individual units is provided to Heads of School (and the individual staff member) through a survey administered by the University's Teaching and Learning Centre. "The expectation is that Heads of School will discuss the results with individual staff as a quality improvement process". Almost all Heads of School, however, saw the student feedback results

> to generally be dysfunctional to necessary improvements in teaching quality.
> The return rates are so low that they simply are not valid. Further, they often

provide a medium for very good University lecturers to be attacked by
students who didn't appreciate their grades.

11. Student support

At the University involved in this study, most formal student support services are
provided through dedicated Centres or agencies, such as the Student Centre and the
Library. Nevertheless, Schools – and thus Heads of School – are responsible for
providing quality feedback to students regarding any concerns they may have regarding
the teaching, content, teaching materials or assessment for the units they are studying.
Schools – and thus Heads of School – are also responsible for ensuring that full-time
higher degree research students have appropriate working space and equipment, and that
Residential Schools are administrated to provide the greatest benefit for students.

12. Quality of units

Heads of School are formally responsible for the quality of the academic units offered by
their School. This involves oversighting, and ultimately being responsible for, the
design, development, and presentation of the units, as well as the timely review and
redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and
University programs and objectives. The Head of School also is responsible for ensuring
that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic
staff. The number of units that a Head of School is responsible for frequently exceeds
100. Some schools have instituted a system of peer review of units.

13. Implementation of University policies and procedures

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all University policies and
procedures are implemented as specified at the School level. This involves a very
significant knowledge and practical understanding of a "very wide range of University
written policies covering such things as unit and course accreditation, program reviews,

leave arrangements, working arrangements, grievance procedures, enrolment processes, credit arrangements, results processing, marketing and advertising guidelines, staff recruitment, casual staffing arrangements, invoicing – the list just goes on and on". It also requires an understanding of the particular policies and procedures of the various peak University committees, such as Academic Board, Finance Committee, and Integrated Project Management teams.

14.   Committee membership

Heads of School at the University are expected to be members of a wide range of administrative and academic committees, including all general School and Faculty Committees (such as resource, finance, workload, research and research training, teaching and learning, and international), selection committees (both for their School and for other Schools in their Faculty), and the Academic Board of the University. A review of the diaries of randomly selected Heads of School suggests that across a year, Heads of School generally will be required to attend between ten and fifteen committee meetings a month. The scheduled duration of these meetings typically is two hours, meaning that formal meeting attendance associated with committee membership normally involves twenty or more hours a month of activity by a Head of School.

15.   Community relations and profile

The role of Head of School includes responsibility for establishing strong and productive linkages with the general and professional communities with whom the School interacts in any way. There is an expectation that the Head of School "has the time to meet with community powerbrokers, establish direct contact with professional associations, and generally be 'seen' outside the University". The Head of School is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate community members and external professionals are members of a range of School-based committees, particularly in discipline areas, and that appropriate communication is occurring with those people from outside the University.

The Head of School also has direct accountability for the marketing of School programs and activities to the local community, and for "providing appropriate information to the University's marketing area on 'news-worthy' events and achievements".

16.   Entrepreneurship

Increasingly, Heads of School feel they are being put under pressure to raise funds from external sources to support the operating costs of the University and, in particular, their Schools. The pressure to be entrepreneurial reportedly is being conveyed overtly by University senior management, "both through policies and public statements and through increasing budget restrictions". Most Heads of School consider that they have no alternative but to promote a more entrepreneurial mindset among the staff in their Schools – in simple terms to raise more money – if they are "to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds".

There appear to be considerable differences among Heads of School, however, regarding their confidence and perceived capacity to engage meaningfully in significant commercial activity outside of the University. There is also a belief among at least some Heads of School that "much of the commercial and entrepreneurial activity of the University and University staff, while frequently prolific, is often less than commercially viable due to the lack of 'real' business skills and acumen among staff who have spent most of their professional lives in the significantly protected environment of higher education" (Head of School with a significant background in private industry). As well as being entrepreneurial themselves, therefore, Heads of School necessarily are required to take responsibility for developing entrepreneurial skills and mindsets among the staff of their Schools. "This is particularly difficult with staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics (or specifically themselves) being entrepreneurial and believe it is the University's problem – not one they share with the University – to find the money to allow them to continue to do what they want to do".

17. Personal teaching, supervision and research profile

The position of Head of School is only allocated a half time load. As a consequence, Heads of School are required to accumulate the equivalent of a 0.5 full-time load in teaching and supervision, as well as maintain a significant research profile, in addition to all their other duties. Many Heads of School indicated that, as a consequence, a 'typical' working week generally was in excess of 50 (and even 60) hours, with the necessity to address work-related issues and commitments across all seven days. A review of some Head of School diaries and formal workload allocations suggested that these statements are likely to be reality rather than exaggeration. Indeed, several Heads of School carry formal teaching and supervision workloads that are already – without any weighting for the Head of School role – in excess of many of the staff in their Schools "yet many staff give no recognition for this effort".

18. 'First port of call'

The Head of School generally "is the 'first port of call' for staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, concerns, and character assassination of colleagues". The Head of School is seen

> *to be simultaneously priest, miracle worker, counsellor, judge, confidant, and comrade in arms. Of course, say 'no' or disagree and the Head of School is immediately 'the enemy', an uncaring 'bully' and someone not fit to hold the position.*

Heads of School indicated that at times they have difficulty in performing the role of 'first port of call', both personally and professionally, because of "the unreasonable expectation by staff of virtually immediate resolution, and of course, resolution in their favour". The role also creates time dysfunctions for the Head of School because of "the expectation by staff that nothing is of more importance or greater priority than dealing with their issue or problem or request".

Key Factors assisting Heads of School to perform their role

Heads of School were asked to identify the key factors that *currently* assist them to perform their job effectively. While many idiosyncratic factors emerged, eight factors consistently were identified by Heads of School. It is worth noting that most Heads of School stated that this was a difficult question to answer, not because there were not a number of factors currently assisting them greatly in performing their role, but because they "spend so much time immersed in the negatives that [we] never really get much of an opportunity to reflect on the positives".

The nine key factors identified by the Heads of Schools as assisting their role were:

1. Clear policy guidelines and procedures.

   All Heads of School stated that their "greatest source of frustration, and of non-productive time commitment" is policy guidelines and procedures that are ambiguous, lacking in detail, excessively wordy, and/or "filled with bureaucratic jargon". Consequently, policy guidelines and procedures that are clearly written, comprehensive and oriented towards practical application are seen to be a major assistance to Heads of School in performing their role. They indicated however, that there is significant variation in the quality and useability of policy and procedures documentation at the University.

2. Effective and timely support from the Executive Dean.

   All Heads of School indicated that their role would be impossible without the direct and overt support of their Executive Dean for the sometimes very difficult decisions they are required to make. In this respect, those Heads of School who appeared to the researcher to be exhibiting the greatest degree of stress in their role, and who seemed to feel the least positive about the outcomes they are achieving, were also the Heads of School who were most critical about the level of support they perceived they have been receiving from their Executive Deans. Alternatively, the Heads of School who appeared to the researcher to be most confident in their role were those who indicated

that they enjoyed strong, consistent and visible support from their Executive Dean on a wide range of issues.

3. <u>Effective and timely support from central administrative units of the University.</u>
   All of the Heads of School interviewed clearly articulated their heavy reliance on central administrative units (such as Human Resources Management, the Student Centre, and Financial Services) for accurate and timely advice on a range of issues about which they considered they themselves had inadequate knowledge and expertise. There was agreement that without such quality support from central administrative units, the role of Head of School would be extremely difficult to perform. It is not surprising, then, that many of the anecdotes relating to difficulties in performing the role of Head of School involved inadequate or inappropriate support from one or more central administrative units, and that many of the anecdotes about successful outcomes for Heads of Schools in relation to difficult situations involved what was considered 'excellent' service and support from central administrative units.

4. <u>Collegial support from the academic staff of the School</u>
   "Heads of School simply have so much to do and so little time to do it in that they simply cannot operate without the full cooperation of their academic colleagues". It was the view of the Heads of School interviewed that "everyone in the School has to pitch in – there is far too much for any one person to do it all – and most do". In particular, Heads of School indicated that they needed patience and understanding from their academic colleagues – patience in that not everyone's issue can be addressed immediately, and understanding in that "the Head of School largely implements policies and directives from higher levels of management, and should not be held accountable by colleagues for the nature of those policies and decisions".

5. <u>A committed and competent administrative team.</u>
   Most of the Heads of School interviewed indicated that their capacity to fulfil their role was also related to the capacity and commitment of the administrative staff in their Schools.

The amount of administrative material to be dealt with at the School level is mind-boggling! Without a good group of administrative people around you, dealing with the trivia, mopping up the problems, generally knowing what they're doing - we would all be dead in the water at this University!.

6. A 'good' Faculty Resource Manager

   Heads of School – on their own admission – rarely have significant experience or expertise in financial management, yet Schools generally have operating budgets of $0.5million or more. As a consequence, they require timely, accurate and strategic advice in relation to fiscal matters. At the University involved in this study, that role is fulfilled by the Faculty Resource Manager – a person delegated overall responsibility for the financial matters of each Faculty, and of each School within the Faculty.

   The Heads of School all stressed, however, that being a 'good' Faculty Resource Manager requires much more than simply being competent in financial management – it also required the capacity and desire to regularly interact with and support Heads of School in understanding the implications of financial issues, and in making realistic recommendations about how to deal with those issues.

7. A strong and collegial Heads of School network

   Some of the Heads of School interviewed lauded the importance of a collegial network among Heads of School at the University. The major strengths of such a network are seen to be: "sharing of experiences"; the capacity to" learn from the successes and failures of others"; "emotional support"; and "consistency of approach across the University, which acts as a protection for each Head of School when particular staff become aggressive about decisions that have to be made".

8. Relevant management training for Heads of School.

   Most of the Heads of School at the University under study had little or no management experience or training prior to their current appointment. Consequently,

all expressed a seemingly genuine desire to engage in as much relevant training – formal or informal – as possible. The University does provide a monthly 'Heads of School Forum' at which attempts are made to provide them with up-to-date knowledge and skills, but most Heads of School considered that this was not adequate for their purposes because it "largely focuses on what the University wants you to know or do, not what you yourself need to know and do".

Key Factors impeding Heads of School from performing their role

Heads of School were asked to identify the key factors that *currently* impede their capacity to perform their job as effectively as they would wish. While many idiosyncratic factors emerged, twelve factors were identified by all of the Heads of School interviewed. It is worth noting that several Heads of School voluntarily stated that "there are so many factors preventing us from doing our job properly" that they have made the decision not to reapply for appointment as a Head of School when their current term expires.

The twelve key factors identified by the Heads of Schools as impeding their capacity to perform their role were:

1. Lack of available time.

   Heads of School at the University chosen for this study are provided with a 0.5 loading for performing the role. The other 0.5 of their appointment must be devoted to teaching, supervision of higher degree research students, and personal research (including refereed publications). Every one of the Heads of School interviewed indicated that it is simply impossible for a Head of School to address the requirements of the role within a 0.5 loading (that is, approximately 18 hours a week). "Meetings alone take up more than the 0.5. Most of us are already working a full load or more – that is 1.0 not 0.5 – and that's just on the Head of School stuff. We are doing the 'other' 0.5 at night and on weekends. That's simply not reasonable or sustainable".

2. Lack of clarity in policies and procedures

    All of the Heads of School interviewed expressed frustration at the lack of clarity in the policies and procedures they are expected to follow and enforce. Further, they asserted that the policies and procedures were often difficult to access ("sometimes impossible to find on the web, and not available in print form"), and were constantly being changed, often without advice to Heads of School that this had occurred.

    > *If we don't know what the policies are, or can't access them, or can't understand them when we do access them, or if they are changed after we think we've figured them out, how can we be expected to perform our job with any semblance of quality?.*

3. The amount of unnecessary 'administrivia', or systems duplication

    All of the Heads of School interviewed complained about the number of times different parts of the 'university hierarchy' ask for the same information, often within a short timeframe. They see the time and effort expended on duplicating information "because the different parts of this University – including IT systems – don't talk with one another" to be a major impediment to their role. Further, they all indicated that they were consistently being asked to "furnish wads of information without the provision of any real reason as to why, and without any real reason being apparent".

4. A lack of adequate, appropriate and timely support from 'the University'

    Most Heads of School provided anecdotes regarding what they considered to be a "significant lack of appropriate and timely support by the University" when they are required to deal with particularly difficult staff. "Heads of School frequently are treated quite unreasonably by particular staff, causing us considerable stress and distress, yet University management seems unwilling or unable to do anything about it". Not only do some Heads of School consider that they lack the appropriate level of support from 'the University', but they also believe that 'the University' often acts to support the very staff who are opposing attempts by Heads of School to enact University policies and procedures. There appears to be a pervasive belief among Heads of School that "the University has gone overboard about protecting the 'rights'

of individual staff, irrespective of how disruptive and inappropriate their behaviour, and in the process, has lost sight of the fact that Heads of Schools have 'rights' too!". It is appropriate to note here that the University works within a rigid industrial framework.

5. <u>A lack of adequate and appropriate incentives</u>

Heads of School see the 'excessive' time demands of their job as impacting negatively on their academic career paths. The Heads of School interviewed all argued that they simply did not have the time to undertake the research or to produce the publications necessary to gain promotion during or immediately after their period as a Head of School. Further, all the Heads of School expressed concern that their managerial commitments actually undermined their research capacity, because it progressively extracted them from many of their professional networks and professional association activities.

Heads of School are paid a 'loading' for undertaking their role, dependent on the size of their School, but with a median value of approximately $10,000.00. This is seen to be inadequate for the role and level of commitment required. "By the time you pay tax on that amount, and take into account the hundreds of excess hours you are required to work, not to mention all the stress, it probably doesn't even break you even with your former academic pay level".

Most of the Heads of School at the University under study are Associate Professors. A small number are full Professors, and one is a Senior Lecturer. The Heads of School have attempted, through the Enterprise Agreement negotiations, to have the 'position' of Head of School carry a Professorial title (which would be relinquished when the person left the role). They have argued that this would not only provide them with a personal incentive, but would also assist them in their role by giving them the 'status' to deal with the full Professors in their Schools "on equal standing". The attempts have not yet been successful.

6. Slowness of university processes

There was universal disquiet among the Heads of School interviewed regarding the time taken by 'central University support areas' to process requests for payment, advice, or action. Anecdotes were provided about casual and contract staff who had to wait lengthy periods of time after completion of their work for payment, in one case over a year. Similarly, anecdotes were provided regarding considerable delays in obtaining advice from 'central administrative units' on urgent staff, student, and commercial issues. "The inability of University infrastructure to provide quick and accurate advice and action" was universally endorsed by the Heads of School interviewed as being a major impediment to their capacity to fulfil their role as effectively and efficiently as they would desire.

7. Lack of financial control

The Heads of School all provided anecdotes regarding the difficulties they encountered in dealing with the anomaly that while the School was the point at which the majority of finances are expended, the School – at least in the University under study – is not itself a cost centre. In simple terms, the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the School operates within budget, yet has very limited control over that budget. As a consequence, financial planning is seen to be cumbersome and unacceptably uncertain for Heads of School, and is considered an area of great "vulnerability" for them.

8. Inadequate IT support

One of the frustrations for the Heads of School interviewed is what they perceive to be inadequate and dysfunctional IT support and infrastructure. All of the Heads of School expressed their extreme frustration at what they consider to be "ill-designed, inaccurate and inadequate IT systems that are not capable of providing [them] with the information [they] want in the form [they] want it at the time [they] want it". The perceived problems with the IT systems are seen to frustrate decision-making by providing incomplete or inaccurate information, thereby contributing to poor or inappropriate decisions and outcomes.

9. Expectations by academic staff.

As discussed previously, the Heads of School are very sensitive to the reality that they are the "frontline of management – the people who have to pass on the bad news, and enforce compliance with rules and regulations of the University". Clearly, this is a difficult situation for the Heads of School, and they need to rely on their colleagues in their Schools for support "it is unreasonable to shoot the messenger". Reportedly, most staff understand the difficulty of the situation, and work in a very collegial way with their Head of School to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Many academic staff in schools do not give priority to processes that do not directly benefit their research or their teaching creating tensions that Heads of School must deal with. "Those [staff] motivated by self interest are very difficult if not impossible to manage … They simply don't give the Head of School a fair go" (relatively new Head of School, social sciences). All Heads of School volunteered the perspective that "90% of our time is spent on dealing with 10% of the staff who want everything their own way, and want to blame the Head of School if that isn't the case".

