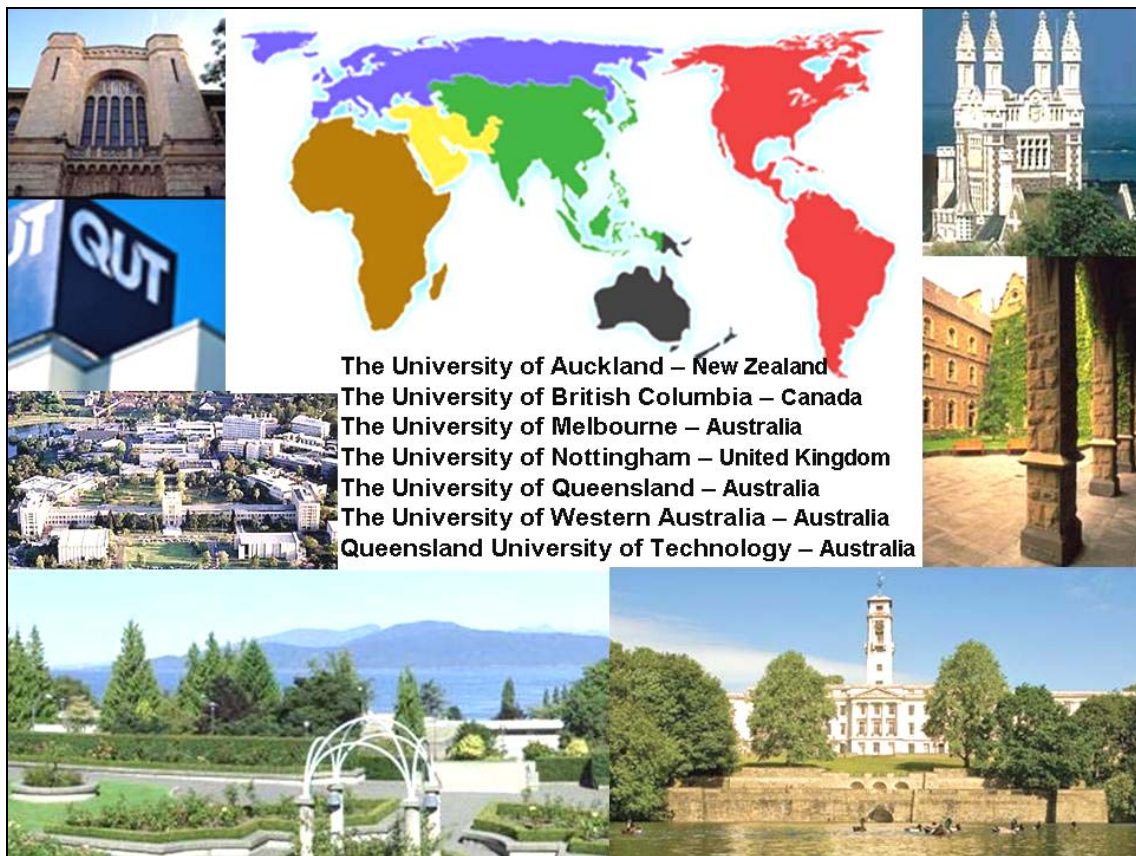


International Equity Benchmarking Project

Stage 2 Report



December 2006

Stage 2 Report

International Equity Benchmarking Project Stage 2

Participating universities:

The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

Date: December 2006

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Introduction

The Stage 2 phase of the International Equity Benchmarking Project was framed by the forthcoming EOPHEA (Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia) Conference scheduled for September 2005. A key objective of the project was to facilitate a discussion at the Conference that would provide information to other equity practitioners about the Project and touch on some of the key issues that had been addressed to date.

Additionally, the group felt it would be beneficial to explore the potential to invite one or more additional universities to join the Project and to identify possible suitable candidates during this Stage 2 phase. Benchmarking partners agreed that invitees would have a sound track record in staff and or student equity, preferably both, and would demonstrate an interest in collaborative work and particularly in engaging in a long-term action learning project in the area.

Stage 2 was also marked by sharing of documentation that individual partners found to be useful in informing strategic initiatives or changes to practice. Each institution could then consider the value and relevance for their particular context.

As Benchmarking partners have discovered, those directly charged with responsibility for staff and/or student equity work in our universities are usually small in number. Unfortunately, the side effect of this has been that when one person has left their role or departed the institution, the impact has been significant. We have realised that there was not necessarily anyone to automatically carry on with the benchmarking work. Maintaining involvement in the Project can be challenging in itself, but it certainly has been made more difficult where personnel issues have had to be worked out at the institutional level. We realise that this is a fact of life for the Project and the fact that there have been major changes of this nature for two of the Benchmarking partners during Stage 2 and beyond, has impacted upon the capacity of the group to complete the tasks it set.

