VICE CHANCELLORS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY? A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.

Dr. Bernard O'Meara

School of Business, University of Ballarat, P.O. Box 663, Ballarat, Vic. 3350. Tel. (61) 5327900

Email: b.omeara@ballarat.edu.au

Dr. Stanley Petzall

Deakin Business School, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria 3261, Australia. **Tel. (61) (03) 52 271036**

Email: petzall@deakin.edu.au

VICE CHANCELLORS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY? A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.

ABSTRACT

This paper is based on recent Ph.D research. The practices for appointing Vice Chancellors (VC's) in Australian Universities were examined, together with the changing role of the VC and new demographic patterns in VC backgrounds. A number of other issues were also examined, including the training and preparation of VC's, mentoring and the changing skill base required to be effective in the role. In addition, the paradox was investigated of appointing academics from the ranks of individuals with non-business backgrounds, to run large enterprises which are being compelled to adopt an increasingly business-oriented focus.

The methodology employed involved the use of a survey instrument administered to present and former VC's, Chancellors and members of selection panels, supplemented by interviews. Representatives of the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) and consultants operating in the academic field were also interviewed. In addition, extensive use was made of public domain material.

The research was mainly qualitative in nature. However, use was also made of descriptive statistics to provide an insight into how higher education in Australia is changing and to analyse survey findings.

Some key results of the research are reported, including the importance of informal processes such as networking in the selection of VC's, the key role played by Chancellors, and the continued practice of appointing VC's from within academia rather than the private sector. This is in spite of evidence that the role of the VC has changed to one of strategic planner and business manager rather than the more traditional role, in the context of a rapidly changing external environment. Suggestions are also made for ongoing research in the area.

Introduction:

The role and functions of the Vice Chancellor (VC) in Australian universities has been the subject of much debate and analysis, as discussed below. However, surprisingly little attention has been given to the ways in which VC's are recruited and selected.   The research presented in this study attempts to fill that gap by applying recruitment and selection theory to the role of the Australian Vice-Chancellor. It therefore addresses a critical issue for Universities and the Higher Education system at a time of great change in the system.

In 1997, the Higher Education (HE) system was comprised of 43 institutions, of which 39 were Universities. For the same year, the HE system had a total number of 695,000 students (an increase of 67% over the last decade) and a funding base of $1,602,900,000 (Andrews et al, 1999). The 39 Universities were spread over 130 campuses and employed over 77,500 full-time and fractional staff. They are therefore large and complex organisations.   Many of these institutions were multi-campus

operating both domestically and overseas and as Federal funding has been reduced, they have had to operate in a very competitive and international arena.

There are thus 39 key individuals, the VC 's of Australian Universities, who are responsible for a huge amount of public funding, and large numbers of staff and students. The recruitment and selection of these key executives is critical, given the changing nature of the environment and the real threat of a further reduction of federal funding, increased global competitiveness, and the need for HE institutions to act as independent strategic business units.

Research Objectives:

The role of Vice-Chancellors has been difficult enough in the past, however now they also needed to be the chief academics, administrators, strategists and fundraisers. Recent internal and external changes have made the role of the Vice-Chancellor more complex and demanding, requiring people with greater political "savvy" and diplomatic skills. Vice-Chancellors are now the Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) of their institutions. Sloper (1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1996) investigated the complexity of the role, its legal basis and incumbency and demographic patterns. He concluded that only exceptionally talented people could fill such a complex role.

The Ph.D thesis on which this study is based, builds upon the data identified and examined by Sloper and attempts to fill the gaps. The Ph.D research therefore attempts to answer a number of questions including the following:

1. What are the recruitment processes used to target suitable candidates?

2. What are the selection methods used to identify the most suitable candidate?

3. What criteria are used to select candidates and against which they can be benchmarked?

4. What are the key organizational characteristics that influence the processes and outcomes?

5. What are the key individual characteristics of candidates that are valued by selection panels?

6. How effective are these processes and can they be improved?

The above are the broad issues addressed in the Ph.D thesis. However, in this paper, only selected findings are reported owing to space constraints.