10. Excessive number of mandatory meetings.

There was unanimous agreement across the Heads of School interviewed that – particularly given they are only on a 0.5 administrative load – the number of School-, Faculty- or University-level meetings they are required to attend during the year is "onerous" and a major impediment to their capacity to fulfil their role satisfactorily. One of the Heads of School, for example, demonstrated to the researcher that he had been required to attend a minimum of 15 such meetings, varying between one and four hours in duration, every month (except January and December) since his appointment at the beginning of 2003.

11. Lack of input to decision-making

The Heads of School expressed their concern at the low level of input asked of them into University policies and procedures, particularly those that impacted at the School level. Their belief is that if the University expects policies and procedures to be

implemented smoothly and effectively, then the people who will be charged with 'frontline implementation' – the Heads of Schools – should be significantly involved in the design and development of those policies and procedures.

12. Personal lack of specific skills and experience

Most of the Heads of School interviewed openly acknowledged that their own lack of knowledge, skills and experience in 'line management' created significant problems for them in performing their role. However some cited experience as a Course Coordinator or Associate Dean as beneficial in their new role. On the one hand, they saw this as reflecting "the lack of succession planning and professional development support provided by the University". On the other hand, they saw this as reflecting the complexity of the position, requiring both high level managerial and academic expertise and experience, and indicated that "few people would be able to fulfil both aspects at a high level".

Key Factors likely to attract someone to the role of Head of School

Initially, all ten Heads of School interviewed reacted somewhat negatively to this question (possibly posturing), suggesting that they could not see why anybody would be attracted to the position of Head of School under current circumstances: "it's too much work and too much stress for virtually no reward". Indeed, several Heads of School indicated that they would not "under any circumstances" be reapplying for the role when their three year contract period expired.

When pressed, however, three common factors emerged that the Heads of School suggested might attract someone to apply for the position:

1. Increased pay and leave incentives.

All ten Heads of School suggested that people might be attracted to the position if a significantly higher monetary incentive was attached "to offset the widely known

negatives of the position in a modern University". Some of the Heads of School suggested that financial incentives could come in forms other than direct salary; for example, the provision of money to pay for a research assistant to assist the Head of School to maintain a satisfactory research profile. Others suggested that additional study leave entitlements and professional development funding assistance available at the end of the term as Head of school would certainly be an attraction for many people.

2. Professorial status while Head of School.

    In the University involved in this study, almost all Heads of School are Associate Professors. It was suggested during the interviews that virtually all of those Heads of School "undoubtedly aspire to be a Professor, but taking on the role of Head of School – at least under current promotional guidelines – is the 'kiss of death' for such ambitions, at least while one is in the role, and for several years after". There was general support for the notion that Heads of School being afforded Professorial status while they are in the role would, therefore, be a significant incentive for people at Associate Professor level to apply.

3. Greater acknowledgement in the promotion process.

    Currently at the University the maximum 'weighting' towards promotion that a member of staff – including Heads of School – can claim for service to the university and wider community is 35 percent. This means that while Heads of School are formally spending 50 percent of their time on service to the University and wider community (and in reality generally much more than that), they only receive around one-third credit for that effort towards promotion. Heads of School believe that the weighting for service to the University and wider community should at least reflect the formal time allocation for their role; that is, at least 50 percent weighting. It is the belief of the current Heads of School that if the weighting for service was lifted to half, "many more academic staff would be tempted to apply for the position of Head of School".

Suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the role of Head of School

At the conclusion of the interviews, the Heads of School were asked to identify how they thought the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School might be improved in the University. It was stressed that this question specifically referred to *the effectiveness of the role*, rather than to ways of providing personal and professional benefits for the particular individuals occupying the position of Head of School.

Nine suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the role of the Head of School at the University were identified:

1. Define the role and responsibilities of Heads of School more clearly.

   All ten Heads of School interviewed identified a need for the University to "more clearly, precisely and reasonably" define the role and responsibilities of Heads of School. Currently, they believe that there are far too many 'grey areas', resulting in Heads of School frequently "being uncertain as to whether they should be involved in certain situations, and if so, whether they are expected to take the lead, and if so, what is the extent or limitations of their 'powers' ".

2. Make the Head of School a full-time position.

   All ten Heads of School stated, very firmly, that "the range of formal responsibilities and overt expectations" placed on them by University management and staff is "far in excess of what can reasonably be undertaken, with any semblance of quality, within a 0.5 appointment". A majority of the Heads of School interviewed believed that the position of Head of School "occupies in excess of 35 hours a week, every week, and thus should be a full-time position". There was general support for the proposition that "full-time Heads of School would not only decrease the excessive stress on the individuals in the roles, but would also ensure significantly better management across the University because of the increased time to address and resolve complex issues".

3. Increase administrative support

A majority of the Heads of School interviewed indicated that they are "having to undertake, personally, a plethora of purely administrative tasks" and that their existing administrative staff are "stretched to the limit" because "significant activities have been devolved in recent times to the Schools" and because the "commercial push has significantly increased the administrative load on Schools without any recognition of this from the University in the form of increased staffing".

4. Have clearer University policies and procedures.

All ten Heads of School entered a plea for much clearer University policies and procedures. They argued that it frequently is very difficult to obtain a clear understanding from existing policies and procedures as to what should be done in particular situations and how. As a consequence, they indicated that they felt very vulnerable in terms of risk management, and were not confident that their "best attempt at amateur interpretation of the rules" would be sustainable in all situations.

5. Instigate better training for Heads of School, both before and after undertaking the role.

All ten Heads of School interviewed felt that "there is a very high priority for the University to put in place some form of preparation or succession planning for prospective Heads of School". Their view is that a Head of School needs a range of high level knowledge and skills and experience that generally is not part of the roles they occupy prior to becoming a Head of School. Further, they consider that "the consistency and rapidity of change in policies and procedures within the University requires a more targeted and structured approach to professional support for Heads of School than currently is the case at [the University]".

6. Increase responsibility for dealing with matters of discipline to be accepted by the Executive Deans and other senior University administrators.

A majority of the Heads of School interviewed indicated that they generally feel "out there own our own" when there is a necessity to discipline academic staff. Many

Heads of School stated that when a difficult staff situation arises, the frequent response from Executive Deans and other senior University administrators is "that's the Head of School's problem". The Heads of School believe that difficult decisions and disciplinary matters should be much more of a joint management responsibility, and in this regard, that Executive Deans and other senior University management should be taking a much more overt and proactive role.

7. Ensure school-friendly IT systems

As has been discussed previously, the Heads of School interviewed all expressed a high level of frustration at the range of problems associated with the University's information technology infrastructure and systems. They believe that the system is currently driving teaching and learning (the "core business of Schools"), when the situation should be the reverse. All the Heads of School interviewed stated that they could do their job much better, and with much less stress, if "IT systems were more accurate, user-friendly, and worked for the benefit of staff and students".

8. Better communication with Schools

All ten Heads of School interviewed indicated that "a lot of information simply fails to get down to the School level, at least in the detail with which it originated. Yet the information usually refers to activities that are expected to be implemented at the School level". It follows, therefore, that the Heads of School believe that the University should significantly improve the nature and quality of communication to Schools.

9. Greater involvement of HOS in decision-making

As has been discussed previously, Heads of School expressed frustration at the fact that they frequently are expected to implement decisions to which that they had little or no input. It is their belief that the opinions of Heads of School should be sought much more frequently in University decision-making forums "to ensure that policies and procedures are implementable, or can be implemented most efficiently, at the School level where the rubber in most cases hits the ground".

Chapter 5: Phase Two Questionnaires and Findings

Purpose of the chapter

As explained earlier in the methodology chapter (Chapter Two), the purpose of this chapter is to:

- describe how the information identified through the interviews and literature review (discussed in Chapters Three and Four) was used to construct a questionnaire;

- detail the distribution of the questionnaire to a sample of relevant stakeholders (including the Heads of School interviewed);

- report the information collected from the questionnaire; and

- discuss the findings from the analysis of questionnaire information.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to present each unique issue, concept or suggestion for improvement identified through the literature review (Chapter Three) and interview process (Chapter Four) to a sample of relevant stakeholders for the purposes of validation. The assumption is that issues, assertions and 'statements of fact' can be held to be valid in the context of the University if they are considered by the major relevant stakeholder groups to be accurate descriptions of reality. Also suggestions for improvement are worth consideration if they are viewed by the major stakeholder groups to represent realistic and potentially useful options.

Identifying items for the questionnaire

In accordance with the modified Delphi methodology used for this research, the process of developing items for inclusion in the questionnaire followed procedures outlined by Adler and Ziglio (1996), and involved:

1. collating and categorising the information gleaned from the literature review and Heads of School interviews; and

2. developing an item or items to address each of the major categories and subcategories identified.

Four broad dimensions of the *roles and responsibilities* of Heads of School at the University were identified: management of academic staff (workload allocation, managing conflict, ensuring compliance with university policies and procedures, ensuring academic standards); administration (financial management, ensuring compliance with university policies and procedures, student support); leadership (professional development of staff, School research performance, development of courses, entrepreneurship); and individual professional commitments (committee memberships, community interaction, and individual teaching and research commitments).

Four major factors were identified from the interviews and literature review as *assisting* Heads of School to perform their role effectively and efficiently: clear policy guidelines and procedures; effective and timely support from all levels of the University; strong communication networks; and relevant professional training and development.

Five major factors were identified from the interviews and literature review as *impeding* the capacity of Heads of School to perform their role effectively and efficiently: excessive workloads; lack of clarity in policies and procedures; inadequate university processes and infrastructure; unreasonable expectations of the position; and lack of specific skills and experience.

Suggestions for *improving* the capacity of Heads of School to perform their role effectively and efficiently, and to improve the job satisfaction of Heads of School, were categorised as follows: professional and financial incentives (increased pay and leave incentives, professorial status while Head of School, greater acknowledgement in the promotion process); clearer definition of roles and responsibilities; improved University policies, processes and procedures; better training for Heads of School, both before and after undertaking the role; and improved support from senior university management.

Appendix Two tabulates the process of constructing one or more items to address each of the major categories and subcategories identified above. As shown, 38 separate items were needed in order to address the eighteen categories emerging from the literature review and interviews. Each item was constructed in the form of a statement, with respondents asked in the questionnaire to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement on a 5-point Likert scale: SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree (that is, ambivalent); D = disagree; and SD = strongly disagree.

Final form of the questionnaire

Appendix Two provides a list of the 38 questionnaire items requiring a Likert scale response. In addition to those 38 items, it was considered important for the questionnaire to include two other sections: biographic information and an open-ended general comment section.

It was decided that there were six biographic factors that might influence the reaction of respondents to each of the questionnaire items: employment level; age; time at the University; time in current position; Faculty; gender of the Head of School, and gender of the respondent. Section One of the questionnaire sought to collect this information through multiple choice response items. Slight differences in the biographic items were necessary for each of the different stakeholder groups sampled: for example, respondents other than Heads of School were additionally asked for the gender of their Head of School. As a consequence, four versions of the questionnaire, each with a slightly different biographic Section One, were necessary: a Head of School questionnaire; an Executive Deans questionnaire; an academic staff questionnaire; and an administrative staff questionnaire.

In Section Three of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to react to the following open-ended question in the hope that their responses might provide further insights into

the roles and responsibilities of Heads of Schools: *What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?*

Each questionnaire also had a cover page that: explained the purpose of the research and the nature of the participation requested; provided a guarantee of confidentiality for participants; explained that information collected would be transferred to a database, and then secured in a locked file for a period of five years before being destroyed; stressed that participants were under no obligation to complete this questionnaire, and could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation, and provided researcher contact information.

The final forms of each of the four versions of the questionnaire are provided as Appendices Three to Six.

Sample, distribution and return rates

It was considered important to obtain the perspectives of four particular 'groups' of University staff through the questionnaires: Heads of Schools; Executive Deans; academic staff; and administrative staff. These groups covered the normal sphere of activity for Heads of Schools at the University.

The sample selected for Phase Two (the questionnaire phase) of this study comprised:

- All 10 Heads of Schools who where interviewed;
- The four Executive Deans (heads of Faculties);
- A stratified random sample of 40 academic staff (four from each of the ten Schools associated with the ten Heads of School who had participated in the study); and
- A stratified random sample of 20 administrative staff (from Schools, Faculty Offices and Central Administration).

Questionnaires, with an explanatory cover sheet inviting people to participate in the study, were posted through the internal mail system of the university to the respondents identified for the sample. Addressed return envelopes were included in the package to allow individuals to return completed questionnaires without the possibility of identification through School-badged stationery.

Table 5.1 provides the return rates for the questionnaire. Given that the purpose of the questionnaire was exploratory rather than confirmatory – that is, it sought to provide viewpoints from various stakeholder groups rather than representative data – the number and distribution of returned questionnaires was considered satisfactory for the purposes of the study.

Table 5.1: Questionnaire return rates

Group	No. distributed	No. returned	Return %
Heads of School	10	10	100.00
Executive Deans	4	2	50.0
Academic staff	40	15	37.5
Administrative staff	20	8	40.0

Table 5.2 provides biographic information regarding the sample who returned questionnaires for the study. Faculty information has been omitted for the Executive Deans for reasons of confidentiality as it would allow easy identification of individuals.

Table 5.2: Biographic information for sample
Frequency (relative percentage)

Biographic category		Heads of School	Executive Deans	Academic staff	Administrative staff
Age (yrs)	≤ 25	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)
	25-34	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)	2 (25.0)
	35-44	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (20.0)	2 (25.0)
	45-54	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (53.3)	2 (25.0)
	≥ 55	7 (70.0)	2 (100.0)	3 (20.0)	1 (12.5)
Gender	Male	9 (90.0)	1 (50.0)	10 (66.7)	5 (62.5)
	female	1 (10.0)	1 (50.0)	5 (3.3)	3 (37.5)
Time in yrs at this university	≤ 1	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (6.7)	0 (0.0)
	2 - 5	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (20.0)	5 (62.5)
	6 - 10	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (53.3)	1 (12.5)
	≥ 10	7 (70.0)	1 (50.0)	3 (20.0)	2 (25.0)
Faculty	Arts	2 (20.0)	-	3 (20.0)	2 (25.0)
	EBL*	3 (30.0)	-	2 (13.3)	1 (12.5)
	EHPS*	3 (30.0)	-	8 (53.3)	4 (50.0)
	Sciences	2 (20.0)	-	2 (13.3)	1 (12.5)
Academic level	Lecturer	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (40.0)	-
	Snr Lect	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (26.7)	-
	Assoc.Prof	6 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (20.0)	-
	Professor	3 (30.0)	2 (100.0)	2 (13.3)	-
Time as an academic in yrs	≤ 1	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)	-
	2 - 5	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (13.3)	-
	6 - 10	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (20.0)	-
	> 10	10 (100.0)	2 9100.0)	9 (60.0)	-

* EBL: Economics, Business and Law; EHPS: Education, Health and Professional Studies.

Interesting biographic information about the Heads of School in the sample includes:

- 70% are 55 years of age or older, with only one Head of School being under 45 years of age;

- all but one of the Heads of School in the sample are male. This is expected, as there is only one female Head of School in the university;

- all Heads of School are experienced academics, with more than ten years experience in a university;

- 70% of the Heads of School have been at the current university for ten years or more, and all of the Heads of school have been at the university for at least two years.

- median time as a Head of School is four years; and

- the sample contains a reasonably even distribution of Heads of school across Faculties.

Biographic information regarding the academic staff in the sample that may influence the nature of their responses includes:

- 93.3% of academic staff who returned completed questionnaires are over 34 years of age, with 73.3% being 45 or older. This is a somewhat older age distribution of academic staff than for the university as a whole;

- ten of the 15 academics (66.7%) are male. This is markedly higher than the distribution for the university as a whole in which over half the academic staff are female;

- the distribution of academic levels approximates the distribution for the university as a whole; and

- over half the returned questionnaires came from staff in one Faculty. This may reflect a 'collegial' phenomenon as the Faculty is the same as the one in which the researcher is employed.

Biographic information regarding the administrative staff in the sample that may influence the nature of their responses includes:

- the age distribution approximates the distribution for administrative staff across the university;

- almost two-thirds of the sample has been at the university for between two and five years;

- the sample includes administrative staff from School and Faculty Offices, as well as from central Administration; and

- almost two-thirds of those who returned questionnaires were males, whereas the greater majority of administrative staff in the university are female.

The findings: item analysis

Appendix Seven presents the frequency distributions for each of the 38 items in the questionnaire, partitioned on the basis of employment groupings (Heads of School, Executive Deans, academic staff, and administrative staff). The median response for each item – again partitioned on the basis of employment group - also is provided in Appendix Seven. As discussed in Chapter 2, the median is a measure of central tendency that conveys the notion of 'average response' to each item. In order to calculate the median, questionnaire responses were weighted as follows: SA (strongly agree) = 5, A (agree) = 4, N (neither agree nor disagree) = 3, D (disagree) = 2, and SD (strongly disagree) = 1.