This Stage 2 Report is substantially different from the Stage 1 Report in that it necessarily reflects a different phase in the development of the International Equity Benchmarking Project and the achievements during this time.

As we noted in our paper presentation to the EOPHEA Conference, we have learnt that the issues that continue to challenge us are very much the same in each institution. This is despite the differences in context for each of our benchmarking partners arising from the different countries and tertiary systems within which we work. We all still struggling to attract students from equity groups, with promoting women into senior academic roles, with effectively managing work-life balance matters for our staff and in some areas we have difficulty in accessing robust data that would enable us to measure our institutional performance and the effectiveness of interventions we implement.

While at times we all have felt we have made a rod for our backs with the additional workload generated by the International Equity Benchmarking Project, the knowledge we are breaking new ground and value-adding to our work has sustained us. Indeed, so has the growing strength of the collegiality that has resulted from our engagement with the Project.

Ann Stewart

International Equity Benchmarking Project Convenor

Equity and diversity in participating universities

1. Equity Index Benchmark Analysis

The 'Equity Index' is a data analysis tool developed in Canada in 1990 by the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service (also known as the Glass Ceiling Commission) and further refined in the late 1990's by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity in Western Australia. It is a tool for analysing the representation and distribution of women and occupational or diversity groups in a workforce.

The Equity Index enables an organisation to gain a clear picture of the distribution of women, or any other selected group, through the organisational strata in proportion to the overall distribution of staff. An Equity Index score of 100 indicates equitable distribution through levels, irrespective of the percentage of total staff constituted in the cohort under review. An Equity Index score under 100 indicates the group is compressed into the lower levels whereas an Equity Index score over 100 demonstrates an over-representation in the higher levels of the organisation relative to the overall distribution of staff. The Equity Index is a calculation which takes the total number of staff at each level and the proportion of the equity group and then provides the distribution for the total organisation. The tool used to calculate the Equity Index score, also indicates whether that score is significant.

An overview of the results of the 2003 Equity Index benchmarking exercise reveals that each of the six institutions exhibit the same general trend of female under-representation (and corresponding male over-representation) at higher levels for both academic and general staff. Another trend evident in all institutions is that less than half of all academic staff are female (average 35.9%) and more than half of all general staff are female (average 57.7%).

The following represents an institution by institution analysis of the Equity Index results and the underlying anomalies regarding percentage of staff by level, separately for academic and general staff. Due to the significant difference in the classification structure at The University of British Columbia (UBC) and the other five institutions investigated, and also the fact that no breakdown by function ('Research Only' or 'Other') was provided, UBC have not been included in the calculation of totals and averages, and instead they have been analysed separately.

Throughout this document, Equity Index scores will be followed by their measure of significance (shown within square brackets). An asterisk immediately following the Equity Index score indicates that the score is statistically significant, determined by an absolute significance of greater than 2.0 or -2.0. For example, a hypothetical Equity Index score of *150* [2.5]* represents a score of 150 which is significantly different from 100, as indicated by the significance score of 2.5 and corresponding asterisk.

Overall, female academic staff had an Equity Index of *57* [-11.2]* and male academic staff had an Equity Index of *132* [8.7]*, with 37.8% of academic staff being female.

The Equity Indices for general staff were slightly less extreme than for academic staff with a score of *84* [-5.4]* for females and *128* [6.9]* for males; female staff account for 61.6% of the general staff population.

The following sections provide the summary analysis for each institution.

1.1 Queensland University of Technology

Academic

The Equity Index scores (female: 72* [-2.5], male: 122* [2.1]) for academic staff were the healthiest of the five institutions, indicating that while female academics are under-represented at higher levels and males over-represented, the extent is less than at any of the other institutions.

The proportion of female academic staff (41.0%) is above the 5 institution average, however appointments at Level B account for 45.6% of female staff and only 35.9% of male staff. Furthermore, 13.4% of males are appointed at Level E as opposed to just 5.4% of females. In total, 67.1% of female academics are appointed at either Level A or Level B, 15.6% more than the proportion of males (51.5%).

General

Female general staff had a non-significant Equity Index of 88 [-1.8] indicating that the deviation from 100 could be due to random fluctuations. The corresponding Equity Index for male staff is 121* [2.3] showing a definite over-representation at higher levels.

Queensland University of Technology had a lower proportion of female general staff (60.7%) than the 5 institution average. Appointments at Level 4 constituted over one quarter of all female staff appointments (25.5%), more than double the proportion of male staff at the same level (12.6%). There were 15.5% more females appointed at Level 5 or below (62.1% of females compared to 46.7% of males).