THE PARADOX OUTLINED

The research reported in this study addresses a paradox. During the 1980's and 1990's the Federal Government moved toward increasing the degree of corporatisation within the Australian Higher Education sector. As a consequence, Universities have had to adopt a wider range of management practices than was previously the case. It might therefore be expected that Australian Universities would appoint their Chief Executive Officers (Vice–Chancellors) from applicants with high levels of skill and expertise in these fields, possibly from the corporate environment and the private sector.

Yet evidence suggests they do not do so, or only to a small degree. An exception to the above occurred in November 1998, when Dr John Hood, the former senior

executive of the Fletcher Challenge group of companies, was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Auckland University (Dunbar, 1998). Professor Ken McKinnon also highlighted the issue of a wider base of recruitment on the occasion of his resignation as VC of Wollongong, when he publicly stated that VCs were under-prepared for their roles and needed formal training for the position (Carruthers, 1994).

Research Methodology:

The research methodology employed included a review of literature on Recruitment and Selection and in particular, for the recruitment of Executives and CEOs. However while there was a wealth of material relating to the private sector, there was less Australian material concerning the Higher Education sector. There was more material available covering the recruitment and selection of College and University Presidents in the US commensurate with the greater volume of research in that country.

The US material, while predominantly descriptive, did yield an insight into the typical processes used to recruit College Presidents . The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) has produced Selection and Appointment Procedures (1993) for University academic staff at levels A-E. However neither the AVCC nor DETYA have provided any guidelines for the recruitment and selection of VCs, suggesting that selection panels required flexibility and greater latitude when selecting suitable candidates for this complex role. The absence of such material was considered important as it implied discretion was required by selection panels.

Several valuable studies were located, including *Effective Recruitment, Rules, Practices, Procedures* (ACM, 1994) and *Trends in Staff Selection and Recruitment*

(National Institute of Labour Studies Inc, 1997) a paper prepared for DEETYA. These provided a relatively recent review of Australian recruitment and selection practices and together with other researched material, provided part of the theoretical framework. These practices were then compared to US academic recruitment practices and contemporary private sector recruitment and selection practices.

Material analysed by David Sloper provided essential background detail on VCs for the years 1963, 1973, 1983 and 1993. However this study reviewed all known public domain material related to all VCs for the periods of five year intervals from 1960 to 2000. In order to maintain consistency, data was gathered that was similar to that gathered by Sloper, which provided an overview of relevant pathways used by incumbents to obtain their positions as well as details of their backgrounds, previous roles, age and tenure, discipline base and related matters.

The data was collected from a variety of sources including

- Who's Who in Australia (1960-2000)

- The AVCC Senior Staff Lists (1970-2000)

- Commonwealth Universities Yearbook (1960-2000)

- Other bibliographic sources such as *Contemporary Australians*

- Media releases

- Direct contact with University archivists

- Who's Who of Executive Heads, 1998.

The gathering of material from such a variety of sources ensured the greatest degree of completeness and consistency .   However, there were some gaps in relation to a small number of VC's over the 40 year period covered.

The data was analysed, compared to the material presented by Sloper . Some interesting demographic trends were identified, which, however, are not the main focus of this paper. Each University was contacted in order to obtain all available material, mainly in the public domain, concerning recruitment and selection procedures for VC's including:

1. Position and Person Specifications

2. Job adverts, selection criteria

3. Applicants details where made public,

4. Process outline, composition of selection panels

5. Academic Senate/Board minutes dealing with the position

6. The strategic plan/intent of each University

7. Set questions asked and related material

A survey instrument was constructed, to be administered to current and former Vice Chancellors, existing and former Chancellors and selection panel members.
The questionnaires were reviewed in a pilot study and approved by the AVCC. The questionnaires involved Likert scales, and included both open and closed questions. The questionnaires forwarded to the respondents were slightly different, depending on whether they were present or former VC's or chancellors or selection panel members. The questionnaires forwarded to incumbent and previous VC's and Chancellors asked for details such as age, gender, country of birth and discipline base. The remainder of

the questionnaire was divided into sections in relation to the position, the recruitment

and selection processes used, and a blank section for comments from respondents.