As shown in Appendix Seven, the total sample median for all except three of the 38 items was 4.0 or greater, and no item had a median less than 3.0. This provides a strong indication that the sample generally endorsed the perceptions and suggestions relating to the role of Head of School gleaned from the literature and interviews.

The three items that had a sample median of 3.0, indicating a relatively lower overall level of support, were:

Item 27: *Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures*

Heads of School did not support this item strongly (only 11% in agreement) while it was quite strongly supported by all other groups (with 50.0% of academic staff either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement). As shown in Appendix 7, this difference of opinion is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. To some extent, the response by Heads of School might be reflective of the 'appeasement' approach often attributed to their management style by the literature.

Item 29: *Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community*

There was little support from any of the four groups involved in the questionnaire for this suggestion, indeed both Executive Deans and over 57% of academic staff disagreed with the statement. Statistically, the only reason that the overall median for the item was not less than 3.0 was that 87.5% of the administrative staff provided an 'N' response, perhaps reflecting their lack of involvement in the 'professional' dimension of the Head of School role.

Item 38: *There are significant advantages in having a Head of School appointed from 'outside' the university*

Generally, respondents were quite ambivalent about this suggestion, neither expressing agreement nor disagreement with it. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the two Executive Deans in the sample strongly agreed with the proposition while the other Executive Dean disagreed. It is also interesting that almost a quarter of Heads of School expressed support for the suggestion, while almost a quarter of academic staff expressed disagreement.

Three items had a sample median greater than 4.0, indicating a relatively higher overall level of support:

Item 4: *A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School*

This item had an overall median of 5.0, indicating strong support from the sample as a whole for the proposition. Indeed, 63.6% of the sample 'strongly agreed' with the statement, and no respondent indicated that they disagreed.

Item 5: *The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School*

This item had an overall median of 4.5. While Executive Deans and the academic staff had median responses of 4.0 for this item, administrative staff

had a median of 5.0, with 75% of them indicating that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement. This difference was statistically significant at the 0.001 level, and may reflect a closer knowledge and appreciation by the administrative staff 'in the office' of the range and level of difficulties encountered by Heads of School in managing academic staff.

Item 23: *Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them*

This item also had an overall median of 5.0, indicating strong support by the sample as a whole for the proposition. What is interesting, however, is that neither of the two Executive Deans agreed with the statement, while academic staff and the Heads of School themselves strongly agreed (both registering medians of 5.0). This may indicate that the Executive Deans are not fully aware of the 'coal-face' workload of the Head of school position, particularly as their own position is somewhat more strategic in nature.

Cross-tabulations conducted on each of the 38 items revealed a further nine items of interest, in which the frequency distributions of one or more of the groups was statistically different at the 0.01 level:

Item 2: *The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university*

The median response from Heads of School to this item was 5.0, Executive Deans 4.5 and both staff groups 4.0. The Chi-Square value (26.7113) is statistically significant at the 0.009 level, suggesting that Heads of School attribute relatively higher importance to them "managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives" than do other staff in the university.

Item 6: *One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff*

The median for both Heads of School and administrative staff for this item was 5.0, while the median for Executive Deans was 4.0 and for academic staff 3.5.

The Chi Square value (32.4636) was statistically significant at the 0.0009 level. As it generally is the Head of School and the administrative staff who do the bulk of the work in allocating and monitoring workloads (in concert with Course Co-ordinators), these distributions would seem to suggest that Executive Deans and academic staff are not fully aware of how much frustration and effort is entailed in these tasks.

Item 8: *The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management*

This item had a Chi Square value of 29.0019, which was statistically significant at the 0.003 level. The major contributor to this statistic was the two Executive Deans, both of whom disagreed with the statement, while a majority of all other respondents were in agreement. This would appear to support the assertion, raised in Chapter 4, that senior managers of the university are not sufficiently aware of the impact of their decisions on the day-to-day management of staff, and of the extent to which the Heads of School act to deflect criticisms and concerns from reaching the higher levels of university management.

Item 11: *Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control*

The median for Heads of School on this item was 5.0, while it was 4.0 for academic staff, 3.0 for administrative staff and 2.5 for Executive Deans. The Chi square value of 32.9971 is statistically significant at the 0.0009 level. It appears, therefore, that Heads of school are extremely sensitive regarding the extent to which they might be held accountable for the expenditure of monies. This might be explained, in part at least, by their belief (expressed in Item 12 and in the interviews reported in Chapter 4) that they have not had sufficient financial training or support for this dimension of their role.

Item 13: *Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations*

The factor behind the Chi Square value of 26.7002 (statistical significance 0.009) for this item would appear to be the median of 2.5 by the Executive Deans, with all other groups having a median of 4.0. As a consequence, it would seem reasonable to suggest that Executive Deans expect substantially less from Heads of school in terms of financial management than is the case for the other staff of the university, including the Heads of School themselves.

Item 24: *Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds*

42.8% of academic staff disagreed with this statement, while all other groups registered a median of 4.0. Indeed, the only respondents to disagree with the statement were academic staff. The difference in the distributions was statistically significant at the 0.005 level, and would appear to confirm the difficulties confronting the Head of School in terms of change management for academic members of staff, that were discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Item 25: *Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs*

Again, the differences in distributions for this item (significant at the 0.008 level) are attributable to the disagreement of academic staff (28.6%) with the statement, while no other respondent disagreed. It would seem reasonable to assert that this difference is linked to the resistance by many academic staff to the intrusion of 'business' activities into the traditional domain of the university academic – a view that does not appear to be supported as strongly by the Heads of School, Executive Deans or administrative staff.

Item 26: *Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance*

This item has a Chi Square value of 27.1191 that is statistically significant at the 0.007 level. 28.6% of academic staff disagreed with the proposition, which is again explainable, in part at least, by concerns expressed by academic staff regarding the perceived intrusion of 'business' agendas into 'academic freedom' – in this case, quality assurance mechanisms. Of interest, however, is that one-third of Heads of Schools also disagreed with the statement, perhaps reflecting the 'academic' as opposed to the 'management' dimension of their total role in the university.

Item 35: *A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads of School in order to attract and keep the best possible people for the role*

The frequency distributions for the four groups on this item are very interesting. Two-thirds of Heads of School 'strongly agreed' and no Head of School disagreed – this is what one would expect, given that the statement attributes direct benefits to the Heads of School. The overwhelming majority of academic and administrative staff also agreed with the proposition, with no member of either of these groups expressing disagreement. Of the two Executive Deans, however, one disagreed and the other was ambivalent. This difference was statistically significant at the 0.003 level (Chi Square 29.8881). The implication would appear to be that the Executive Deans consider that Heads of School already have sufficient incentives to take on the role, a position rejected by the other staff surveyed. Nevertheless, if this belief is representative of the senior management of the university, then it may create a significant barrier to the recruitment of the most capable candidates for the position of Head of School.

Factor analysis

The purpose of conducting a factor analysis is to assist the researcher to understand "the 'factors' or 'variables' that underlie the way in which respondents have reacted to the statements contained in the questionnaire" (De Vellis, 1991: 92). In this way, factor analysis helps the researcher to better understand and describe the topic under investigation (Vogt, 1993), and can help to identify important factors that would not otherwise be identified by other methods of scanning information (Smith, 1987).

It should be noted that in the case of the present study, because the number of respondents (35) relative to the number of items (38) is not large, extreme caution should be exercised in using the outputs of the factor analysis, which should primarily be used for "exploratory" rather than "confirmatory" purposes (Cattell, 1986). In other words, this factor analysis was undertaken for the purpose of assisting thinking, not for directly contributing to the explanation of the findings.

The combined data set was subjected to a principal components analysis, with the components then rotated to their simplest structure using a varimax rotation technique (Cattell, 1986; De Vellis, 1991). Using an eigenvalue cut-off of 1.0, eight components (or 'factors') were identified, accounting for 68.6% of the variance. The varimax loadings are presented as Appendix 8. The eight factors were interpreted as follows:

Factor 1: "Accountability and compliance"(Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 26, 27, 35, 36, 37). This factor relates to the necessity for the Head of School to comply with financial, administrative and academic rules and regulations, and also to ensure the compliance of staff within the School.

Factor 2: "Management of academic staff" (Items 5, 8, 9, 20,21,23,25,34). This factor relates to the human resource management dimension of the role of Head of School, including conflict resolution and professional development.

Factor 3: "Staff communication" (Items 2, 3, 19, 24, 33). This factor focuses on the nature and level of communication from the Head of School to staff, and on the extent to which feedback is sought and received from staff by the Head of School.

Factor 4: "Business background" (Items 12, 38). This factor explores the extent to which Heads of School have a successful background in business management, as opposed to their specific academic discipline.

Factor 5: "Prioritizing" (Items 6, 13, 28, 29, 30). This factor relates to the need for Heads of School to prioritise finances, administrative tasks and requirements, and academic activities within significant budget and time constraints.

Factor 6: "Clarity of directions"(Items 4, 14, 16). This factor focuses on the need for the Head of School to articulate clearly and unambiguously directions, procedures and instructions to both administrative and academic staff.

Factor 7: "Strategic visioning"(Item 15). This single item factor focuses on the role that the Head of School takes in developing and implementing educational visions for the academic and entrepreneurial programs of the School.

Factor 8: "Staff empathy" (Items 1, 31, 32). This factor relates to the extent to which the Head of School and staff, both academic and administrative, work collaboratively and collegially to support each other as genuine School 'team'.

These eight factors would appear compatible with the information gained from the interviews and literature review regarding the role of the Head of school.

The findings: written comments

Respondents were given the opportunity in the questionnaire to provide open-ended comments on the major action(s) that they felt could be taken to improve job

effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School. Of the 35 respondents to the
questionnaire, 26 (74.3%) made one or more written comments. Table 5.3 lists the major
issues addressed, together with the number of respondents who referenced each of the
issues.

Table 5.3: Suggestions for improvement

Suggestion	Frequency
Increased targeted training for HOS	11
Make HOS a full or three-quarter time position	9
Reduce administrative paperwork	8
Employ additional administrative staff at School level	8
Improve efficiency of central administration	6
Greater HR support for dealing with difficult staff	6
Abolish Faculties and devolve functions to schools	5
Reduce the size of large Schools	5
Clarify the strategic direction of the University	4
Greater overt support from executive Deans for HOS	4
Clearer/ more transparent provision of financial data to Schools	4
Greater funding to Schools	3
Increased academic level while in HOS role	3
Increased allowance for HOS	2
Schools to administer their own courses	2
Appoint deputy HOS	2
Upgrade levels of administrative staff in Schools	2
Increase leave provisions for HOS	1
Implement succession planning for prospective HOS	1
Academic Union to provide stronger support to HOS with difficult staff	1
Establish School management/ advisory boards	1
Require previous management experience for appointment as HOS	1
Reduce the number of committees	1
Develop a calendar of events for the HOS for planning	1
Include HOS in all senior management forums of the University	1

Summary

In summary, then, the Phase two questionnaire provides validation for the roles and responsibilities of the University's Heads of Schools, and the factors that promote or inhibit the effectiveness of the position, that were postulated from the interviews and literature review. The role is seen to focus on: management of academic staff (workload allocation, managing conflict, ensuring compliance with university policies and procedures, ensuring academic standards); general School administration (financial management, ensuring compliance with university policies and procedures, student support); and strategic leadership at the School level (professional development of staff, development of courses, School research performance, entrepreneurship). A major issue overlying this role is the requirement for Heads of School to maintain significant levels and standards of teaching, higher research degree supervision and research. A major factor underpinning the role would appear to be the extent to which the Head of School receives strong and productive collegial support from other members of the School, the Dean and from the University's senior management.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

Purpose of the chapter

As explained earlier in the methodology chapter (Chapter Two), the purpose of this chapter is to: synthesise, analyse and discuss the range of findings collected from the study, and draw conclusions relevant to the study's objectives as outlined in Chapter One:

1. Identify and describe the major current roles and responsibilities of the university's Heads of School;

2. Identify the key factors that are seen to promote or assist the capacity of the Heads of School to perform their function effectively and efficiently;

3. Identify the key factors that are seen to inhibit or prevent the Heads of School from performing their function effectively and efficiently;

4. Identify strategies and approaches that might assist the Heads of School to perform their function more effectively and efficiently; and

5. Provide insights that might assist other universities to understand better the issues, challenges and opportunities associated with the position of Head of School (or Department).

Each of these will be addressed in turn.

Roles and responsibilities

The major identifiable roles and responsibilities that the research has revealed as exercised by Heads of School at the University in this study are presented in Figure 6.1 (below).

Figure 6.1: Roles and Responsibilities of Heads of School
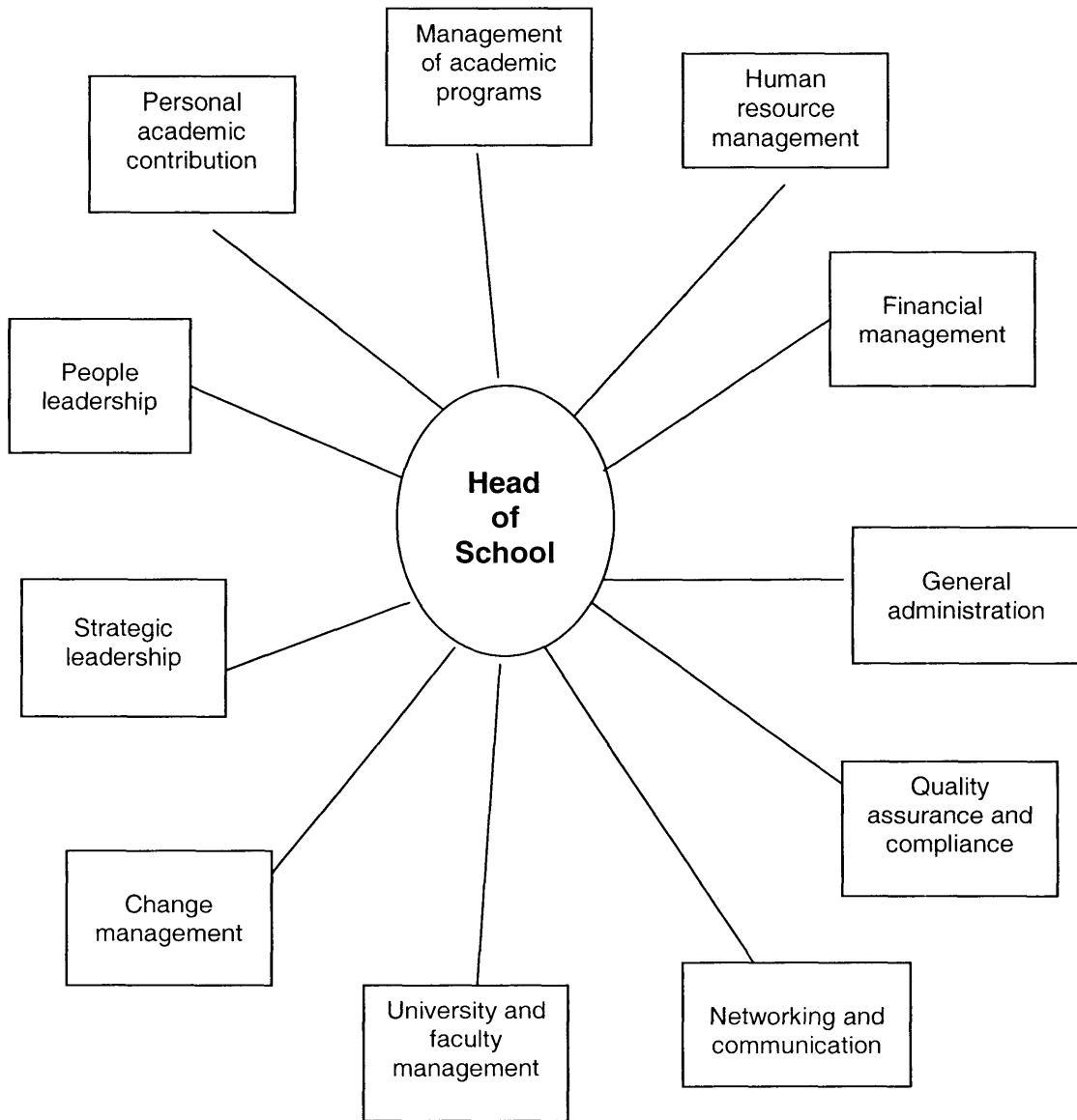
- *Management of academic programs,* including: the design, development, delivery and formative review of awards, courses and units of study; the production and use of relevant quality teaching and learning materials and technologies; assessment; compliance with University policies; overall School-level support for higher degree

research students; stakeholder networking and evaluations; and staff workload allocations;

- *Financial management* – ensuring School expenditure is properly monitored, approved, recorded, and is within allocated budget parameters;

- *General administration* – including leave and travel approvals, enquiry management; and completion of university forms and reports;

- *Quality assurance and compliance* – ensuring School, course and staff member compliance with formal university policies and procedures;

- *Networking and communication* – ensuring two-way information flow within the School, and between the School and other Schools, agencies and Directorates of the university, and between the School and relevant outside agencies;

- *Change management* – handling the decisions and their impacts and consequences associated with changes in policy, processes and procedures that effect the School and its staff, both academic and administrative;

- *Strategic leadership* – guiding and facilitating the development of a shared vision and strategic direction for School based activities and action;

- *People leadership* – motivating and mobilising staff towards strategic objectives and achievements;

- *Human Resource management* – supporting the professional needs and development of academic and administrative staff, and resolving tensions and conflicts that may arise among individuals or groupings of staff; and

- *Personal academic contribution* – the need to maintain an academic profile, to teach, to supervise research students, to conduct research, and to actively participate in the activities and contributions of relevant professional associations.