1.2 The University of Melbourne

Academic

With an Equity Index score of 55* [-7.0], female academics at The University of Melbourne were the second most-compressed of the institutions studied (while having more than twice the number of appointments than UWA - the institution with the lowest female academic Equity Index score). This inequality is further highlighted by the institution having the most over-represented males, with a score of 142* [6.1].

While employing a greater proportion of female academics than the 5 institution average, 42.2% of these are appointed at the lowest level, more than double the proportion of Level A males (20.1%). This reflects the high number of Research Only appointments made by this research intensive university but also the lack of progression for female staff relative to males who are appointed to these positions. Further contributing to the under-representation of females at higher levels, is that 2.9% of all female academics are appointed at Level E - the lowest proportion of any institution studied. This is in contrast to the proportion of all males who are at Level E, which - at 13.7% - is 4.7 times greater than the proportion of females.

General

Unlike academic staff at the same institution, general staff at The University of Melbourne are comparatively well positioned. With an Equity Index of 87* [-2.3], UMelb females have the least significant disadvantage, while at 125* [3.1] the males also have the most minimal advantage.

As with their academic counterparts, the proportion of female general staff (63.9%) is not only greater than the 5 institution average, it is also the greatest of all institutions. Although males and females are not comparatively distributed, the difference is not as extreme as in the case of other institutions, with the major discrepancies being 23.5% of females employed at Level 5 compared with 14.7% of males, and 55.2% of females at Level 5 or below compared to 39.3% of males. There are, however, proportionally 2.5 times more men at Level 10 and above (6.4%) than females (2.6%).

1.3 The University of Queensland

Academic

With female and male academic Equity Index scores of 57* [-5.5] and 128* [4.0] respectively, The University of Queensland is ranked third for both males and females. While both scores are significant, neither is above the 5 institution total (though the score for females exactly matches the average).

At 34.9%, The University of Queensland has a lower proportion of female academic staff than the 5 institution average. Of their academic staff, the proportion of female academic staff employed at Level B or below (72.6%) is more than 25% greater than the proportion of male academic staff employed at the same levels (46.6%), and the proportion of Level E academics is 3.7 times greater for males than females (3.8% of females and 14.1% of males).

General

As with their academic staff, the Equity Index scores of general staff at the University of Queensland rank third of the five institutions, with both being slightly lower than the 5 institution average (female 82* [-3.3], male 130* [4.0]). Also like their academic counterparts, the proportion of female general staff is slightly lower than the corresponding 5 institution average.

With almost one quarter of female general staff being employed at Level 4 (24.2%), this proportion is more than double the 11.8% of male staff employed at the same level. Conversely, at higher levels, it is the males who are over-represented, with males comprising 3.3 times the proportion of female Level 10 staff (1.2% of females and 3.9% of males). It should, however, be noted that the proportion of both female and male general staff appointed at Level 10 is considerably below the average for the 5 institutions (2.1% and 5.2% of females and males respectively).

1.4 The University of Western Australia

Academic

While being the second-smallest of all six institutions, the academic Equity Index scores of 53* [-4.7] and 131* [3.5] give The University of Western Australia the unhealthiest female and second unhealthiest male Equity Indices of all institutions.

At 34.9%, the proportion of female academic is less than the 5 institution total. Disturbingly, the proportion of female staff employed at Level B or below (68.1%) is more than double the proportion of males (33.8% - the lowest of any institution); this discrepancy is the unhealthiest of all institutions.

With only 15.3% of males being employed at Level A and 17.4% at Level E, The University of Western Australia is one of only two institutions with a greater proportion of Level E males than Level A. In contrast, the proportion of females appointed at Level E is almost seven times less than the proportion employed at Level A.

General

As with academic staff, female general staff at The University of Western Australia are similarly disadvantaged, with both female and male general staff having respectively the second lowest and highest Equity Index scores of all institutions (80* [-2.8] and 140* [3.7] respectively), both being unhealthier than the 5 institution average. Similarly, with 63.0% of general staff being female - second only to The University of Melbourne - The University of Western Australia also has a greater proportion of female general staff than the 5 institution total.

With 72.8% of females and 56.2% of males being appointed at Level 5 or below, a difference of 16.6%, The University of Western Australia once again ranks the most poorly of the institutions studied. Similarly, with 3.4 times more males than females appointed at Level 10 (6.4% of males and only 1.9% of females), female under-representation at higher levels is also proportionally the most considerable of all institutions.

1.5 The University of Auckland

Academic

Irrespective of having a lower proportion of female academic staff than the 5 institution total (32.0%), Equity Index scores for The University of Auckland were the second healthiest scores (female: 60* [-3.8], male: 123* [3.6]).