The questions in relation to the position included:

• do you have a formal position description?

• what are/were your average weekly working hours?

• do you believe that the role of a VC is equivalent to that of a CEO in the private

sector?

• how is the role of VC changing?

• what aspects of the role if any were you unprepared for?

• should a VC have experience outside academia?

• should a VC have a background in business?

In terms of the recruitment and selection processes, questions asked of present and

former VC's included:

• were you formally invited to apply?

• did you respond to an advertisement for the position?

• were you approached by a consultant?

• were you required to undergo any form of testing?

• how many interviews did you have?

• were you interviewed by a panel?

• did you meet all senior university staff?

• how long did the process take from application to appointment?

• were you required to give a presentation?

• was your partner included in any activities, including social activities?

• were the selection criteria made clear to you?

• did the university have a clear strategic direction prior to your appointment?

• following your appointment, did you need to provide a new or different strategic

direction?

The questionnaires were followed up by interviews with respondents (mainly former

VC's and Chancellors) who were willing to be interviewed further about the matters

raised.

Apart from the use of descriptive statistics, the methodology was largely qualitative in

nature, exhibiting the characteristics outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 27):

The natural setting is the direct data source and the researcher is the key instrument;

The research is descriptive in nature;

The research is concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products;

Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively;

"Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach, and there is a focus on

participant perspectives.

The survey instrument was distributed to present and former Chancellors and Vice

Chancellors, and Selection Panel members as the key players involved in the

recruitment and selection process. The responses obtained are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of research methodologies involving interviews and questionnaires

	Number of	* Number	Number	Number

	questionnaires sent out	returned but not completed	returned and completed	interviewed
Vice-Chancellors	39	6	15	8
Former VCs	38	6	15	12
Chancellors	39	3	13	7
Former Chancellors	37	9	7	2
Selection Panel Members	100	25	23	0
Consultants	0	0	0	2
AVCC	0	0	0	2

* A number of Universities returned questionnaires as their Councils' considered the topic too sensitive.

Unfortunately, a number of Chancellors, VCs and University Councils were not prepared to provide <u>any</u> data for analysis. However, there was sufficient data to identify some significant trends. Nevertheless, given the importance of this research to higher education
the lack of responses from some quarters was disappointing.

Results

'Any university that relies too heavily on the interview has problems.'

It is not possible to review all the outcomes of the research thus only some of the more significant findings will be presented. As might be expected the panel interview was the most common type of interview used together with behavioural and situational interviews.

The panel sizes varied from three to 22 but the trend was towards 6-8 members and staff representation on selection panels was declining. However while external stakeholder representation was considered important some respondents commented on the ease with which panel members could be selected/elected depending upon predisposition to relevant issues.

An example given was a university that wished to appoint a female Vice-Chancellor. Members of the panel were chosen based predominantly upon their support for this issue. The inevitable outcome was the appointment of a female VC. The same principle could be used to ensure the appointment of a specific candidate because that candidate is known to support certain views or has specific assets such as a strong network in political circles.

It was therefore interesting when former and incumbent VCs commented that in some instances there appeared to be two sets of selection criteria. The first was the formal set which is outlined in advertisements and information packs. The second set of selection criteria was far more subjective and rarely appeared in writing.

Incumbents reported that early in the interview the panel established academic credibility, leadership and management competencies. However later or in subsequent interviews the focus tended to shift toward personal attributes, beliefs and value systems. This was confirmed by Chancellors who reported that they wanted to envisage how a candidate would appear on television or in the print media. They therefore delved into personality, diplomacy skills, ability to work with others, personal philosophy, longer term ambitions, industrial and public relations skills.