At least four important issues arise in relation to this suite of roles and responsibilities. First, the level and range of knowledge and skills necessary to be held by the Head of School in order to effectively address these roles and responsibilities is extensive, and arguably well beyond what can reasonably be expected of any one individual, particularly an academic with little or no previous experience outside of academia. These conclusions are compatible with findings reported in Chapter Three by Coaldrake and Stedman

(1999), Deem (2002), Gmelch and Schuh (2004), and Smith (2002). They are also compatible with the fact that, as reported in Chapter Four, every one of the Heads of Schools interviewed for this study indicated that it is simply impossible for a Head of School to address the requirements of the role within the available time. Further, all of the Heads of School interviewed openly acknowledged that their own lack of knowledge, skills and experience in 'line management' created significant problems for them in performing their role. Responses to Item 23 of the questionnaire provides further strong supporting evidence for these conclusions, providing an overall median response of 5.0 for the item: *Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them.* It is interesting that while academic and administrative colleagues of the Heads of Schools strongly supported the statement, the Executive Deans held a significantly different view (median 2.5), with one of the two Executive Deans actually disagreeing with the statement. If one accepts the proposition that the Heads of Schools and their academic and administrative colleagues have correctly assessed the workload of a Head of School as excessive, then it is reasonable to argue that the Executive Deans – the immediate supervisors of the Heads of School – lack sufficient understanding of the demands being made on the position. It is also reasonable to argue that without such an understanding, the Executive Deans are unlikely to actively seek to diminish the workloads for Heads of Schools or provide the necessary and appropriate administrative support.

Second, the findings and literature suggest there is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of a Head of School. There appears to be confusion about their role, from themselves and by other staff at the university who interact with them. The responses to Questionnaire items: 1, 7, 8, 15, 16, and 18 indicate a variation in the level of agreement about the functions Heads of School are expected to carry out, according to their position statement. This suggests that Heads of School and those who interact with them may be unclear about their role and possibly construct a definition of their role as enacted on the job.

Lack of clarity and direction is also identified in the University AUQA Audit (2004: 5). The first recommendation for the University is that it: ". . . clearly defines the loci for setting various policies, the degree of flexibility in policy interpretation and implementation, and corresponding accountabilities."

Furthermore the University does not require strategic plans at the School level. The inference is that it difficult for Heads of School to align or enhance the contribution of a School to the Faculty and University strategic plans. In the words of the *Statement on Governance by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges* in the US, there is a "need for the board, the chief executive, and appropriate stakeholders to clarify the authority delegated to the faculty and other participants in the governance process." (cited in Coaldrake, Stedman and Little 2003: 3). These findings indicate that despite the attention paid to governance and management at University Council and senior management level the 'spotlight' has not yet reached the Head of School level.

The lack of clarity surrounding the role of Heads of School is set in the context of the faculty 'silo' structure within the university. The implications of the 'silo' approach are identified in the AUQA Audit (2004: 8) of this university:

> *Faculties, in some respects, continue to act as relatively autonomous bodies. Evidence for this revolves around the common development of guidelines by the University that are applied in Faculty-specific ways. It is not always clear how the University can be sure that these variances are equally effective in implementing the guidelines.*

As faculties are reasonably autonomous it is a challenge for Heads of School to align the goals of the university with the work of individual staff in Schools. Theoretically, university governance is supposed to be uniform, with each faculty governed with the same formal structures. Despite this alleged homogeneity, there is a diversity of local arrangements. Each faculty has differing management structures and committees, awards and policies evident in the 2005 University Handbook and faculty websites.

Mignot-Gérard (2002: 15), suggests the lack of homogeneity is unsurprising: "universities are not homogeneous entities, but fragmented social systems in which small groups of actors with conflicting goals and values coexist". She suggests they protect the interests of their constituent groups above the university as a whole.

Findings of this study indicate that the policies, guidelines, procedures and expectations required to underpin those roles and responsibilities frequently are ill-defined, inadequate, inconsistent and ambiguous. As discussed in Chapter Three, the lack of clearly defined policies, processes and expectations to inform the defined roles and responsibilities of a Head of School is identified by several writers as one of the major impediments to the efficient and effective performance of incumbents (Benoit and Heiman, 2002; Carroll and Wolverton, 2003; Walvoord et al., 2000). Similarly, as reported in Chapter Four, all Heads of School interviewed for this study expressed concern about policies, guidelines and procedures that are ambiguous, lacking in detail, excessively wordy, and permeated by excessive jargon. The implications of this issue were well-stated by one of the Heads of School interviewed:

> If we don't know what the policies are, or can't access them, or can't understand them when we do access them, or if they are changed after we think we've figured them out, how can we be expected to perform our job with any semblance of quality?

Third, the suite of roles and responsibilities for a Head of School primarily reflects those of a corporation rather than a scholarly institution. Indeed, if one replaces 'academic discipline' with the broader business notion of 'product', then the roles and responsibilities identified through this study for Heads of School very closely align with the roles and responsibilities described by contemporary authors for middle level business managers, particularly those in medium sized enterprises that approximate in size with the university under study (Fernando, 2003; O'Connor, 2005; Schein, 2004; Sutcliffe, 2006). As discussed in Chapter Three, this is a radical change in which universities have moved rapidly to become "managed entities ...[in which] ... institutional values are management values ...[and]... the discourses that prevail at the

institutional level are management discourses" (Kuiper, 2005: 13). This perspective is supported by the strong support from all groups – Heads of School, Executive Deans, academic staff and administrative staff – for Item 3 of the questionnaire: *The key role of a Head of school is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School* (see Appendix Seven). Writers such as Deem (2000), Harman (2002) and Santiago et al. (2004) refer to this situation as the emergence of 'new managerialism' which is seen to entail interrelated organisational, managerial and cultural changes leading to a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control.

Fourth, it would seem reasonable to argue that the significant and complex range of 'management' roles and responsibilities identified through this study largely negates the capacity of Heads of School to participate effectively in the ascribed 'strategic leadership' dimensions of their position. Effective strategic leadership requires time to "understand and conquer the context" (Carter-Scott, 1994: 10), to develop longer term alternatives that reach beyond existing boundaries (Gardner, 1990), to weigh up consequences and opportunities (Covey, 2005), to establish strong and appropriate relationships and networks (Peters and Waterman, 2004), and to advocate for strategic outcomes (Luecke, 2006). The recurrent component of all of those leadership requisites is time – time to think, time to reflect, time to plan, time to do. Yet all of the Heads of School interviewed for this study asserted that lack of time is probably the greatest difficulty they face, a perspective endorsed by their colleagues in the questionnaire, and particularly through Item 23: *Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them.* Without time to effectively perform strategic leadership functions, it would appear confounding and problematic to include this dimension as an expectation of the middle level managers of the University.

Factors promoting or inhibiting the effectiveness of a Head of School

This study has identified at least eleven major factors that act to promote or inhibit the effectiveness of a Head of School at the case study university. In general, these factors act to either promote or inhibit the effectiveness of the role based on the extent to which they are present, or conversely, absent. The order in which the factors are presented should not be seen to reflect priority of importance – indeed, the sense gained by the researcher through this study was that all the factors are of high importance, not only individually but also in the way they interact to affect outcomes.

The major factors that were identified through the study are: the level, nature and extent of previous experience in business and human resource management; the level of commitment to the role by the incumbent; the nature and quality of initiation to the role, and of on-going professional development; the personal credibility, charisma and 'style' of the incumbent; time available for the role; the extent to which the nature and expectations of the role have been clearly and comprehensively defined; the length of time that the incumbent has been in the position; the availability of finances and other resources; the degree of support from university management; the degree of support from colleagues, both academic and administrative; and the capacity of the Head of School to influence relevant university strategies, policies and processes.

The level, nature and extent of previous experience in business and human resource management

There would appear to be three major issues arising from this factor. First, it would appear axiomatic that one's capacity to perform in any management role – including that of Head of School – has a direct correlation with the level of relevant management knowledge and skill possessed. Contemporary management theorists generally support the proposition that the knowledge and skills necessary for effective management (as distinct from leadership) primarily are learned competencies (Covey, 2004; Luecke,

2006; Peters and Waterman, 2004). The learning underpinning the knowledge and skills of effective managers generally emerges from a combination of formal award studies, structured programs of professional development, and significant, relevant and diverse management experiences, and results in what Argyris (2004: 93) terms the manager's 'theory of action' – the framework from which and against which managerial decisions are made and evaluated. As discussed in Chapter Four, all of the Heads of School interviewed for this study openly acknowledged that their own lack of knowledge, skills and experience in business and human resource management creates significant problems for them in performing their role. Further, not one respondent to the questionnaire disagreed with the proposition (Item 12) that few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in critical aspects of management. This is not to argue that a Head of School primarily or exclusively should have a business rather than an academic background, because management theorists generally agree that a practical understanding of context is just as important as acquired management knowledge and skills in achieving productive outcomes (Luecke, 2006). The assertion is, however, that among the professional background of a Head of School should be significant exposure to the processes and experiences that build business acumen, knowledge and skill.

Second, it is a generally asserted truism that a demonstrable track record as a successful manager is important in providing those who are being managed with a sense of certainty, security and optimism, particularly in times of significant change or organisational growth (Peters, 1994). If colleagues know that their manager has a high level of knowledge and skill in relevant managerial processes, then they will feel confident that administrative and human resource processes in their area will be managed efficiently and effectively. In turn, if they feel confident in the management of the area in which they work, and thus feel relatively secure in their working environment, people are able to focus more intensely and productively on achieving quality outcomes (Peters, 2005). Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that the higher the level of credibility held by the Head of School as a business and human resource manager – which in turn largely is the product of previous learning and experience in business and human resource

management – the safer academic and administrative staff will feel in their environment, and the more likely they will be to deliver quality outcomes for their organisation.

Third, there is general agreement in the literature that innovation and creativity rely heavily on the breadth and depth of knowledge that managers and leaders have about their organisation and the processes by which it operates. Opportunities often cannot be grasped fully or pervasive changes effected and sustained unless those leading and managing the organisation have a "deep knowledge" (Peters, 2005: 108) of its products, services, and processes. A lack of 'deep knowledge' about the management processes needed by the organisation can lead to duplication of processes and procedures, sub-optimisation of the use of resources, and lost opportunities (Matta and Ashkenas, 2005). It follows, therefore, that the greater the managerial knowledge and skill of Heads of School, and the greater their understanding of the management processes used at their university, the more prepared they will be to support innovation, grasp opportunities, and effect necessary change.

The level of commitment to the role by the incumbent

It is another generally accepted truism that the greater people's commitment to a role, the harder they will work to exhibit quality performance and to achieve desired outcomes and goals (Peters, 2005). If one accepts this proposition, then it is reasonable to assert that effectively addressing the breadth and depth of roles and responsibilities identified through this study for a Head of School requires a very high level of commitment to the role by incumbents.

It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate in any rigorous manner the personal level of commitment to the role held by Heads of School, or subsequently the relationship between the level of commitment and the level of performance. Nevertheless, the findings from the study – and in particular the reflective statements reported in Chapter Four – would appear to support the view that the level of commitment among the Heads

of School primarily reflects the notion of 'sense of duty' rather than an enthusiastic commitment to what the position can achieve and the opportunities it can unveil, both personally and organisationally.

Covey (2005: 265) has developed a 'hierarchy of commitment' (Figure 6.2) which ranges from what he terms 'Rebel or Quit' through to 'Creative Excitement'.

Figure 6.2: Hierarchy of commitment

(Adapted from Covey, 2005: 265)

Creative Excitement
(*driver:* quest for meaning)

↑

Heartfelt Commitment
(*driver:* love for organisation/ activity)

↑

Cheerful Cooperation
(*driver:* sense of duty)

↑

Willing Compliance
(*driver:* reward)

↑

Malicious Obedience
(*driver:* fear)

↑

Rebel or Quit
(*driver:* anger)
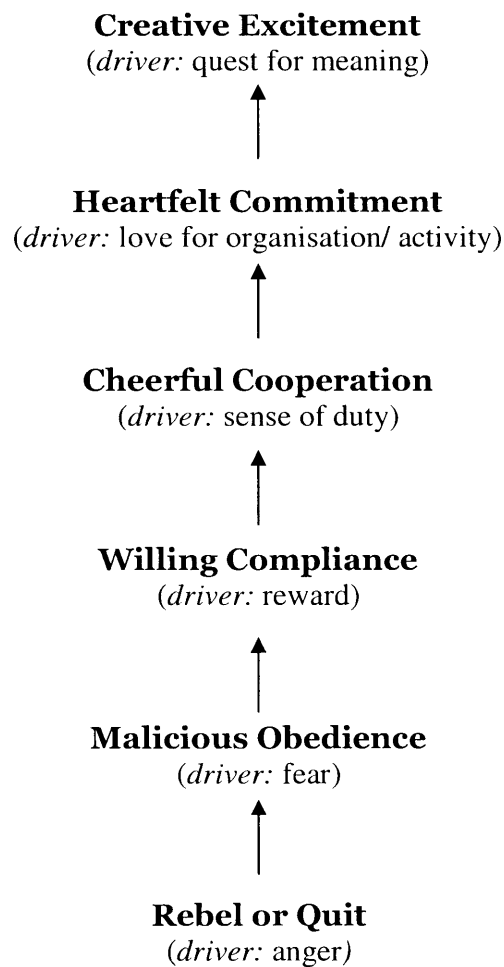
As shown, each level of commitment is considered primarily to reflect a response to a personal and/or organisational factor. Covey notes that "Research shows that only one in five managers have a passionate commitment to the high-priority goals of their team and organization" (Covey: 276). Intuitively, it would appear – on the basis of evidence presented for this study – that the proportion among Heads of School is unlikely to be any higher, and may indeed be even less.

Covey (2005: 274-275) argues that "the execution gap of commitment – the gap between intent and execution – is a primary source of time management problems" in any organisation. Commitment, he argues, determines how people define the high-priority goals, along with mission and values, and that in turn will govern every other decision. Where there is a lack of commitment

> *you will have nothing but confusion about what is truly important. The end*
> *result is that urgency will define importance. That which is popular, pressing,*
> *proximate and pleasant – in other words, that which is urgent – becomes*
> *important. The net result is that [the managers] are reading the tea leaves,*
> *putting their finger to the political winds, and kissing up to the hierarchy.*

In simple terms, Covey argues that without genuine commitment at a high level, the organisation will lack the level of creative energy in its management likely to take it to 'leading-edge' performance (Covey: 280). Given, then, the range of pressures identified previously in this study that are impacting on the university in ways that are generating considerable concern about its future performance and even viability, it would seem that there is a strong case for investigating means of enhancing the level of commitment of Heads of School to their roles. This is addressed, in part at least, later in this chapter.

The nature and quality of initiation to the role, and of on-going professional development

As identified through the interview data described in Chapter Four, most of the Heads of School at the University under study received little or no specific training at the time of accepting their initial appointment, and had little or no management experience or training prior to their current appointment. All of the Heads of School interviewed expressed a seemingly genuine desire to engage in as much relevant training – formal or informal – as possible, both at the time of taking up their initial appointment and in an on-going mode. The University currently does not have a formal structured induction program for its Heads of School. It does provide a monthly 'Heads of School Forum' at which attempts are made to provide up-to-date knowledge and skills, but the training is ad hoc, frequently conducted by staff with no management background themselves, and attendance is not mandated. In essence, then, Heads of School largely acquire the knowledge and skill they require to undertake their role successfully through informal experiences rather than through a structured program aligned to duty statements and university goals.