With 72.7% of females and 46.8% of males being appointed at Level B or below - a difference of 25.9% - The University of Auckland had the second lowest difference of the five institutions; this was comprised of an additional 16.4% females at Level A and 9.6% of females at Level B. Although there are proportionally 2.6 times more males than females employed at Level E (18.8% and 8.3% respectively), the proportion of females at Level E is greatest of the institutions – excluding UBC whose profile differs considerably to the other five institutions.

General

In stark contrast to their representation of academic staff, female general staff at The University of Auckland are the most disadvantaged of all institutions. With Equity Index scores of 76* [-2.7] and 146* [3.4] for females and males respectively, the Equity Index scores for The University of Auckland are poorer than all other institutions analysed (including The University of British Columbia).

In comprising 61.5% of the general staff population, the proportion of female staff is marginally below the five institution average. The largest discrepancy exists at Level 2 with almost 3 times the proportion of female general staff (23.1%) as male general staff (7.8%). This inconsistency decreases as the levels increase, with 88.1% of females being appointed at Level 5 or below, just 10.0% more than the proportion of males (78.1%), the best of any institution.

Unlike the Australian institutions, The University of Auckland does not appoint general staff at Level 10; their highest level is Level 9. Unfortunately the proportion of male general staff at Level 9 (3.1%) is 3.4 times the proportion of female general staff at the same level, which at 0.9%, is less than the proportion of female staff appointed at the highest level at all other institutions.

1.6 The University of British Columbia

Academic

Due to differences in organizational structures, promotion systems and demographics, considerable caution needs to be used when comparing UBC to the other institutions. Subject to that caution, a comparison of the UBC academic Equity Index scores (female 90 [-1.2] and male 104 [0.7]) with the other five institutions reveals that the distribution of females and males is considerably more equitable than that of the other institutions. Furthermore, both Equity Index scores are non-significant indicating that they are possibly the result of random factors.

One disturbing feature of the profile of academic staff at The University of British Columbia is the low proportion of female staff; with females comprising just 27.2% of academic staff, UBC has the lowest proportion of females by far (almost 5% less than the second lowest – the University of Auckland with 32.0%). Furthermore, academic staff distributions at The University of British Columbia have the unenviable characteristic of having more than twice the proportion of females than males at the lowest level (10.9% of females and 5.3% of males) while having less than half the proportion of females to males at the highest level (23.0% of females and 49.1% of males).

Although the structure of academic staff at The University of British Columbia is roughly similar to that of the other five institutions (with the only exception being that the lowest two levels are combined into a single level, (Level A/B), the fact that over 40% of academic staff are appointed at the highest level (42.2%) highlights the extreme difference between UBC and the other institutions; the next highest is The University of Auckland with 15.4% of academics appointed at Level E. Furthermore, apart from UBC, no other institution has more than 9% of female and 19% of male academics at Level E. Due to differences in format from UBC, it was not possible at this time to include their data in comparing the data between institutions. UBC was not included in the final computation of totals and averages with the other five institutions.

General

As with academic staff, the structure of general staff at The University of British Columbia is significantly different from the other five institutions to warrant exclusion from many analyses. Most notably, UBC has 15 levels of general staff whereas the other institutions have nine or ten.

Unlike their academics, the Equity Index scores of 85* [-4.5] and 118* [4.8] for females and males general staff respectively do indicate that the under-representation of females and over-representation of males at higher levels is significant. Both figures, however, give UBC a better standing than the average of the other five institutions.

While being less than the five institution average, at 53.3% female, the proportion of male and female general staff is close to equal; this is not, however, the case for distribution by

level. Looking at the proportion of staff at Level 5, females outnumber males by more than 4.3 (14.5% of female and just 3.4% of males). And while the proportion of female staff employed at Level 5 and Level 13 are the same (14.5%), almost 10.5 times more males are employed at the higher level (35.4% of males at Level 13). Furthermore, almost 2.5 times as many males are appointed at Level 13 or above (42.5% of males compared to 18.9% of females).