The most common selection criteria included:

- The ability to set the strategic direction of the University

- Commitment

- Personal motivation

- Communication competence and

- Knowledge of strategic management

These criteria were commonly referred to by Chancellors, former Chancellors and Selection Panel members in interviews. However some Universities had specific selection criteria based upon organisational antecedents such as strategic focus, geographic location and student demographics. Where such a review of organisational antecedents did occur the outcome was a belief that the role of VC was more akin to a CEO than a chief academic.

The research established that the "great eight "Universities can afford to choose a VC from other younger and smaller universities. But the view emerged from respondents that "Gumtree Universities" and younger universities saw the reputation of the older

universities (academic rather than vocational) as a bankable commodity and appointed their VC's accordingly.   These were generally referred to as "fantasy appointments" and saw a DVC or PVC from a larger university being appointed as VC. However most if not all Universities of Technology have made internal appointments from Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVC's) or Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVC's) to fill the role of the VC as a response to a decision to move in a different strategic direction.

Another interesting comment made by incumbent and former VCs was the belief that the decision had in fact been made prior to the interviews. Chancellors would only comment that quite often there were 'preferred' candidates amongst those being interviewed and that quite often these candidates were appointed.

While VCs were not tested in any way as sometimes occurs in the private sector Chancellors did note that networking was extensively used to notify potential candidates of the impending vacancy. Another associated trend was that many incumbents commented that they would not apply for a position unless they were personally 'invited' to do so. The reasons given for this varied from the need for confidentiality to the belief that the better candidates would in fact be contacted. Such an invitation conveyed to the applicants a message that the university council considered them to have all the requisite competencies required for the role and also indicated to the candidates the esteem in which the university held them. Thus if the candidate was not successful there was no 'loss of face'.

This discussion then raised the obvious question; how do University Councils and Chancellors identify these likely candidates? This question was seen as highly

contentious by most interviewees; however the common response was that the device of the informal list was used. This informal list contains the names of those most likely to be successful in gaining an appointment.

It became clear that while succession planning does not exist at this level individual VCs identify future potential leaders and develop them accordingly. Then when the opportunity arises they will put forward their proteges as suitable candidates for the position of VC. These names are informally discussed with peers and exchanged so that incumbents know likely candidates and pass these onto Chancellors. Thus while this list exists it does so only in an informal sense. These candidates become the preferred candidates more likely to be appointed to the position. Consultants also used the names on this list, in addition to conducting executive search and advertising.

According to respondents, preparation for the role of VC varies although there was stated to be little formal preparation. The AVCC was rarely involved or informed of impending vacancies but does conduct a range of courses for senior academics . This contrasts with New Zealand where preparation is more formalised, along with succession planning and performance based contracts.

The most common route to the position was for likely academic leaders to be identified and appointed Heads of Schools or Deans with executive powers over all academic issues as well as staffing and budget control. This was seen as a pivotal point in the career of academics as they were then more likely to be appointed a PVC or a DVC.

Table 2 Role of incumbents immediately prior to current appointment **(%).**

	2000	**1995**	**1990**	**1985**	**1980**	**1975**	**1970**	**1965**	**1960**
VC	21	3	15	16	0	6	7	0	0
DVC	31	30	8	11	16	6	7	8	0
PVC	10	21	23	16	16	17	13	0	0
Other Academic	23	25	31	41	52	54	40	71	50
Senior Admin	10	18	19	11	16	17	33	21	40
Govt	0	0	4	5	0	0	0	0	10
UNK	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N=	**39**	**39**	**26**	**19**	**19**	**18**	**15**	**14**	**10**

Clear trends are apparent from Table 2. As the number of universities has increased so to has the opportunity for incumbent VCs to move from one university to another generally larger and older university at the same level. Also as the number of universities has grown, the number of DVCs and PVCs has also increased. This is seen as reflecting the need to corporatise becoming more important as government funding declines. This increase in DVC's and PVC's has provided a large pool within Australia from which universities are drawing future VCs. The increase in this pool of academics has resulted in a decline since 1960 of 'Other Academics' such as Heads of Schools, Deans and professors being appointed VC.