Research by Albert and Bradley (1995: 1) identified that a manager's accumulated knowledge and know-how is a primary source of innovation and regeneration for any organisation. Similarly, Thomas Stewart (1997: xiii) – Editor of *Fortune* magazine – asserts on the basis of his long and highly successful career in business that developing and managing the "intellectual and behavioral assets" of middle managers is one of the most important factors driving the achievement of organisational goals. It follows, therefore, that a lack of quality initiation and professional development programs for Heads of School will not only impact on the capacity of incumbents to perform their role successfully, but will also have a significant influence on the capacity of the university itself to perform successfully in an increasingly competitive educational environment.

The personal credibility, charisma and 'style' of the incumbent

A consistent theme underpinning many of the findings from this study is that potentially of equal importance with what Heads of School actually do is the notion of how they go about doing it. This gets to the issue of the critical importance of 'persona' – the public image and approach of Heads of School as they go about their role of managing. The scope of the current study limited the capacity to pursue this factor in detail, but as reported in Chapter Three, there is a growing body of research-based opinion to support the proposition that the most effective Heads of School are those who are seen to have a successful track record as both an academic and a manager, who have an open and inclusive decision-making style, who communicate well with good interpersonal skills, and whose personality encourages support rather than conflict with colleagues (Gaither, 2002; Gmelch, 2004; Holbeche, 2004). Bennis and Thomas (2004: 152) suggest that the impact of the manager's persona significantly explains the question: "Why is it that certain people seem to naturally inspire confidence, loyalty and hard work, while others (who may have just as much vision and ability) stumble, again and again?".

It would seem reasonable to assert that the personal credibility of Heads of School as academics is linked, in large part, to their ascribed academic position. As shown in Table 5.2, 10 percent of Heads of School at the university for this study are Senior Lecturers (Academic Level C), 60 percent Associate Professors (Academic Level D), and 30 percent full Professors (Academic Level E). This suggests that all of the incumbents have established a reasonable track record of successful academic teaching, research and publication, and thus should have established academic credibility with colleagues. However, an issue raised in passing by some of the Heads of School interviewed, and one that was not directly explored as part of this study but would seem to be an area for useful future research, is the extent to which Heads of School below the level of full Professor – which represents 70 percent for the University – are afforded academic credibility by full Professors in their Schools, and the impact that the assessment by these Academic Chairs has on the role of Head of School. Intuitively, it would seem reasonable to suggest that at least some full Professors will react negatively to someone of lesser 'academic standing'

making decisions that impact on their professional activity, particularly if they disagree significantly with those decisions. If this is the case, then it would seem reasonable to assert that Heads of School will encounter significant overt and covert resistance in the performance of their roles from these academic powerbrokers.

As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the credibility of Heads of School as business managers is linked significantly to the level, nature and extent of their previous experience in business and human resource management. As already indicated the findings suggest that Heads of School generally do not have significant prior experience as successful business managers, and thus it is reasonable to conclude that they do not have a high level of credibility in this domain among their academic and administrative colleagues at the university. Heads of School, however, would appear to be in a 'Catch 22' situation. Very few academics who are widely acknowledged as leaders in their discipline area have had the opportunity to acquire high level business management skills, and conversely, very few highly successful business managers have been in a position to acquire high level professional standing in their discipline area (through, for example, research and publication). As a consequence, it would appear a truism that for most Heads of School, it is reasonable to expect them to have acquired significant credibility as either an academic or a business manager, but not both. This raises the issue of whether the role of Head of School should be packaged into a single appointment, or whether the academic and business dimensions of the role should be ascribed to different people on the basis of their specific expertise, as happens in a number of areas of industry (Peters and Waterman, 2004). Certainly, there would appear to be benefit in conducting case study research into the relative strengths and weaknesses of different structural arrangements for achieving the dual academic and business objectives currently ascribed to Heads of Schools.

A plethora of research-based publications concentrate on the strengths and weaknesses of variously defined 'management styles', and it is beyond the scope of this study to review that work in detail. In very simple terms, however, it can be argued that academic discussions of management 'style' may – at very high levels of aggregation – be

classified in two ways: the locus of concern, and the nature of the interaction with others in the workplace. Tricker (2005: 202) proposes that management styles can be categorised according to the locus of the manager's concern, and can be plotted on a 'managerial grid', the axes of which are 'concern for results' and 'concern for people' (Figure 6.3). He identifies four major 'managerial styles' within his managerial grid: the *impoverished style* which is concerned only in getting necessary work done with the minimum of effort; the *scientific management style* where there is "a concentration on maximizing efficiency"; the *middle of the road style* where the aim is "to get reasonable results and to keep everyone happy"; and the *team management style* where everyone "works together to get the best out of themselves and others".

Figure 6.3: Managerial Grid

(Adapted from *Tricker, 2005: 202*)

9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

**Concern
for
Results**

*Scientific
Management
Style*

*Team
Management
Style*

*Middle-of-the
road
Style*

*Impoverished
Style*

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Concern for People
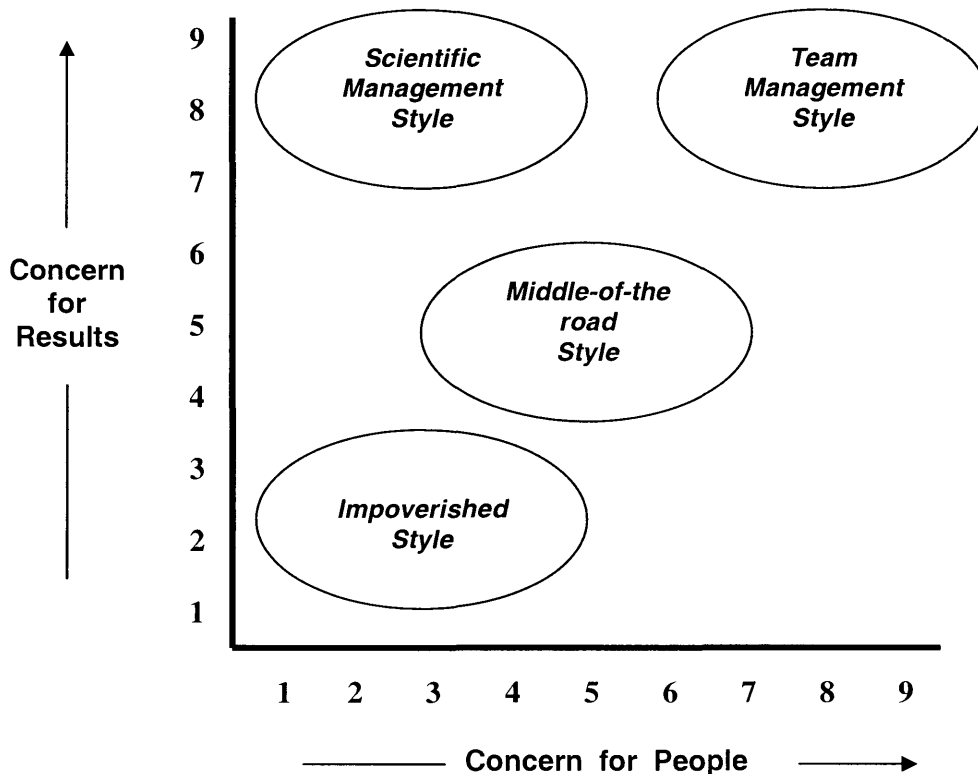
Alternatively, Garvin and Roberto (2005: 161-164) suggest that management styles can be positioned on a continuum that reflects the nature of interaction with others in the workplace. The referents for the continuum they suggest are 'advocacy' and 'inquiry in action'. Managers who demonstrate an advocacy style are "passionate" about their preferred approach to activities and processes and "therefore stand firm in the face of disagreement ... Advocates often present information selectively, buttressing their arguments while withholding relevant conflicting data" (Garvin and Roberto, 2005: 162).

Alternatively, managers who demonstrate an inquiry in action style carefully consider options, encourage constructive criticism and feedback, encourage critical thinking among staff, and "share information widely, preferably in raw form, to allow staff to draw their own conclusions" (Garvin and Roberto, 2005: 163). This study did not pursue in depth an assessment of the management style of Heads of School, and this would appear an interesting and potentially informative area for further research. Nevertheless, on the basis of the limited information derived from this study, the researcher intuitively feels that most of the Heads of School interviewed generally reflect a 'middle of the road' style on the managerial grid, and are more likely to be positioned towards the advocacy end of Garvin and Roberto's continuum. In other words, it is suggested that the limited evidence from this study tends to identify a management style for Heads of Schools that: seeks acceptable rather than exceptional results (which would be compatible with low risk management strategies); seeks to keep everyone happy, or conversely, to minimise conflict and criticism; and seeks to maintain a firm control over process and outcome. It is speculated that an interesting additional area for further research might be the extent to which the management style of Heads of Schools is moulded or dictated by the management style they experience from their superiors – in this case, the Executive Deans.

Time available for the role

Item 23 of the questionnaire – " *Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them"* – was one of the most strongly supported statements in the survey, with a median response of 5.0 and only one respondent disagreeing with the proposition. Further, as reported in Chapter Three, every one of the Heads of School interviewed stated, with considerable emphasis, that it is simply impossible for a Head of School to address the requirements of the role within the allocated 0.5 loading (that is, approximately 18 hours a week). Indeed, as also identified in Chapter Three, most Heads of School are having to regularly work at night and on weekends to address the combined managerial and academic components of their role.

Availability of time to undertake the role, however, is a far more complex set of issues than merely assigning minutes to tasks. First, the time available to address any particular task or issue actually is contingent on the notions of priority and importance rather than on time per se. Covey (2004: 151) has constructed a 'time management matrix' (Figure 6.4) that shows the interaction between priority, importance, and activity. High priority or urgent matters, he argues, "insist on action. They're popular with others. They're usually right in front of us … But so often they are unimportant!". Important matters he argues "contribute to your mission, your values, your high priority goals". The problem, he suggests, is that "we react to urgent matters … If we don't have a clear idea of what is important, of the results we desire, we are easily diverted into responding to the urgent" (Covey, 2004: 151.).

Figure 6.4: the Time Management Matrix

(Adapted from *Covey, 2005:151*)

Priority

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects	Prevention, PC activities Relationship building Recognising opportunities Planning
Not Important	Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate/pressing matters Popular activities	Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities

Importance

It follows that when Heads of School allege they do not have sufficient time to undertake particular activities, they may actually be saying, in part at least, that they have not attributed a sufficiently high priority to those activities, because they have not been assessed either as being of sufficient urgency or importance in relation to other activities. A confounding notion here is the issue of whose assessment of urgency and importance determines the prioritisation of activities. Clearly, the Heads of School will have their own concepts of urgency and importance, but their job descriptions also clearly identify a reporting – and thus action – line to their supervisors, which in the case of the university under study is Executive Deans. It is problematic how Heads of School resolve any significant differences of opinion about what is urgent or important between themselves and their supervisors, and as a consequence, what impact this has on the issue of available time for the Heads of School to undertake their roles. It is also reasonable to assert that the resolution of such conflict may impact significantly on notions of ownership, and thus on the level of commitment that Heads of School might have with respect to their roles.

Second, it would appear axiomatic that the more experience, knowledge and skill possessed by a Head of School, the less time in general that the Head of School will need to spend on addressing an activity or resolving an issue of concern (Covey, 2004; Luecke, 2006; Peters and Waterman, 2004). It follows, therefore, that some of the concern expressed by Heads of School regarding insufficient time to address all of the activities expected of them may, in part, relate to deficiencies in their acquired experience, knowledge and skill as a manager, as already discussed earlier in this chapter. If this is the situation, then the arguments proffered by the Heads of School for better induction, more structured and targeted professional development, and a greater level of staffing support may be at least partially vindicated.

Third, without time to think – time away from the administrivia that pervades every corner of day-to-day management – there is little creativity in management (Covey, 2005; Loehr and Schwartz, 2004; Peters, 2005). Amabile (2005: 119) argues that organisations

> *routinely kill creativity with fake deadlines or impossibly tight ones. The*
> *former create distrust and the latter cause burnout … Creativity often takes*
> *time. It can be slow going … Managers who do not allow time for exploration*
> *are unwittingly standing in the way of the creative process.*

Loehr and Schwartz (2004: 141) suggest a physiological reason for the link between creativity and time to think. What happens, they allege, is that 'non-cognitive time' slows brain wave activity and stimulates a shift in mental activity from the left hemisphere of the brain to the right, thereby allowing one to suddenly find solutions to vexing problems. Whatever the reason, it is reasonable to conclude that Heads of School will be inhibited from developing creative solutions to management problems if they are not provided with sufficient time away from routine management activities. This proposition is, however, a somewhat two edged sword, because as Teresa Amabile (2004: 119), the Associate Dean (Research) at Harvard Business School, notes: "Under some circumstances, time pressures can heighten creativity". Amabile contends that in circumstances in which "the time crunch and the importance of the work legitimately make people feel they must rush" there is an increase in "intrinsic motivation by increasing the sense of challenge"

(Amabile, 2004: 119), and this can result in high level creativity. Consequently, it would seem that the argument for increasing creative management practices through freeing up time for Heads of School to think is not explained through a straightforward correlation, and represents an area in which considerable new research may be needed.

Fourth, it would seem reasonable to assert that the length of time that Heads of School need to address issues and activities, and effect subsequent actions, is correlated with the processes they employ for making decisions. The more information Heads of School require and the more detailed the analyses they perform prior to making a decision, the greater the time allocation needed. Alternatively, the more that Heads of School rely on intuition and experience to make management decisions, the less that 'time available' emerges as an inhibiting factor for their role. This is compatible with research conducted by Luecke (2006: 91-93) who proposes that decision-making style can be represented as a continuum, from 'rational' to 'intuitive'. Rational decision-makers generally will not make management decisions without first collecting comprehensive information and performing detailed analyses, while intuitive decision-makers assess situations and form conclusions "without the intervention of factual information or analysis" (Luecke, 2006: 92). For Heads of School, it is suggested that a major variable influencing their management 'style' (rational or intuitive) is their willingness to accept risk. Ensuring that comprehensive and detailed information is collected and analysed prior to making a decision intuitively will decrease the 'risk' of making a wrong or inappropriate or inadequate decision, or one that may have significant unintended and unacceptable consequences. Alternatively, the extra time needed for rational decision-making significantly increases the risk that other activities or projects will not be addressed, or addressed adequately, within stipulated timelines. The interplay of management style and level and nature of risk would appear to be an issue of major importance for Heads of Schools and their universities, and one that would seem warranting of significant further research.

The extent to which the nature and expectations of the role have been clearly and comprehensively defined

Superficially at least, it would appear self-evident that the greater the knowledge that Heads of School have about the outcomes they are expected to achieve and the processes they are expected to employ to achieve those outcomes, the more efficiently and effectively they will be able to perform their role. As identified in Chapter Four, all of the Heads of School interviewed for this study expressed the view that their capacity to perform their roles efficiently and effectively is undermined by policy guidelines and procedures that are ambiguous and lacking in detail. Further, they expressed concern that the policies and procedures are often difficult to access, and are often being changed without notice or consultation. Certainly, most contemporary management writers would support the need for expectations of managers to be clear, and the criteria against which performance will be assessed to be overt (Matta and Ashkenas, 2005; Peters and Waterman, 2004). It is also reasonable to argue that the more comprehensively and precisely the roles and responsibilities of the role have been articulated, the less likely it is that Heads of School will be held accountable for activities or outcomes over which they have little or no control – a concern expressed through both the interviews and questionnaire associated with this study. In Item 11 of the questionnaire, for example, there was strong agreement that *Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control.* This can be explained, in part at least, by the fact that monetary responsibilities and appropriate data to Heads of Schools are not addressed in any clear or comprehensive way in university policies and procedures. It would appear to follow, then, that universities should take the necessary steps to ensure that the nature and expectations of the role of Head of School are defined as clearly and comprehensively as possible if they wish to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

The call by Heads of School for clear and comprehensive policies and procedures would appear to be compatible with a quest for certainty, and perhaps also stability, with respect to their position. This raises an interesting and potentially important issue about the

extent to which it is possible or even desirable to seek certainty and stability in an organisation experiencing fundamental, pervasive and continual change. In their book *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, Peters and Waterman (2004) make a strong case for the proposition that excessively comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures for management inevitably result in organisational failure in an environment characterised by ambiguity rather than any definable notion of certainty. Ambiguity, they argue, demands flexibility, and that means policies and procedures that guide practices rather than stipulate them, and that emancipate decision-making rather than control it. Without flexibility and innovativeness, they contend that the organisation will slowly but inexorably fall further and further behind the competition as it becomes less and less relevant to its market. The real difficulty, suggests Peters (2005), is that at a time when organisations are feeling increasingly vulnerable because of the 'slipping and sliding' of their environment, their best management solutions may be those which carry the greatest risk – a dilemma that few organisations are capable of handling well. This is a particular challenge for Australia universities as they are subject to a variety of external constraints, which can at times be contradictory. They are encouraged by government to be more flexible, independent and entrepreneurial, while remaining compliant with various government regulations and centralised demands for planning and accountability.