1.7 Conclusion

While the extent differs, the sad fact remains that all institutions studied demonstrate a distribution of both academic and general staff that indicates an under-representation of females and over-representation of males at higher levels relative to their representation in the universities' workforces. In order to rectify this, a conscious effort needs to be made to recruit more high-quality female staff or to assist current staff in obtaining the skills required to warrant their progression through the classification levels. Attention also needs to be given to how males are positioned and supported in the organisation, and how they in turn support female staff. With an over-representation at higher levels, there is greater likelihood that male staff are in leadership and other influential roles. When tackling the issue of gender equity in institutions, as much attention needs to be paid to the advantage provided to men by virtue of their over-representation in senior positions as there is to the under-representation and compression of females into lower paid and less influential positions

While the easiest way to reduce the extent of female under-representation and male-over-representation at higher levels is to recruit females to the upper levels, for general staff in particular this could have a negative side-effect. Given that the proportion of female general staff is already considerably above 50%, focussing purely on recruiting high-quality females will result in an even more prominent over-representation of female general staff if similar efforts are not made to increase the number of men recruited or appointed to lower level positions. The danger of having a feminised workforce in the 'administrative' (non-academic) employment stream is that the work that these staff do will become under valued over time, as has been evidenced in other female dominated occupations such as teaching and nursing.

It therefore appears that the ideal solution may not necessarily be the easiest 'quick-fix'. Instead, equity can only be achieved by obtaining a balance between nurturing and promoting current talent while also recruiting high-quality staff.

2. Professorial Promotion and Appointment Procedures

Benchmarking partners shared information about their current promotions procedures, and discussed two documents. The first was a report written by The University of Melbourne Manager, Equity & Diversity, who had been funded by her university to undertake research into 'Professorial Promotion and Recruitment Procedures and Practices in Eight Research Intensive UK Universities'. Included in this report is a summary of specific policies and initiatives that support gender equity in the eight universities surveyed:

- Promotion policy includes a requirement that all promotion committees are gender balanced
- Policy requires that promotion committees have "at least one person of each gender"
- An Equity and Diversity statement is included in the promotion procedures and guidelines

- Procedures specifically invite candidates to provide information about time out for children, illnesses etc. (following the principle of ‘assessing merit relative to opportunity’)
- Central promotions committee considers impact of family responsibilities on the performance of candidates for promotion
- Applicants for promotion complete an Equal Opportunity Monitoring form that is used to collect and compare data on the application and success rates of women, people from different ethnic groups and people with disabilities
- Heads required to actively seek applicants for promotion from under-represented groups
- Heads appoint two professors for each candidate who are available for informal advice and guidance on the application process
- Procedures advise candidates to seek advice from a Professor in their field and how to get evidence of international recognition
- Promotion applications and outcomes are monitored by HR in order to identify people from under-represented groups who have not been promoted for a specified period of time. This information is provided to faculties and the central promotions Committee so that any causes of direct or indirect discrimination can be identified and obstacles to further career progression removed
- Leadership programs are available to women at senior lecturer level and above to support progression.

Benchmarking Partners also discussed the paper: *The Great Barrier Myth: an Investigation of Promotions Policy and Practice in Australian universities*. Winchester et al. University of South Australia for the National Colloquium of Senior Women Executives in Higher Education. 2005. This report recommended that all universities:

- include in promotions policies and/or guidelines clear procedures and recording requirements for out-of-round promotions
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines opportunities for promotion to all levels, including E [i.e. professorial level]
 - consider instituting a simplified process for promotion from level A to level B
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines explicit mention of promotion opportunities for part-time staff and how their applications will be assessed.
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines flexibility in promotions criteria, perhaps by use of a weighting system whereby a staff member may nominate weightings.
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines directions for assessing non-traditional careers’ relative to opportunity
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines a clear equity statement
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines requirements that committee chairs and members complete training on gender equity prior to the first meeting of the committee
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines an appropriate ratio of gender representation on promotions committees
 - include in promotions policies and/or guidelines a requirement that an EEO representative or person with an equity brief be involved to monitor the process and the results to ensure that cultural and equity issues are addressed.
 - adopt a KPI for women in senior positions
 - implement special initiatives to encourage and assist women applicants.
- (adapted from pp 33, 34)

3. Student outreach

Benchmarking partners shared information about student outreach initiatives in their institutions and where possible, provided documentation about these.

3.1 The University of Auckland – MATES

MATES – Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme is based on the successful home-based mentoring model ‘Perach’ that has been in operation in Israel for over 25 years. Adapted for the local context, MATES brings together university students and senior school students with potential to succeed at tertiary level. The mentors assist their mentoree through a combination of friendship, teaching, and encouragement to develop high educational aims and to expand skills and abilities to maximise their opportunities for success. Other initiatives include:

- **Whaia Te Pae Tawhiti:** a “summer school” type motivational program which encourages Māori students from out of Auckland to aspire and work towards a university education
- Road shows conducted by the Māori Equity Advisors (38 schools in 2005) to encourage and motivate younger Māori students to aspire to study at the University of Auckland
- Finance Evening, to provide Māori and Pacific school leavers and their parents/caregivers with important information about finance options for funding their university education
- Attendance by the Māori and Pacific Equity Advisors at Māori and Pacific Islands School Career Evenings to provide motivation and advice to Māori and Pacific Island students and parents; and
- Outreach events designed to expose 4th form (year 10) girls to a wide variety of tertiary and career opportunities in science via interactive activities, and through the eyes of role models encourage them to consider science beyond the compulsory levels at school.