There has also been a noticeable decline in senior administrators and government officials being appointed as VC's . The rise in intermediaries (DVCs and PVCs) between VCs and Deans has seen a rise in likely successors being drawn from the DVC and PVC range. Also, DVC's and PVC's have been given the opportunity to prove themselves by being asked to fill in for VC's on occasion.

" I liked him (the candidate), I ran him by my wife and she liked him so the interview was where I sold him to council!'

One major surprise was the overwhelming belief expressed by all respondents that the Chancellor had paramount power. This position was seen as anything but that of a figurehead, to the extent that selection panel members indicated that the Chancellor made the final decision, not necessarily with consultation. To a considerable extent this view was supported by Chancellors interviewed, who saw their relationship with the incoming VC as being of very great importance. This was viewed as just as important if not more so than matching the competencies of the VC with the requirements of the organisation. It was also stated that selection panel members took their lead from the Chancellor and thus characteristics deemed desirable by the Chancellor were then considered important by members of the selection panel. The correspondence between the views of Chancellor and VC was viewed as being legitimate in the selection process.

Case Studies.

Two universities consented to assist with case studies. Both were established post 1988, but had previously been Colleges of Advanced Education. In both cases, the

outgoing incumbent was Foundation VC, with between 6 and 11 years service. The Chancellor in the first university was a respected member of the business community, while in the second case he had a long history of service in Australian universities.

In case study one, both Chancellor and VC were interviewed, and supplementary material was provided by the Council Secretary. In the second case study, on the VC could be interviewed. The material supplied by the universities has been edited to provide anonymity, and avoid the identification of specific individuals.

The two universities are very different. The first is located in the central part of a capital city, the second in a regional area. The first university has 10,000 more students than the second. The first has seven faculties, some 40 departments, 7 schools, 2 Institutes, spread between higher education and the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sectors, and over 30 research centres. The second has nine Schools in the higher education sector, six TAFE division schools and very few research centres. Both universities had undergone the transition from CAE's, and the second had also merged with a TAFE college some four years after gaining university status. In each case, the universities were losing their foundation VC's, who had steered them through the transition phase. In the first case, the outgoing VC was the previous director, while in the second the incumbent had been drawn from a larger university to take up the role. In the former case, the incumbent had been a DVC.

Different consultants were used in the selection processes for the new VC, which may explain the differences in the processes. Also, while both appointment resulted in an internal candidate being nominated, they were appointed for different reasons. In the

first case, the Council determined the role to be that of a CEO, while in the second, it was deemed to be mainly an academic role. In both cases, the universities decided the available resources would not allow them to create a substantial pool of applicants from which to choose a new VC. In neither case did the Chancellor contact other universities or ask the consultants to target or approach specific individuals. In both cases, there was one internal candidate, and all other candidates were externals. Also, in case study one, the university was satisfied with the strategic direction forged by the outgoing VC.

However, in the second case, it appears that the Council wished to pursue a new strategic direction. The Council in the first case wanted a CEO who could operate in an academic context, while in case two the Council wanted a more traditional academic. This may also be a function of the respective Chancellors, as in case 1, the Chancellor was a prominent businessman, while in case two he was a former VC. In both cases, the consultant worked with the Chancellor , the Council and the selection panel, and assisted them to focus on the role of the new VC, and hence his/her desired attributes. Both appointees commented on the benefits of having consultants involved, though in case study one, the consultants appeared to be working with a different set of selection criteria to those of the panel. This resulted in confusion and concern for candidates.

However, it is clear the consultants translated the immediate and strategic needs of universities, as determined by their respective councils, to identify attributes in the candidates which would make for success in the role. In the first case, the council

took nearly a year determine the role of the new VC, the strategic priorities, and the desirable attributes of the new appointee.