There is little relevant research to inform these issues. It would, however, seem to be an area of significant importance to the future of universities, and thus a priority area for further investigation.

The length of time that the incumbent has been in the position

Most management writers support a correlation between relevant experience and the capacity to fulfil the role of manager (Bennis and Thomas, 2004; Garvin and Roberto, 2005). Indeed, it would seem axiomatic that the greater the breadth and depth of relevant experience, and the greater the repertoire of accumulated knowledge and skill, the more

likely a manager is to facilitate quality outcomes. As reported in Chapter Three, Benoit and Heiman (2002), for example, argue that the length of time the incumbent has been in the position of Head of School is a major determinant of success. They argue strongly against the practice in some universities to have a "rotating Head" position, believing that the complexity of the management environment takes time and experience to understand and master: "To routinely leave the job to inexperienced administrators raises questions about whether or not universities are using their resources in the most efficient manner" (Benoit and Heiman, 2002: 10).

The biographic data collected for this study revealed that almost all the Heads of School had been in the role for significant lengths of time, with a median period of four years. Over two-thirds of the Heads of School had been in the position for more than two years, and many were in their second or third three-year term. Further, 70 percent of them had been at the same university for more than ten years. Peters (2005), however, argues that a management team can in fact reach the point where it has too much experience, and so is not informed and challenged as much as might be desirable by new ideas and new ways of thinking. For this reason, he proposes that it is important for any organisation to seek an appropriate balance between experience on the one hand, and new and creative ideas on the other. In a highly competitive and rapidly changing world, he proffers the need for organisations to "cleanse their portfolio of its successful yesterdays" by ensuring that the management team includes some "mold breaking types" who have not been "standardized by time in their position" (Peters, 2005: 154-5). Further, he suggests that individual managers may indeed have a 'use by' date, and that appointments to particular management positions should perhaps have specified maximum time limits. This raises the notion of whether Heads of School should be limited to a set number of years or terms in the position – an area perhaps warranting of targeted rigorous research.

The availability of finances and other resources

It is a managerial truism that the more difficult it is to access resources (financial, physical, human and information-based), the more difficult is the task of management (Covey, 2005; Peters, 2005). On the basis of information collected, formally and informally, through this study, it would seem reasonable to infer that the same truism applies to the role of Head of School.

In Chapter Three, it was established that real government funding to Australian universities has fallen by almost 15 percent in the last decade, such that universities now are having to raise around 60 percent of their running costs from private sources. Further, it is predicted that real funding to universities in the period 2006 - 2008 is likely to fall by a further $337million (Nelson, 2005; NTEU, 2005). The reality is that in an environment of contracting financial support from government and increasing need to compete in a finite educational market, the resource base available to individual universities will inevitably decrease, and thus the resources that can be made available to individual Schools within universities will decrease. Further, it generally follows that as resources become scarcer, accountability measures to ensure wise allocation and use of those resources will increase, which in turn means increased managerial activity and responsibility for Heads of School. Inevitably, this must impact on the priority and time available for other management activities for Heads of Schools.

There is evidence from this study that while administrative staff in Schools generally recognise the impact of availability of resources on the work and decisions of Heads of Schools, academic staff are not so convinced. In Item 24 of the questionnaire, for example, over one-third of academic staff (but not one administrative staff member) disagreed with the statement: *Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds.* Further, a majority of those surveyed agreed with Item 25: *Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties*

with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs

While much literature is available on shrinking government resources to universities, there is a dearth of research into the impact of decreasing resources on the role of Heads of School in the Australian context, although as reported in Chapter Three, a study of American universities by Graham, Heiman, and Williams in 2003 found that resource constraints led to lower per-student expenditure, increased staff-student ratios, a relative decline in conditions of work; and more fixed-term (non-tenured) appointments. Targeted research in this area would appear to be a high priority for Australian universities.

The degree of support from university management

In Chapter Three, the importance to Heads of School of receiving specific and on-going support from senior university management was highlighted by several writers (Moses, 1990; Hecht et al., 1999; Deem, 2001; Conway, 2002; Smith, 2002, 2005; DeWitt and Ward, 2003), and was also identified as a major issue in the 2004 AUQA Report on the university for this study. Similarly, in Chapter Four, a strong message emerging from the interviews with Heads of Schools relates to their reliance on senior university management for strong and overt support for their role. Further, no one surveyed disagreed with Item 36 of the questionnaire: *Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role without overt support for their actions and decisions from management.*

Amabile (2005: 124-125) argues that strong and overt support from the senior management of an organisation not only improves the capacity of middle managers to effect their roles, it also boosts the "sense of purpose so central to intrinsic motivation" and above all "fosters creativity ... An organization's leaders must put in place appropriate systems or procedures and emphasize values that make it clear that creative efforts are a top priority". Amabile suggests that the most powerful support that senior management can offer its middle managers is recognition and rewards, but, she cautions,

" ... not providing sufficient rewards and recognition can spawn negative feelings ... People can feel used, or at least underappreciated. And it is rare to find the energy and passion of intrinsic motivation coupled with resentment" (Amabile, 2005: 124). It would appear significant, then, that only one person disagreed with Item 34 of the questionnaire: *Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from university management about their efforts and achievements*, and that was an Executive Dean

This factor also involves communication. . All the Heads of School interviewed indicated that "a lot of information simply fails to get down to the School level, at least in the detail with which it originated", referred to by Trowler (2002) as the 'implementation gap'.

The degree of support from colleagues, both academic and administrative

A strong message from the interviews with Heads of School reported in Chapter Four is that Heads of School can not perform their role efficiently and effectively without the strong and overt support of the academic and administrative colleagues in their Schools. To a large extent, the desired support is task based through School Committees; that is, Heads of School need colleagues to take at least partial responsibility for completing the plethora of administrative and academic tasks confronting Schools. It is not necessarily surprising, then, that the Heads of School also identified non-supportive colleagues as their single greatest source of frustration, stress, and time commitment, and that a majority of those surveyed agreed with Item 33 of the questionnaire: *Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from academic staff about their efforts and achievements.*

Another aspect of collegial support identified in Chapter Four is the importance the Heads of School attach to the nature and strength of their network with other Heads of School. The strengths of this peer network are seen to include sharing of information, ideas, experiences, and solutions to problems, as well as providing 'emotional support'

during times of extreme stress and engendering consistency of approach and decision-making across the university.

The research of Hecht (2004), reported in Chapter Three, highlights the particular importance of support for the Head of School from administrative staff. Administrative staff, she reports, have a capacity to draw on institutional history to assist decision-making, have an invaluable knowledge and understanding of important deadlines, and are able to draw on their experience and expertise to improve time management in the School. In short, Hecht argues that quality administrative support allows Heads of School to devote more time to the strategic, people management and entrepreneurial aspects of the roles. However, as Moses and Roe (1990) identified, some Heads of School are reluctant to delegate, either to academic or administrative staff.

While it is clear that support from colleagues, both academic and administrative, is a critical determinant of success for Heads of Schools, the literature review undertaken for Chapter 3 revealed that almost no research has been done in this area. Research into the nature and impact of collegial support for university middle managers would, therefore, seem to be an area of priority.

The capacity of the Head of School to influence relevant university strategies, policies and processes

As reported in Chapter Three, research by Tucker (1993) suggested that the status of the position of Head of School in the university hierarchy, and the status of the individual Head of School within the university, are important determinants of performance because of the attendant 'power' to support decisions and decision-making. As also discussed in Chapter Three, Seagren et al. (1993: 2), suggest that this relates to the capacity of Heads of School to "understand the political forces and processes of the institution ... and skillfully maneuver groups and coalitions" while Moses and Roe (1990: 214) suggest that it is because Heads of School preferred "being in control rather than being controlled".

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Unfortunately, there is little research or scholarly literature relating to this factor, and even the findings reported above by Tucker, Seagren and Moses are on the basis of limited research information. Nevertheless, it would seem reasonable to hypothesise that the greater the personal 'status' of a Head of School, and the greater the 'status' of the position of Head of School in the hierarchy of the university, the greater the influence of the Head of School on university decisions and processes.

Conclusion: Towards a new paradigm for middle-level university management

On the basis of information and insights revealed through this thesis, it is argued that the management model employed by the university chosen for this study is compatible with what Burns and Stalker (1993) term a 'mechanistic management system' and Mintzberg (1989) 'machine bureaucracy'. Such systems are characterised by: a hierarchical structure; concentration of decision-making within the upper levels of management; primarily vertical communication between supervisor and subordinate; a proliferation of rules, policies and regulations for controlling the system; and elaborate and largely centralised administrative structures (Burns and Stalker, 1993: 120).

Luecke (2006) and Peters and Waterman (2004) argue that organisations which demonstrate these characteristics are 'geared for performance' rather than 'geared for innovation and responsiveness'. They contend that the focus for such organisations is a search for quality and control, but as a result the organisations lack flexibility and responsiveness, thereby restricting their entrepreneurial capacity. This is a significant concern, given the demands on the University in this study to raise an increasing percentage of its operational needs through entrepreneurial activity.

Luecke (2006: ix) argues that a major reason for the lack of commercial responsiveness in a mechanistic management system is the "series of decisions required to ... initiate or implement activities". Because action must wait for approval through all steps of a linear

decision-train, rapid responses to challenges or opportunities simply are not possible. Further, Mintzberg argues that because of the volume of decisions that must pass along the decision train in 'mature' organisations (such as the university), there are strong pressures to 'standardise' decision-making processes into set policies and procedures, and to ascribe them as roles and responsibilities to various individuals in middle and senior management positions.

Contemporary writers in the areas of organisational management and leadership consistently argue that in the face of pervasive and rapid change, and rapidly increasing competition for resources and markets, management systems must take on a much more 'organic' form in which the emphases are on networked structures and team-based activity and decision-making (Covey, 2004; Drucker, 2000; Edmondson et al., 2005). The essential argument is that hierarchical systems do not empower all members of the organisation to maximise their contribution to the goals of the organisation, and that new organisational arrangements are required to "tap people's commitment and capacity [and to] enhance the organization's capacity to be creative" (Senge, 1990: 4). Senge (1990) argues that what is needed is a move from linear (hierarchical) thinking to systems thinking, from policy and procedures-driven performance to performance built on shared vision, and from managers to teams. He contends that all members of successful organisations must be "able to act upon the structures and systems of which they are a part". He advocates a "shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future" (Senge, 1990: 69).

There would appear, then, strong grounds for arguing that, if Heads of Schools are to carry out their roles effectively, there are significant imperatives for the university in this study to move from a hierarchical structure (characterised by slow and often inadequate responses to challenges and opportunities) to a more flexible, adaptive and productive 'organic' organisational structure. The question that must therefore be asked is why has this not happened?

It is suggested that there are three predominant reasons. First, universities are inherently change resistant because so much of what they 'are' rests on what they 'have been'. They are steeped in traditions such as ornate insignias, Latin mottos, academic dress, formal ceremonies, and academic committee structures. Further, excellence has always been measured on the basis of established track records rather than current performance. It is not surprising, then, that any suggestions to move from traditional hierarchical structures based on the power of positions such as Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dean, and Head of Department or School would be strongly resisted.

Second, a move to a more 'organic' structure may be interpreted by academic staff as support for 'new managerialism' (Meek, 2003), with the attendant fear that business processes will replace the university's espoused focus on teaching, learning and research (an argument elaborated in Chapter Three). This creates an interesting dilemma, with academic staff likely to support the very structural arrangements that disempower them because of fears that structures that will empower them might shift the focus of what they consider to be their core activities.

The third reason, and the one of most relevance to this study, is that the University's approach to decision-making reflects what might be termed a 'position-driven paradigm'. In a position-driven paradigm, the starting point is the identification of positions, to which are then ascribed roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, which in turn provide the basis for directing activities and decisions to be made. If outcomes and performance are considered less than satisfactory, the response is to repeat the process, adjusting the nature of the positions and their attendant roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – the well known 'restructure'.

Luecke (2006: xi) argues "the primacy of decisions …Decisions set the pace and direction: the rest is follow-through". Under a position-driven paradigm, decision-making is primarily – and at least ultimately – vested in positions and thus individuals, and is corralled by the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that have been ascribed to those individuals. Quality decision-making, however, involves risks, trade-offs, and the

interaction of a wide range of factors that are often beyond the capacity of an individual to understand, let alone evaluate. For this reason, leading contemporary writers and management consultants generally advocate decision-making processes that support collaborative problem solving, multiple critical thinkers, balanced arguments and the presentation of alternatives, constructive criticism, and collective ownership of the outcome (Garvin and Roberto, 2001; Matheson and Matheson, 1998). This requires a new decision-making model for the university, one that might be termed a 'process-driven paradigm'.

In a process-driven paradigm, the starting point is the challenges, opportunities, issues and activities around which decisions are required to be made. People, both inside and at times outside the organisation, are involved in those decision-making processes and forums to the extent to which they can make significant and positive contributions. Decision-making teams are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed depending on the nature and impact of the issues. The issue determines the most appropriate decision-making process, and the decision-making process determines the people to be involved and the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities they will need.

In brief, the position-driven paradigm gives primacy to the position and the incumbent, while the process-driven paradigm gives primacy to the issue. The position-driven paradigm seeks to standardise processes and outcomes, while the process-driven paradigm seeks to unleash innovation and initiative, and the combined power of the whole organisation.

There are significant differences, however, between management-focused decision-making and leadership-focused decision-making, and both are vital to an organisation (Covey, 2005: 100-101). Management decisions essentially focus on "the allocation of scarce resources against an organisation's objectives, the setting of priorities, the design of work, and the achievement of results" (Weathersby, 1999: 88). They are about the essential functions of an organisation around which there are limited choices (Covey, 2005: 101). Alternatively, leadership decisions focus much more on ways of productively

coping with change and developing a strong and communicated vision to guide performance (Weathersby, 1999: 89). They are about "making happen what wouldn't happen anyway" (Pascale, 1996: 59).

The reality is that the challenges, opportunities, issues and activities that would drive a process paradigm would require both management and leadership decision-making, and that the sheer volume of management-related activity would preclude the operation of teams and networks in all circumstances. As a result, it would seem reasonable that middle-level management positions operating according to generally standardised rules and procedures will be a necessity under a process paradigm. A process-driven paradigm does not preclude middle level management positions such as a Head of school. The critical difference is that positions emerge as one of a range of ways of addressing the range of decisions to be made, rather than as prescribed loci of control as is the case under the existing position-driven paradigm.

In simple terms, it is argued that the current model for middle-level decision-making at the university results from a process of simply building on what has always been, rather than taking a totally new perspective that starts from what is needed in the new and emerging environment. The existing model starts with a pre-determined structure, to which roles are subsequently ascribed. This is akin to trying to make a jigsaw piece fit the puzzle by using a hammer. It is argued that a new model is needed, in which roles are identified from a consideration of the challenges and opportunities facing the university, and the functions that must be undertaken as a result. Structure, in this model, is decided last not first, and is decided on the basis of the best way of clustering identified roles and functions into positions.

It is asserted, then, that the fundamental questions that should guide the identification of roles and responsibilities for Heads of School should be:

- What are the challenges, opportunities, and functions that the university must address?

- What are the most appropriate decision-making processes for addressing those challenges, opportunities and functions?
- What structural arrangements are required in order to enact those processes?

This approach would almost certainly identify a range of appropriate and outcomes-focused decision-making processes and structures, and it is almost certain that the new paradigm would still retain a major role for a Head of School or equivalent position. It is also highly likely, however, that the nature of the Head of School position, and the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities attributed to it, would be significantly different from what currently exists.

It is suggested, then, that the University for this study should consider replacing its existing position-driven paradigm for decision-making with a process-driven paradigm in order to improve the quality of decision-making, and the relevance of those decisions to the challenges and opportunities facing the university. For this to happen, however, considerable research and development into the functioning of a process paradigm will need to be conducted, a task that lies well beyond the scope of the current study.

Summary

Findings from the study have identified a range of significant challenges for the University's middle management, and have questioned the current decision-making paradigm that has led to current Head of School position statements and operational realities. Further, findings have suggested ways of improving the effectiveness of the position within the existing management and decision-making paradigm, and suggested a new approach for improving the quality and inclusiveness of middle-level decision-making.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that a theoretical framework for management requires consideration of at least two things: what is to be done, and how is it to be done

(Peters and Waterman, 2004). This study identified that Heads of School, at least in the University under scrutiny, fulfil two major functions: management of business activity and management of learning processes and outcomes. In a number of areas, these two activities overlap and often support one another, but in other areas, they are in significant conflict. Increasingly, the business management agendas are being driven by senior university management in response to financial and competitive forces. The educational agendas primarily are driven by academic colleagues, and by the underpinning philosophies and beliefs of the Heads of School themselves. This 'top-down'/ 'bottom-up' tension is not easily managed and demands a great deal from the incumbents. The approaches for addressing the business and educational imperatives of the role can be expressed on a continuum ranging from 'directorial' to 'inclusive', and are a product of the particular 'style' of the Head of School, the circumstances in the school, and the influence of senior university management.