3.2 University of Melbourne – Melbourne Access Schools Program, and Access Melbourne

Melbourne Access Schools Program commenced in 2001 was based on research that suggested that engaging with students earlier in their school experience optimised the effect on post-school decision making. The program has two distinctive features. It:

- encourages a partnership with ten targeted under-represented metropolitan and regional schools; and
- focuses on students from year 10.

Students are in the program for the three years, 10–12 (inclusive). The program encompasses mentor support, study and organisation skills workshops, parent evenings and a Spring Residential School. Key element is the use of university mentors (Unipals) who are current university students from non-traditional backgrounds. The Unipals receive training and support for their mentoring role.

Feedback indicates that a substantial percentage of teachers and students felt there was a positive impact on attitude toward high school study and to pursuing a commitment to

tertiary education. In addition greater understanding of higher education was achieved. For the first cohort in the program, 31% indicated an interest in undertaking tertiary study at the commencement of the program. By year 12, 83% cited university as an option.

Access Melbourne commits 20% of the University's total commonwealth-funded undergraduate intake through this program. The program combines special entry and scholarship scheme entry requiring a single application. It will include special entry scheme for Indigenous Australians and covers the following forms of disadvantage:

- difficult family circumstances
- economic or social disadvantage
- disability or long term illness
- non-English speaking background
- enrolment in an under-represented school in the State
- applicants from rural and isolated areas
- participants in the Melbourne Access program.

The University of Melbourne is also investigating introducing additional bridging studies to support equity entrants.

3.3 The University of Queensland

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at UQ undertakes outreach work to various schools throughout the state and northern NSW. The University also offers special entry through the 'UQ Link' program designed to assist students from financially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds gain entry to UQ. The scheme is marketed to year 12 students in school within the University catchment area, and student must be nominated by their schools. The program provides a special orientation, and follow-up support. UQ has not had 'outreach' programs in the traditional sense, but is in the process of advertising a new position that will expand the UQ Link program to develop and undertake outreach in the future.

3.4 The University of Western Australia – Student Diversity Access Program

Student Diversity Access Program (SDAP) aims to increase tertiary aspirations through a range of activities for students from schools on our priority list of Low SES and Rural schools. Students, usually from year 8 or 9, are invited to participate in class groups in a campus visit that includes hands-on activities in faculties, library tours, meetings with current students from their school or a similar one and a campus tour. SDAP holds 'themed' events for larger groups of secondary students from priority schools, often in tandem with a national conference on campus or National Weeks such as Science Week or Archaeology Week and arranges for enrolled university students (Uni Role Models or URMs) to speak at high schools with the aim of informing prospective students about life on campus and motivating them to aspire to tertiary studies. Some rural URMs return to their schools when they are on study break. Metro URMs visit schools with the Prospective Students Officer.

Rural Medicine and Dentistry

UWA's Rural, Interstate and Student Support Co-ordinator conducts extensive school visits in rural and remote areas to encourage students to apply for entry to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, and the Bachelor of Dentistry. Up to 25% of the places

within the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, and up to 10% within the Bachelor of Dental Science are reserved for rural students

3.5 Queensland University of Technology

The Q-Step program has been operating for 10 years and involves outreach to low-income students to create aspiration, and a boost to their tertiary entrance score should they enrol. The focus of the program is to de-mystify the university experience (on-campus days and school visits by “ambassadors” who are university students from working class backgrounds); and to compensate for the depressing effect of poverty on school achievement (3OPs are added to their tertiary entrance score). Over time, schools in low-income areas who we have worked with have become used to the idea of their students going to university, and the Q-Step program has helped change the culture and attitude at the school level. Q-Step students pass and complete at approximately the same rates as other students.

4. Leadership Development for Women

4.1 The University of Western Australia

UWA provided copies of their detailed report into the Women & Leadership development program that has been running now for 10 years;

More than the Sum of its Parts: 10 years of the Leadership Development for Women Programme at UWA. Ed. Jennifer de Vries. University of Western Australia. 2005

Copies of this document are available at www.csd.osds.uwa.edu.au/page/67287

The report notes the reason for the instigation of the Leadership Development for Women (LDW) program came about as a means to “redress long standing and sustained disadvantage for women” (p8), which is common to all universities in Australia and beyond, as our International Equity Benchmarking Project has demonstrated.