It is interesting that the panel in the first case did not ask set questions, but the panel in the second did, as the consultants in the second case did not recommend the use of such questions. Thus, clearly, their use was advisory only. Councils set the framework and consultants worked within it.

This was determined early in the process by the universities, with information packages and internal advertisements being internally consistent. In the second case, Council decided not to set selection criteria, leaving candidates scope to show they could set their own priorities and direction.

The panels were chaired by the Chancellors, and were kept small, six and seven members respectively. In case one, all members of the panel were experienced in senior appointments, while in case two, 6 out of 7 had such experience. In each case only small number of applicants were interviewed. In case one, two candidates were considered appointable, and three in case study two.

This supports the view that while the pool of suitable applicants may be growing, the increasing complexity of the role can actually narrow the number of appointable candidates. As one respondent Chancellor stated: "It is difficult getting a large pool of interest. Most universities are quite delighted if they have a serious choice to make. You can expect the better candidates to be approached rather than apply, and the advertising method is almost certainly not going to succeed."

Another aspect of consistency is the role of the partner. The partners of candidates

had no part in the selection process, and neither panel believed they should.

Candidates were interviewed for approximately an hour and a half. The panel met

five times in case study two, but only once in case study one. This was because the

Council in case study two had been meeting for almost 12 months to discuss the

future of the university and the VC's role, and only one meeting was needed to

confirm what questions would be asked in the interview.

It is also of interest to note that the consultants who were interviewed indicated that

they recommended the use of performance-based contracts, yet the university which

had previously used them in case study two rejected this approach. However, in case

study one, a different firm of consultants was used, and the appointed indicated that

he wanted a performance-based contract.

However, the most intriguing differences were in the backgrounds of the Chancellors

and view of the respective councils on the role of the VC. This once again highlights

the role of the Chancellor in the process, and the influence the Chancellor can wield

over the Council. In the interviews previously discussed, the significance of the

Chancellor's role was much commented on, together with the notion that the

Chancellor and the VC constitute a working team.

In case study one, the Chancellor was a prominent businessman with an international

profile, and most council members were also from a similar background, familiar with

concepts of private sector corporate governance. Thus, the council was well qualified

to appoint a senior executive. However, while they believed the university showed

the characteristics of a large private sector business, they still imposed the threshold

requirement of academic credibility. The Chancellor commented: "Generally

speaking you need people with some experience and knowledge of what they are

going to be doing. They will not get that if they have not been in the sector. You

would not expect the CEO of BHP to come from the university sector. It would not

happen."

They therefore required candidates to have a Ph.D and to come from the HE or a

closely related sector. However, having established the threshold of academic

credibility, they did not believe they necessarily required an academic. Instead the

Chancellor believed VC's are involved less and less in traditional academic activities

and more and more in the management and leadership of the enterprise.

It was considered that such traditional activities should be delegated to DVC's and

PVC's. This echoes the view emanating from the interviews, that the role of the VC

determines the role and purpose of subordinates, university structure and governance.

(Marginson and Considine 2000) This view is consistent with that expressed by a

number of respondents to the questionnaires who referred to the flow-on impact of

appointing a new VC. Thus, the Chancellor and Council took the view that the VC

was indeed responsible for the "bottom line" in all areas of performance, including

fund-raising, investment strategy, and the efficient use of property. It was noted that

most universities are now dependent on commercial agreements for more than half

their income, with corresponding legal obligations. With an annual turnover of

A$400 million, 50,000 students and 3,000 staff, Council in Case Study one decided it was in the best interest of the university to have it managed in a manner similar to the private sector.

In Case Study Two, the Chancellor was a former VC and a distinguished academic. The selection committee contained three academic members, while the two external members of council had a long history of association with education. The other two members wee the two Deputy Chancellors. Thus, it is reasonable to assume the panel had a largely academic perspective. The appointee also held strong views that the role was mainly an academic one, and voiced this opinion in the ten minutes afforded him at the commencement of his interview with the panel. The advertisement for the position also referred to it as one of leadership in teaching, tertiary education and funding. Thus, both the Council and the candidate agreed on the primarily academic nature of the role. In this appointment, Council appears to have favoured a strong academic with   management and leadership qualities.