Above all, findings from this study would seem to reinforce Albert Einstein's observation (cited in Covey, 2004: 103): "The significant challenges we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them".

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APPENDIX 1

HEAD OF SCHOOL - POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position: Head of School

Reports to: Dean of Faculty

Position Objective:

The Head of School shall be responsible to the Dean for the academic and administrative leadership of the School and for the management of its physical, financial and human resources. The Head of School will be expected to maintain an academic teaching and research profile, although normally with a reduced teaching load of no more than half that of the relevant level academic staff of the School.

Accountabilities:

The Head of School shall -

1. work closely with the Dean to ensure achievement of Faculty and University objectives, as detailed in the relevant Strategic Plans, and plan School initiatives and procedures accordingly,

2. contribute effectively as part of the Faculty Executive or Management Group, providing support and advice to the Dean on the overall management of the Faculty and the development of Faculty policies,

3. engage in appropriate consultative processes within the School to provide staff the opportunity to express their views on academic, administrative and resource matters,

4. manage the School's physical, financial and human resources under delegated authority from the Dean in accordance with legislative requirements and Faculty and University policies,

5. provide and facilitate leadership for and promotion of excellence in teaching and research in areas in the School, including through effective quality assurance mechanisms, budgeting mechanisms and personal advocacy for Faculty and University values,

6. implement University policies and values as detailed in the Strategic Plan and other University wide plans with the objective of providing a safe, healthy, equitable and harmonious working environment for staff and students,

7. represent the School on relevant Faculty and University bodies, including the Faculty Board and Academic Board, and on relevant external bodies such as professional bodies,

8. provide information and advice to the staff and students of the School, the Dean, and other areas of the Faculty and University, as required; and provide relevant information to external bodies, including the media, as required and in accordance with University policies,

9. exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as the Dean may assign to the Head of School from time to time.

Faculty-specific activities and responsibilities:

Faculty of The Sciences

- Heads of School will be designated Deputy Deans of the Faculty,
- In the absence of the Dean, they will be required from time to time to assume the role of Acting Dean,
- Heads of School would normally be expected to have appropriate management experience covering their areas of responsibility.

Appendix 2
Identification of questionnaire items

Matching grid:

Dimension	Questionnaire item(s)
Management of academic staff	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 19, 20,
Administration of the School	2, 3, 11, 14,
Leadership and vision	1, 8, 13, 15,
Personal professional commitments	29, 30, 37,
Clarity of processes/ procedures	2, 11,
Support in the role	10, 21, 31, 36,
Communication and networks	1, 2, 33, 34, 35
Preparation and training for the role	3, 12, 13,
Workloads	6, 9, 22, 23, 28,
Requisite skills and experience	12, 13, 38
Incentives	32, 33, 34, 35, 37,
Compliance issues	3, 5, 7, 26, 27,
Conflict	6, 7, 9, 10, 20, 21, 27,
Commercial/ entrepreneurial	24, 25,
Academic quality	16, 17, 18, 19,

Questionnaire items:

1. A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff
2. The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university
3. The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School
4. A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School
5. The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School
6. One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff
7. Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement
8. The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management

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9. Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools
10. Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"
11. Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control
12. Few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management
13. Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations
14. It is important for Heads of School to ensure the general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems
15. Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality
16. I am aware that the Head of School is formally responsible for the design, development, content and presentation of the academic units of their School
17. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff
18. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for the timely review and redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and university programs and objectives
19. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities and support for professional development
20. The Head of School generally is the 'first port of call' for staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, and concerns
21. The Head of School frequently is put in a very difficult position by staff who expect – even demand – that their issue or problem will be dealt with immediately, irrespective of whatever other priorities or issues the Head of School might have to deal with
22. I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half load for their management and administrative functions, and must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision, research and service
23. Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them
24. Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds
25. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs
26. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance
27. Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures

28. Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large number of Faculty and University meetings
29. Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community
30. I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a major contribution to their discipline area through scholarship and research
31. Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively without the strong and overt support of the staff in their School
32. Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of School
33. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from academic staff about their efforts and achievements
34. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from university management about their efforts and achievements
35. A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads of School in order to attract and keep the best possible people for the role
36. Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role without overt support for their actions and decisions from management
37. The administrative and leadership performance of the Head of School should be given additional weighting when they apply for academic promotion because of their limited capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile while in the position
38. There are significant advantages in having a Head of School appointed from 'outside' the university

Appendix 3
Role of the Head of School Questionnaire
(Heads of School version)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed to provide information to support the research component of my MEdAdmin(Hons). My study focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in regional universities, using the University as a case study.

You are not required to place your name or contact details on the questionnaire – anonymity is guaranteed. Section A requests some general biographic information to allow more detailed analyses of responses. The level of biographic information requested is not sufficient to allow individual respondents to be identified. The final report will be written to ensure that no respondent can be identified.

Completed questionnaires will have their information transferred to a database, and will then be secured in a locked file for a period of five years before being destroyed.

You are under no obligation to complete this questionnaire. You may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Please react to every item, whether or not you feel you have sufficient information.

It is important that your responses be "independent", so please do not discuss them with others.

If you would like to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 67732581. A summary of findings from the research will be made available to all participants at the completion of the study.

Regards

Morna Winter-Irving
School of Professional Development and Leadership

Section 1: Biographic information

Please respond to this section by placing an X in the appropriate box after each item. If you believe that you 'fit' more than one box, please choose the box that best reflects your circumstances.

Academic level:
- ☐ Senior Lecturer
- ☐ Associate Professor
- ☐ Professor

Age:
- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55 or over

Time at UNE:
- ☐ 1 year or less
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ over 10 years

Time in position:
- ☐ 1 year or less
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ over 10 years

Faculty:
- ☐ Arts
- ☐ Economics, Business and Law
- ☐ Education, Health and Professional Studies
- ☐ The Sciences

Your sex:
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Section 2

In this section, you are asked to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with a number of statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in this university, as well as some suggestions regarding how the role might be improved.

Please CIRCLE the letter(s) on the right of each statement that best indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, according to the following key:

SA = strongly agree
A = agree
N = neither agree nor disagree
D = disagree
SD = strongly agree

---

1. A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff   SA A N D SD

2. The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university   SA A N D SD

3. The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School   SA A N D SD

4. A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School   SA A N D SD

5. The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School   SA A N D SD

6. One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff   SA A N D SD

7. Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement   SA A N D SD

8. The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes   SA A N D SD

that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management

9. Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools   SA A N D SD

10. Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"   SA A N D SD

11. Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control   SA A N D SD

12. Few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management   SA A N D SD

13. Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations   SA A N D SD

14. It is important for Heads of School to ensure the general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems   SA A N D SD

15. Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality   SA A N D SD

16. I am aware that the Head of School is formally responsible for the design, development, content and presentation of the academic units of their School   SA A N D SD

17. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff   SA A N D SD

18. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for the timely review and redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and university programs and objectives   SA A N D SD

19. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities and support for professional development   SA A N D SD

20. The Head of School generally is the 'first port of call' for   SA A N D SD

staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, and concerns

21. The Head of School frequently is put in a very difficult
    position by staff who expect – even demand – that their
    issue or problem will be dealt with immediately, irrespective
    of whatever other priorities or issues the Head of School
    might have to deal with   SA A N D SD

22. I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half
    load for their management and administrative functions, and
    must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision,
    research and service   SA A N D SD

23. Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and
    administrative load for the time allocation made available to
    them   SA A N D SD

24. Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more
    entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in
    their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing
    costs and available funds   SA A N D SD

25. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with
    some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics
    being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the
    university's running costs   SA A N D SD

26. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with
    some staff who actively resist university policies and
    procedures requiring professional accountability and
    compliance   SA A N D SD

27. Heads of School are often accused by some staff of
    'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to
    university policies and procedures   SA A N D SD

28. Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large
    number of Faculty and University meetings   SA A N D SD

29. Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in
    the local professional community   SA A N D SD

30. I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a major contribution to their discipline area through scholarship and research   SA A N D SD

31. Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively without the strong and overt support of the staff in their School   SA A N D SD

32. Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of School   SA A N D SD

33. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from academic staff about their efforts and achievements   SA A N D SD

34. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from university management about their efforts and achievements   SA A N D SD

35. A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads of School in order to attract and keep the best possible people for the role   SA A N D SD

36. Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role without overt support for their actions and decisions from management   SA A N D SD

37. The administrative and leadership performance of the Head of School should be given additional weighting when they apply for academic promotion because of their limited capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile while in the position   SA A N D SD

38. There are significant advantages in having a Head of School appointed from 'outside' the university   SA A N D SD

Section 3

What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?

1)

2)

3)

Thank you for having taken the time to complete this questionnaire.

Now please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and place it in the UNE Internal Mail.

Appendix 4
Role of the Head of School Questionnaire
(Academic staff version)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed to provide information to support the research component of my MEdAdmin(Hons). My study focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in regional universities, using the University as a case study.

You are not required to place your name or contact details on the questionnaire – anonymity is guaranteed. Section A requests some general biographic information to allow more detailed analyses of responses. The level of biographic information requested is not sufficient to allow individual respondents to be identified. The final report will be written to ensure that no respondent can be identified.

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If you would like to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 67732581. A summary of findings from the research will be made available to all participants at the completion of the study.

Regards

Morna Winter-Irving
School of Professional Development and Leadership

Section 1: Biographic information

Please respond to this section by placing an X in the appropriate box after each item. If you believe that you 'fit' more than one box, please choose the box that best reflects your circumstances.

Academic level:
☐   Associate Lecturer
☐   Lecturer
☐   Senior Lecturer
☐   Associate Professor
☐   Professor

Age:
☐   Under 25
☐   25-34
☐   35-44
☐   45-54
☐   55 or over

Time at UNE:
☐   1 year or less
☐   2-5 years
☐   6-10 years
☐   over 10 years

Time as an academic:
☐   1 year or less
☐   2-5 years
☐   6-10 years
☐   over 10 years

Faculty:
☐   Arts
☐   Economics, Business and Law
☐   Education, Health and Professional Studies
☐   The Sciences

Your sex:
☐   Female
☐   Male

Sex of your Head of School:
☐   Male
☐   Female

Do you hold a 'special' administration/management position (e.g. Course Co-ordinator, Chair of a School Board of Studies)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section 2

In this section, you are asked to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with a number of statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in this university, as well as some suggestions regarding how the role might be improved.

Please CIRCLE the letter(s) on the right of each statement that best indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, according to the following key:

SA = strongly agree
A = agree
N = neither agree nor disagree
D = disagree
SD = strongly agree

---

1. A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff   SA   A   N   D   SD

2. The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university   SA   A   N   D   SD

3. The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School   SA   A   N   D   SD

4. A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School   SA   A   N   D   SD

5. The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School   SA   A   N   D   SD

6. One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff   SA   A   N   D   SD

7. Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement   SA   A   N   D   SD

8. The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes   SA   A   N   D   SD

that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management

9. Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools

SA   A   N   D   SD

10. Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"

SA   A   N   D   SD

11. Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control

SA   A   N   D   SD

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SA   A   N   D   SD

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22. I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half load for their management and administrative functions, and must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision, research and service

SA   A   N   D   SD

23. Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them

SA   A   N   D   SD

24. Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds

SA   A   N   D   SD

25. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs

SA   A   N   D   SD

26. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance

SA   A   N   D   SD

27. Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures

SA   A   N   D   SD

28. Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large number of Faculty and University meetings

SA   A   N   D   SD

29. Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community

SA   A   N   D   SD

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30. I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a   SA A N D SD
    major contribution to their discipline area through
    scholarship and research

31. Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively   SA A N D SD
    without the strong and overt support of the staff in their
    School

32. Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the   SA A N D SD
    role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of
    School

33. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from   SA A N D SD
    academic staff about their efforts and achievements

34. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from   SA A N D SD
    university management about their efforts and achievements

35. A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads   SA A N D SD
    of School in order to attract and keep the best possible
    people for the role

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37. The administrative and leadership performance of the Head   SA A N D SD
    of School should be given additional weighting when they
    apply for academic promotion because of their limited
    capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile
    while in the position

38. There are significant advantages in having a Head of School   SA A N D SD
    appointed from 'outside' the university

Section 3

What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?

1)

2)

3)

Thank you for having taken the time to complete this questionnaire.

Now please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and place it in the UNE Internal Mail.

Appendix 5
Role of the Head of School Questionnaire
(Administration staff version)

INTRODUCTION

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Regards

Morna Winter-Irving
School of Professional Development and Leadership

Section 1: Biographic information

Please respond to this section by placing an X in the appropriate box after each item. If you believe that you 'fit' more than one box, please choose the box that best reflects your circumstances.

Location:
- ☐ Academic School
- ☐ Faculty Office
- ☐ Central Administration

Time in position:
- ☐ 1 year or less
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ over 10 years

Your sex:
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Section 2

In this section, you are asked to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with a number of statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in this university, as well as some suggestions regarding how the role might be improved.

Please CIRCLE the letter(s) on the right of each statement that best indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, according to the following key:

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A = agree
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D = disagree
SD = strongly agree

1. A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff — SA A N D SD

2. The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university — SA A N D SD

3. The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School — SA A N D SD

4. A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School — SA A N D SD

5. The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School — SA A N D SD

6. One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff — SA A N D SD

7. Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement — SA A N D SD

8. The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes — SA A N D SD

that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management

9. Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools   SA A N D SD

10. Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"   SA A N D SD

11. Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control   SA A N D SD

12. Few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management   SA A N D SD

13. Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations   SA A N D SD

14. It is important for Heads of School to ensure the general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems   SA A N D SD

15. Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality   SA A N D SD

16. I am aware that the Head of School is formally responsible for the design, development, content and presentation of the academic units of their School   SA A N D SD

17. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff   SA A N D SD

18. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for the timely review and redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and university programs and objectives   SA A N D SD

19. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities and support for professional development   SA A N D SD

20. The Head of School generally is the 'first port of call' for   SA A N D SD

159

staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, and concerns

21. The Head of School frequently is put in a very difficult position by staff who expect – even demand – that their issue or problem will be dealt with immediately, irrespective of whatever other priorities or issues the Head of School might have to deal with

SA A N D SD

22. I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half load for their management and administrative functions, and must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision, research and service

SA A N D SD

23. Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them

SA A N D SD

24. Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds

SA A N D SD

25. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs

SA A N D SD

26. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance

SA A N D SD

27. Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures

SA A N D SD

28. Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large number of Faculty and University meetings

SA A N D SD

29. Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community

SA A N D SD

30. I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a major contribution to their discipline area through scholarship and research

SA A N D SD

31. Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively without the strong and overt support of the staff in their School

SA A N D SD

32. Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of School

SA A N D SD

33. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from academic staff about their efforts and achievements

SA A N D SD

34. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from university management about their efforts and achievements

SA A N D SD

35. A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads of School in order to attract and keep the best possible people for the role

SA A N D SD

36. Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role without overt support for their actions and decisions from management

SA A N D SD

37. The administrative and leadership performance of the Head of School should be given additional weighting when they apply for academic promotion because of their limited capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile while in the position

SA A N D SD

38. There are significant advantages in having a Head of School appointed from 'outside' the university

SA A N D SD

Section 3

What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?

1)

2)

3)

Thank you for having taken the time to complete this questionnaire.

Now please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and place it in the UNE Internal Mail.

Appendix 6
Role of the Head of School – Questionnaire
(Executive Deans version)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed to provide information to support the research component of my MEdAdmin(Hons). My study focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in regional universities, using the University as a case study. The questions in Section 2 have been derived from interviews that I have held with Heads of School at the University in which they were asked to identify issues relating to the nature of their role and the factors that promote or impede their capacity to fulfill that role.

You are not required to place your name or contact details on the questionnaire – anonymity is guaranteed. Section A requests some general biographic information to allow more detailed analyses of responses. The level of biographic information requested is not sufficient to allow individual respondents to be identified. The final report will be written to ensure that no respondent can be identified.

Completed questionnaires will have their information transferred to a database, and will then be secured in a locked file for a period of five years before being destroyed.

You are under no obligation to complete this questionnaire. You may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Please react to every item, whether or not you feel you have sufficient information.

It is important that your responses be "independent", so please do not discuss them with others.

If you would like to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 67732581. A summary of findings from the research will be made available to all participants at the completion of the study.

Regards

Morna Winter-Irving
School of Professional Development and Leadership

Section 1: Biographic information

Please respond to this section by placing an X in the appropriate box after each item. If you believe that you 'fit' more than one box, please choose the box that best reflects your circumstances.