One of the hallmarks of the LDW program has been the active support from the most senior levels of the University, which is proven by research to be of fundamental importance for success of any such programs.

Some of the issues raised in the report related to the complexities of evaluation in success or otherwise and in fact what the definition of ‘success’ might be? In fact, the report challenges long held traditional assumptions of what ‘leadership’ is and the unformulated question is ‘What kind of leader/s might be required for the modern and rapidly evolving university?’

The report also notes that women are not an homogenous group and that at any time “other aspects of women’s lives and identities...may ...take precedence over their identity as women [and that] For each individual woman, however, identity is rarely fixed or unified around only one set of interests or needs.” (p72).

4.2 The University of Auckland

The University of Auckland leadership program for women consists of two strands. One group of around 25 mid-level academic and general staff women are selected to attend a year long program of workshops and seminars. Workshop topics include applying for promotion, effective committee participation, work-life balance, identifying behavioural (management)

styles, negotiation skills, organisational structure and personal efficiency training. Goal setting for the year and monitoring progress through a mentoring relationship are pivotal to the program.

A second larger informal program is offered annually for all senior women. This program is based around presentations on institutional issues and opportunities for networking with senior staff.

4.3 The University of Melbourne

The 6th Academic Women in Leadership program is being conducted in 2006. The program is provided for a cohort of 12 academic women at Level C (Senior Lecturer) and Level D (Assoc Prof) who can demonstrate leadership potential and who are actively sponsored and supported by their Dean or Head of Department. The program runs for 9 months and includes a group project, shadowing and career counselling. For their group project, the participants in 2006 are revising the University's Graduate Attributes in order to assist the University in meeting the educational goals of the 'Melbourne Model'. An evaluation of the 2006 program will be available to Benchmarking members in 2007.

4.4 Queensland University of Technology

The main leadership program for women is a two-year experience for about 20 academic and non-academic women in the near-senior ranks. It involves a series of workshops on career planning; strategic understandings of the sector; decision-making practices in the University and so on. It also involves attendance at the Senior Staff Conference; observation of high-level committee within the University; and undertaking a small project. The program is called Quality Women in Leadership (QWIL) and has been going since 1996, funded by the Vice-Chancellor. Its philosophy is to focus not just on women and their skills, but on the institution and its practices, and also to provide aspiring women with visibility and networks outside of their current work area. Participants typically achieve career goals within the next few years, and often attribute their success to the QWIL program. Every 2 years, a committee made up of QWIL "graduates" organises the next program.

4.5 The University of Queensland

At this time UQ does not offer a specific leadership program for women. There are a number of offerings available for both academic and general staff women aimed at fostering career development. These include mentoring, workshops for academic women related to applying for promotion, and Career Horizons', a program primarily developed for general staff. It is anticipated that the development of the first comprehensive Equity and Diversity Plan for the University will assist in this regard.

Presentation to EOPHEA Conference Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 2005

Introduction

Equity and diversity should no longer be on the margins of our universities. The rate of change, increased globalisation of higher education, internationalisation, financial pressures, changes in the research priorities, the increasingly diverse nature of our student population and an increasingly competitive world employment market are all drivers for considering equity and diversity matters as integral to core business.

It makes sense therefore to engage in practices that relate to continual improvement through comparing leading practice with other universities across the globe in order to both develop broader understanding of how 'best practice' is measured, and to provide opportunity to share effective strategies and initiatives with a view to exploring their relevance for different contexts.

One of the learning outcomes from this International Equity Benchmarking project to date has been that, despite differences in the context for each of our benchmarking partners, often because of the different countries and systems within which we work, the issues are still much the same. We all still struggle with attracting students from equity groups, with promoting women into senior academic roles, with effectively managing work-life balance matters for our staff and in some areas we have difficulty in accessing robust data that would enable us to measure our institutional performance, and/or the effectiveness of interventions we implement.

Partners in this International Equity Benchmarking Project took on the dual focus of staff and student equity, and have done so in the form of structuring the Project as a long-term collaborative shared learning opportunity; an 'Action Learning' project. In this framework, the data we gather is not the primary outcome, but rather a means to providing a basis for discussion. It is not intended to merely provide a comparator that might permit us to say we are doing better than X university, or not, but rather that its collection and analysis assists us better understand our own university's performance and the discussions arising enables us to go back to our institutions and reconsider our own work with greater insight.

Selection of benchmarking partners was undertaken on the basis of broad representation from Universitas 21, the Australia Group of Eight (Go8) and a representative from the Australian Technology University network (ATN). Additionally, there was an established track record in staff and student equity and an individual who was interested in participating in the Benchmarking project – a fairly essential ingredient!