Apart from the role of the Chancellor and university councils, another factor in the appointment process was the size of the two universities. The smaller regional university was still trying to establish its academic credibility within the community. This is similar to the traditional pattern discussed earlier, with a foundation VC drawn from a much large and older institution, as was the DVC who was ultimately appointed as VC. It was noted earlier that the image of the older university may be a bankable commodity that newer universities try to replicate to their advantage.

The other interesting point is the strategic direction adopted by each university. In case study one, the university was satisfied with the strategic direction of the university, and its reputation was firmly in place. There was no desire to introduce major change, and hence the council accepted the proposal of the panel to appoint the internal candidate, who could best follow this direction.

In the second case the university believed change was necessary, but not necessarily radical change. It had a DVC with 7 years experience across two universities, and it seems that while he did not view himself as an "inside outsider" the University Council may have done so. However, he had a strong grip on the issues facing the university and could evaluate previous strategies and put forward viable alternatives.

The processes in the two case studies are similar, but both contrast with the processes used by universities in the past, or those which have not engaged a search firm to assist in the appointment process. In the past, the processes were considered by participants to be less than confidential, often involved presentations, and meeting faculty and senior staff, and were rather lengthy and dominated by comparatively large selection committees.

Chancellors used networks extensively to identify potential candidates or relied on advertisements to attract candidates. They relied heavily on written rather than verbal references and a number of participants in the process admitted there was no emphasis on determining university antecedents and matching these with the desirable attributes sought in candidates. Selection Committee members did not always have experience in senior appointments and brought an overly subjective aspect to the process,

appointing the wrong candidate for the wrong reasons on occasions. Former

Chancellors and Vice chancellors themselves were highly critical of the processes,

and believed they needed to change. The contrast between the process as described in

the case studies, and earlier practices is clearly evident.

Emerging issues

While the focus of the research was recruitment and selection a number of important

issues were raised but could not be given the due consideration they required. These

issues included the perceived need for mentoring despite only one respondent

reporting having a professional mentor.

It also became apparent that while performance based contracts for VCs were

increasing slightly they were not widely used. In fact those who did have performance

based contracts had in many instances requested them. The lack of performance based

contracts was also seen as a reason why many VCs were not reappointed at the expiry

of their terms. There was also a lack of preparation for selection panel members, as

few were experienced in interviewing or had received any relevant support training.

Another need that was identified was the need for a more consolidated approach to

training potential VCs.

Professor Gus Guthrie (formerly VC of UTS) instituted a policy whereby he had

regular sabbaticals and as such required DVCs to assume his role of VC during these

periods. This served two purposes. The first was that it allowed the university to

identify the most suitable senior academics for advancement to the most senior role.

The second purpose was that it allowed those filling in for the VC to determine if they were interested in taking this major step in their career. The move from DVC or PVC to that of VC is not necessarily the ideal for all incumbents but being in the position even for a short period helped them to make this decision.

Future Research Opportunities.

Future research could address issues such as the role of the Chancellor in recruitment and selection of VC's, systematic methods of training and preparing aspirants to the role of VC, and a longitudinal study using this research as the basis to monitor methods of appointment and their effectiveness. There would also be scope for comparative studies between the university and the private sectors in respect of the appointment of CEO's.

The findings reported in this paper have been conveyed to the AVCC, the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee and DEST, which will hopefully feed back into improved selection and recruitment of VC's in the future. Suggestions such as those mentioned by Professor Guthrie above should also be valuable in improving the recruitment and selection process.