Time at UNE:
☐ 1 year or less
☐ 2-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ over 10 years

Time in position:
☐ 1 year or less
☐ 2-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ over 10 years

Your sex:
☐ Female
☐ Male

Section 2

In this section, you are asked to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with a number of statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of Heads of School in this university, as well as some suggestions regarding how the role might be improved.

Please CIRCLE the letter(s) on the right of each statement that best indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, according to the following key:

SA = strongly agree
A = agree
N = neither agree nor disagree
D = disagree
SD = strongly agree

---

1. A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff

SA A N D SD

2. The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university

SA A N D SD

3. The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School

SA A N D SD

4. A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School

SA A N D SD

5. The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School

SA A N D SD

6. One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff

SA A N D SD

7. Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement

SA A N D SD

8. The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes

SA A N D SD

that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management

9. Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools

SA A N D SD

10. Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"

SA A N D SD

11. Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control

SA A N D SD

12. Few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management

SA A N D SD

13. Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations

SA A N D SD

14. It is important for Heads of School to ensure the general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems

SA A N D SD

15. Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality

SA A N D SD

16. I am aware that the Head of School is formally responsible for the design, development, content and presentation of the academic units of their School

SA A N D SD

17. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff

SA A N D SD

18. I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for the timely review and redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and university programs and objectives

SA A N D SD

19. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities and support for professional development

SA A N D SD

20. The Head of School generally is the 'first port of call' for

SA A N D SD

staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, and concerns

21. The Head of School frequently is put in a very difficult position by staff who expect – even demand – that their issue or problem will be dealt with immediately, irrespective of whatever other priorities or issues the Head of School might have to deal with   SA   A   N   D   SD

22. I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half load for their management and administrative functions, and must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision, research and service   SA   A   N   D   SD

23. Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them   SA   A   N   D   SD

24. Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds   SA   A   N   D   SD

25. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs   SA   A   N   D   SD

26. Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance   SA   A   N   D   SD

27. Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures   SA   A   N   D   SD

28. Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large number of Faculty and University meetings   SA   A   N   D   SD

29. Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community   SA   A   N   D   SD

30. I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a   SA A N D SD
major contribution to their discipline area through
scholarship and research

31. Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively   SA A N D SD
without the strong and overt support of the staff in their
School

32. Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the   SA A N D SD
role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of
School

33. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from   SA A N D SD
academic staff about their efforts and achievements

34. Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from   SA A N D SD
university management about their efforts and achievements

35. A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads   SA A N D SD
of School in order to attract and keep the best possible
people for the role

36. Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role   SA A N D SD
without overt support for their actions and decisions from
management

37. The administrative and leadership performance of the Head   SA A N D SD
of School should be given additional weighting when they
apply for academic promotion because of their limited
capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile
while in the position

38. There are significant advantages in having a Head of School   SA A N D SD
appointed from 'outside' the university

Section 3

What do you believe are the three (3) major actions that could be taken to improve job effectiveness and satisfaction for Heads of School?

1)

2)

3)

Thank you for having taken the time to complete this questionnaire.

Now please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and place it in the UNE Internal Mail.

Appendix 7
Frequency distributions, medians, and Chi-Square values

Weighting: SA = 5, A = 4, N = 3, D = 2, SD = 1
N: Heads of School = 10; Executive Deans = 2; Academic staff = 15; Administrative staff = 8

Item 1: *A primary role of the Head of School is to 'bridge the gap' between university management and academic staff*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	37.5	37.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	21.4	57.1	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	26.4	58.8	8.8	5.9	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 19.7333
Significance: 0.0885

Item 2: *The Head of School plays a pivotal role in managing the balance between the 'business' and 'education' imperatives of the university*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	21.4	64.3	7.1	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	39.4	54.5	3.0	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 26.7113
Significance: 0.0094

Item 3: *The key role of a Head of School is to manage the human, physical and financial resources of the School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	22.2	11.1	11.1	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	28.6	64.3	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	36.4	54.5	6.1	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 25.9337
Significance: 0.0106

Item 4: *A key responsibility for the Head of School is to provide academic leadership – to motivate staff, encourage innovation, and provide clear educational direction to the School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	33.3	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Academic staff	64.3	28.6	7.1	0.0	0.0	5.0
Administrative staff	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
TOTAL	63.6	27.3	9.1	0.0	0.0	5.0

Chi Square: 24.9997
Significance: 0.0197

Item 5: *The management of academic staff is a complex, difficult, and frustrating function for a Head of School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	42.9	35.7	7.1	14.3	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
TOTAL	48.5	39.4	6.1	6.1	0.0	4.5

Chi Square: 26.7724
Significance: 0.0091

Item 6: *One of the most difficult and unrewarding tasks for a Head of School is the allocation and monitoring of workloads for academic staff*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	7.1	42.9	28.6	14.3	7.1	3.5
Administrative staff	62.5	25.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	5.0
TOTAL	33.3	42.4	15.2	6.1	3.0	4.0

Chi Square: 32.4636
Significance: 0.0009

Item 7: *Ultimately, it is Heads of School who are responsible for ensuring compliance of staff with university policies and procedures within the parameters of the Academic Staff Agreement*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	22.2	55.6	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	3.0
Academic staff	21.4	50.0	7.1	21.4	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	62.5	25.0	12.5	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	15.2	54.5	15.2	15.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 16.4552
Significance: 0.1716

Item 8: *The Head of School is the level where staff 'see' that decisions relevant to them are made, and so Heads of School often are held accountable by staff for policies and processes that have been decided at 'higher' levels of university management*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	55.6	33.3	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	2.0
Academic staff	21.4	42.9	7.1	28.6	0.0	3.0
Administrative staff	12.5	37.5	50.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
TOTAL	15.2	42.4	24.2	18.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 29.0019
Significance: 0.0028

Item 9: *Managing staff workloads is a major on-going source of tension and conflict between Heads of School and at least some members of the academic staff of their Schools*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	66.7	11.1	11.1	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	14.3	57.1	7.1	14.3	7.1	4.0
Administrative staff	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
TOTAL	21.2	60.1	6.3	9.1	3.3	4.0

Chi Square: 21.3723
Significance: 0.0504

Item 10: *Some academic staff simply don't give their Head of School "a fair go"*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	
Heads of School	0.0	55.6	33.3	0.0	11.1	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Academic staff	14.3	57.1	7.1	21.4	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	12.1	48.5	27.3	9.1	3.0	4.0

Chi Square: 23.4119
Significance: 0.0247

Item 11: *Heads of School are held accountable for the expenditure of monies over which they often have limited, if any, direct control*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	
Heads of School	55.6	33.3	11.1	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.5
Academic staff	7.1	85.7	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	37.5	50.0	12.5	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	18.2	54.5	18.2	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 32.9971
Significance: 0.0009

Item 12: *Few Heads of School have significant training or prior experience in financial management*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	
Heads of School	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	21.4	78.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	75.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	24.2	72.7	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 18.0229
Significance: 0.1157

Item 13: *Heads of School are expected to understand and manage financial trends, patterns, and aberrations*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	66.7	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.5
Academic staff	7.1	78.6	7.1	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	62.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	9.1	66.7	18.2	6.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 26.7002
Significance: 0.0090

Item 14: *It is important for Heads of School to ensure the general administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the School office and related administrative systems*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Academic staff	35.7	64.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	75.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	36.4	57.6	3.0	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 26.5115
Significance: 0.0098

Item 15: *Heads of School are expected to take a leading role in the development of educational visions for the programs in their Schools, and to lead the development and implementation of strategies for bringing those visions to reality*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	33.3	44.4	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	28.6	50.0	7.1	14.3	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	87.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	24.2	54.5	15.2	6.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 13.0017
Significance: 0.300708

Item 16: *I am aware that the Head of School is formally responsible for the design, development, content and presentation of the academic units of their School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	3.5
Academic staff	35.7	42.9	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	12.5	37.5	37.5	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	33.3	33.3	18.2	15.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.1141
Significance: 0.0071

Item17: *I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that units are taught and assessed by appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	35.7	57.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	87.5	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	33.3	60.5	3.0	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 26.3441
Significance: 0.0097

Item 18: *I am aware that the Head of School is responsible for the timely review and redevelopment of units to ensure currency and consistency with School, Faculty and university programs and objectives*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	22.2	66.7	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	42.9	42.9	7.1	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	37.5	37.5	25.0	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	24.2	51.5	15.2	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 24.5889
Significance: 0.0198

Item 19: *Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities and support for professional development*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	55.6	22.2	11.1	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Academic staff	35.7	57.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	21.2	60.6	12.1	6.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 16.9979
Significance: 0.0179

Item 20: *The Head of School generally is the 'first port of call' for staff complaints, requests, queries, wish lists, whinges, and concerns*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	35.7	50.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	37.5	50.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	39.4	51.5	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.6841
Significance: 0.0064

Item 21: *The Head of School frequently is put in a very difficult position by staff who expect – even demand – that their issue or problem will be dealt with immediately, irrespective of whatever other priorities or issues the Head of School might have to deal with*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	44.4	44.4	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Academic staff	7.1	57.1	21.4	14.3	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	12.1	48.5	33.3	6.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 23.4885
Significance: 0.0205

Item 22: *I am aware that Heads of School are only allocated a half load for their management and administrative functions, and must continue to carry a half load of teaching, supervision, research and service*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	50.0	28.6	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.5
Administrative staff	25.0	37.5	12.5	25.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	45.5	36.4	9.1	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 22.9991
Significance: 0.0286

Item 23: *Heads of School carry far too heavy a management and administrative load for the time allocation made available to them*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.5
Academic staff	64.3	28.6	7.1	0.0	0.0	5.0
Administrative staff	37.5	25.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	51.2	30.5	15.2	3.0	0.0	5.0

Chi Square: 27.6833
Significance: 0.0063

Item 24: *Heads of School have no alternative but to promote more entrepreneurial mindsets and practices among the staff in their Schools if they are to have any chance of balancing costs and available funds*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	22.2	55.6	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	7.1	35.7	14.3	35.7	7.1	3.0
Administrative staff	25.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	18.2	45.5	21.2	15.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 28.9779
Significance: 0.0049

Item 25: *Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who are 'philosophically opposed' to academics being entrepreneurial in order to help raise monies for the university's running costs*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	22.2	44.4	22.2	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	14.3	35.7	21.4	28.6	0.0	3.5
Administrative staff	12.5	50.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	15.2	45.5	24.2	15.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.0003
Significance: 0.0077

Item 26: *Heads of School are experiencing particular difficulties with some staff who actively resist university policies and procedures requiring professional accountability and compliance*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0	3.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	7.1	57.1	7.1	28.6	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	9.1	48.5	21.2	21.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.1191
Significance: 0.0067

Item 27: *Heads of School are often accused by some staff of 'bullying' simply for trying to ensure adherence to university policies and procedures*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	0.0	11.1	55.6	33.3	0.0	3.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Academic staff	14.3	35.7	28.6	14.3	7.1	3.5
Administrative staff	0.0	37.5	50.0	12.5	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	6.1	30.3	42.4	18.2	3.0	3.0

Chi Square: 25.4997
Significance: 0.0133

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Item 28: *Heads of School appear to have to attend a very large number of Faculty and University meetings*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	77.8	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Academic staff	14.3	57.1	14.3	14.3	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	15.2	60.6	15.2	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 19.8778
Significance: 0.0691

Item 29: *Heads of School are expected to maintain a high profile in the local professional community*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	0.0	22.2	33.3	33.3	11.1	3.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	2.0
Academic staff	7.1	7.1	28.6	28.6	28.6	2.0
Administrative staff	0.0	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	6.1	21.2	42.4	27.3	3.0	3.0

Chi Square: 18.4445
Significance: 0.0985

Item 30: *I am aware that Heads of School are expected to make a major contribution to their discipline area through scholarship and research*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	14.3	42.9	21.4	21.4	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	0.0	12.5	75.0	12.5	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	18.2	39.4	27.3	15.2	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 26.9991
Significance: 0.0079

Item 31: *Heads of School cannot perform their roles effectively without the strong and overt support of the staff in their School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	21.4	57.1	21.4	7.1	7.1	4.0
Administrative staff	62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
TOTAL	42.2	48.5	9.2	0.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 22.9467
Significance: 0.0365

Item 32: *Given what they know of the nature and expectations of the role, few staff are likely to aspire to the position of Head of School*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	44.4	44.4	0.0	11.1	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	3.0
Academic staff	42.9	35.7	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	37.5	25.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	39.4	36.4	15.2	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 17.4976
Significance: 0.1391

Item 33: *Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from academic staff about their efforts and achievements*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	11.1	22.2	44.4	22.2	0.0	3.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	21.4	57.1	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	25.0	62.5	0.0	0.0	3.0
TOTAL	15.2	42.4	33.3	9.1	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.0009
Significance: 0.0077

Item 34: *Heads of School receive inadequate positive feedback from university management about their efforts and achievements*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	22.2	33.3	44.4	0.0	0.0	4.0
Executive Deans	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	3.0
Academic staff	21.4	42.9	35.7	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
TOTAL	21.2	36.4	39.4	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 25.7447
Significance: 0.0127

Item 35: *A greater range of incentives should be provided for Heads of School in order to attract and keep the best possible people for the role*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	66.7	22.2	11.1	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.5
Academic staff	42.9	50.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	42.2	24.1	15.2	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 29.8881
Significance: 0.0029

Item 36: *Heads of School cannot effectively perform their role without overt support for their actions and decisions from management*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	35.7	57.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	33.3	63.6	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 19.3227
Significance: 0.0776

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Item 37: *The administrative and leadership performance of the Head of School should be given additional weighting when they apply for academic promotion because of their limited capacity to develop a strong teaching and research profile while in the position*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	66.7	22.2	11.1	0.0	0.0	5.0
Executive Deans	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Academic staff	35.7	42.9	14.3	7.1	0.0	4.0
Administrative staff	62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
TOTAL	36.4	39.4	21.2	3.0	0.0	4.0

Chi Square: 27.1197
Significance: 0.0071

Item 38: *There are significant advantages in having a Head of School appointed from 'outside' the university*

Cohort	Percentage distribution					Median
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Heads of School	0.0	22.2	44.4	11.1	0.0	3.0
Executive Deans	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	3.5
Academic staff	21.4	7.1	50.0	21.4	0.0	3.0
Administrative staff	12.5	0.0	62.5	12.5	12.5	3.0
TOTAL	15.2	9.1	48.5	18.2	9.1	3.0

Chi Square: 14.3339
Significance: 0.2424

Appendix 8
Principal component analysis – Varimax solution[+]

Item	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	-008	164	254	315	-001	124	-117	357*
2	486	159	-507*	243	-140	112	001	259
3	007	-271	497*	363	-152	-001	006	473
4	-208	181	440	009	-174	519*	389	-003
5	-103	554*	-141	114	-274	-406	149	337
6	005	386	-316	-119	-580*	003	-113	001
7	499*	-232	-210	008	-153	009	463	-106
8	297	493*	-279	009	363	121	-239	005
9	-212	431*	296	-360	-279	183	412	-004
10	-550*	300	344	-004	-398	007	-211	177
11	579*	-131	-006	-343	219	126	117	006
12	484	-001	318	-600*	-001	004	-158	-004
13	-203	429	-293	350	517*	-001	189	130
14	300	384	193	002	006	485*	-241	-004
15	182	323	-005	329	-137	-214	410*	173
16	006	001	008	-100	001	-527*	322	-194
17	749*	196	228	005	008	005	257	007
18	516*	-169	119	151	217	-102	344	-008
19	190	-293	616*	488	162	-157	-009	154
20	003	579*	-007	003	114	-423	-156	161
21	-222	585*	-238	209	005	009	-339	006
22	532*	352	-008	007	-002	-008	-002	-379
23	285	531*	230	-217	006	-142	256	-368
24	423	-145	-432*	170	-004	383	-119	006
25	-310	551*	-308	161	144	377	170	-114
26	-646*	317	006	008	192	393	286	-007
27	-573*	175	-003	-255	200	-140	343	001
28	-273	006	-004	-302	456*	-337	-008	352
29	-373	-197	352	-007	567*	004	001	-001
30	381	004	-262	-337	480*	245	007	227
31	009	-002	-473	-380	001	007	252	494*
32	134	115	004	118	-183	-004	325	332*
33	-004	567	617*	-005	173	009	009	002
34	168	652*	201	005	106	-318	-225	-203
35	496*	397	448	-001	-003	274	-215	102
36	634*	009	331	-313	007	002	-005	375
37	446*	305	-008	005	-147	-173	-006	-149
38	237	-164	003	785*	205	001	101	-195

+ Decimal points removed
* Allocated to factor