Conclusion:

This research yielded an abundance of useful information for analysis. However only a very small proportion could be outlined here. The research broadly indicates that the profile of VC's is changing, towards becoming a CEO of a complex modern

university in an increasingly competitive environment. In such an environment, new skills, such as strategic management ability and fund-raising ability may outweigh the traditional skills previously seen as important. However, VC's are still largely drawn from academia rather than private industry . In the future the recruitment base may have to be widened to get suitable appointees. The recruitment and selection of Vice-Chancellors is extremely important and needs to be undertaken as professionally as possible as the outcome impacts upon virtually all areas of Australian higher education. Yet, selection and recruitment processes are still largely informal in nature, and networking remains a very important part of the process.

References:

ACM Human Resources. (1994) Effective recruitment: rules, practices, procedures. Melbourne, ACM.

Andrews, L. et al. (1998) Characteristics and performance of higher education institutions: (a preliminary investigation). [Internet] Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Available from:

http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/otherpub/heperf.pdf [Accessed 5th February, 1999].

Association of Commonwealth Universities. (1998) 1998 Who's who of executive heads.
London, ACU.

Association of Commonwealth Universities. Commonwealth universities yearbook.
London, ACU, various years, 1960-1998

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Senior university 0fficers Canberra, AVCC. Various years, 1970-1990.

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Higher education institutions senior officers: 1991, 2/91. Canberra, AVCC.

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Higher education institutions senior officers 1992, 2/92. Canberra, AVCC.

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Senior officers in Australian higher education institutions, Canberra, AVCC. Various years, 1993-2000

Carruthers, Fiona. (1994) McKinnon quits, queries VC training. The Australian: Higher Education Supplement, 16th February, p 25.

Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. (1987) Australian standard classifications of occupations. AGPS, Canberra.

Department of Employment, Education and Training. (1993) National report on Australia's higher education sector. Canberra, AGPS.

Department of Employment, Education and Training. (1998a) Learning for life, final report. Review of higher education financing and policy. Canberra, AGPS.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. (1998b) Selected higher education student statistics, 1998. Canberra, AGPS.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. (1999a) Higher education report for the 1999 to 2001 triennium. Canberra, AGPS.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. (1999b) Selected higher education staff statistics, 1998. Canberra, AGPS.

Dunbar, Jane. (1998) Auckland's blue-chip vc tackled. The Australian: Higher Education Supplement. 11th November, p. 29.

Marginson, S. and Considine, M. (2000) The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia. Melbourne. Cambridge University Press.

O'Meara, B. Recruitment and Selection of Vice chancellors for Australian Universities. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Deakin University, 2002. (2 volumes).

Osborne, S. (1999) AVCC database report: Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, last updated 22-2-99. [Internet]. Pp 1-4. Available from: http://www.avcc.edu.au:80cgi-bin/xref.prl?11+9+21 [Accessed 23 February, 1999].

Sloper, D.W. (1983) University administrators: a conceptual identity. Journal of Educational Administration and History. 15 (2) pp 49-57.

Sloper, D.W. (1985) A social characteristics profile of Australian vice-chancellors. Higher Education. 14 (4) pp. 355-386.

Sloper, D.W. (1986) Science-a ladder to the vice-chancellor's office. Journal of Tertiary Educational Administration. 8 (1) pp. 83-86.

Sloper, D.W. (1987) Australian vice-chancellors: incumbency patterns in an emerging system. The Journal of Educational Administration. 25 (2) pp. 269-291.

Sloper. D.W. (1989a) The legal and formal basis to the office of the vice-chancellor in Australian universities. Higher Education. 18 (2) pp. 189-208.

Sloper. D.W. (1989b) The selection of vice-chancellors: the Australian experience. Higher Education Quarterly. 43 (3) pp. 246-265.

Sloper. D.W. (1994) The demographics of current vice-chancellors: a social characteristics profile. IN: The Modern Vice-Chancellor. pp. 1-50, Canberra, AGPS.

Sloper, D.W. (1996) The work patterns of Australian vice-chancellors. Higher Education, 31(2) pp 205-31

Wooden, M., Harding, D. eds. (1997) Trends in staff selection and recruitment. Melbourne, National Institute of Labour Studies Inc.