The following sections provides a brief overview of some of the issues faced by the project partners, and some of the key matters dealt with to date.

Additional and more detailed information is available from the two following papers, both available from www.uq.edu.au/equity in the publications.

Benchmarking Equity and Diversity in Higher Education: A Discussion Paper for Benchmarking Partners
Ann Stewart. The University of Queensland. Australia
February 2003.

Issues with engagement as an International partner

Encountering differences in other institutions is one of the exciting things about international benchmarking. However, this needs to be tempered by having sufficient commonality to make useful comparisons.

Benchmarking is a structured relationship within a wider range of international equity contacts. The project has provided opportunity to become familiar with other nations' terminology and organisational structures, information sharing about other systems and development of contacts that could value-add to the benchmarking partnership.

The obvious differences to be addressed include nomenclature. Within the group at present, there are a greater number of universities from Australia, however, benchmarking partners outside of Australia do not have HEW (Higher Education Worker) levels for non-academic staff. 'Higher Education' is not a commonly used term in NZ, which tends to opt for the more inclusive 'tertiary education' or 'universities'. A significant portion of our time in the Project has therefore been to establish commonalities where comparison would be valid, and where we could have discussion about like issues. Defining staff nomenclature and equivalent level was therefore an important step

Comparative Terms and Nomenclature

Canada	New Zealand	Australia
President	Vice Chancellor	Vice-Chancellor
Vice-President	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Associate Vice President	Pro-Vice Chancellor	Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Professor	Professor	Professor
Associate Professor	Associate Professor	Associate Professor
Assistant Professor	Senior Lecturer	Senior Lecturer
Provost	Deputy Vice Chancellor/Pro Vice Chancellor	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor
	EFTS (Equivalent Full-time Student)	EFTSU (Effective Full – Time Student Unit)
Degree program	Degree program/degree course	Degree program/degree course
Staff	General staff	General staff
Faculty	Academic Staff	Academic Staff
Graduate programs	Post-graduate programs	Post-graduate programs
Faculty/Department	Faculty	Faculty

The work to date has enabled us to ascertain the following:

- On the whole the New Zealand and Australian legislation, structures and politics are very similar.
- Universities in Canada and New Zealand are not required to gather or report on student equity data in the same way to their government, as in Australia.
- Different institutional requirements for statistical reporting therefore can create problems for assembling comparative data, but given time, the necessary information can be produced.

- Target groups are common between New Zealand and Australia but in New Zealand rural students are not generally considered to be a target group.
- Indigenous issues are probably more open to variation between institutions because of different social, geographical and political histories rather than gender issues.
- Variation between Government or institutional funding sources can determine the level of responsibility, and therefore scope of programs, that the organisation may have to take for equity e.g. paid parental leave is partially Government funded in NZ and Canada but not in Australia.
- Canadian tenure track is quite different from that in Australia and New Zealand. Entry level academics have a certain period of time by which they must achieve tenure or lose their position. This will clearly have a major impact on equity issues like family responsibilities, managing illness and disability and work-life balance.

Benchmarking partners agreed that a major benefit of the project has been to engage in discussion across international boundaries. In New Zealand, there are relatively few equity practitioners, so there is a motivating factor in being able to participate in the Project.

Within each institution, involvement in the International Equity Benchmarking Project has been strategically useful in raising the EO profile and providing additional credibility to initiatives. The significance of issues such as low representation of senior women has more impact when presented in an international context.

Outcomes from the Project that partners have noted include:

- A focus on senior academic women including obtaining more comprehensive information about professorial promotions and resignations, turn-over retirement and appointment rates and implementation of initiatives associated with this e.g. one university specifically designed promotions workshops for women at Associate Professor level planning to apply for promotion to Professor.
- Capacity of information and resource-sharing to influence initiatives. For example the report from Melbourne University partner based on a UK study of best practice in professorial promotions has significantly informed a comprehensive review of promotions policies by one Project partner.
- Required data collection for the project has leveraged data collection in all participating universities. This has opened up the capacity for longitudinal cohort studies for some partners, where previously no data existed.
- Innovative programs have been considered for implementation, with due regard to appropriate contextualisation, such as the Ally program.

Using International Equity Benchmarking strategically at The University of Melbourne (A Case Study)

In Australia, the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) conducts regular audits of each higher education institution. At the University of Melbourne, the forthcoming AUQA review has put benchmarking on the University's agenda. International benchmarking is particularly important given increased competitiveness in the university sector within Australia; especially between the Group of Eight universities and a range of other universities internationally. The Equity Benchmarking Project was strategically important for identifying areas of high and under-performance.

The activities undertaken by the International Equity Benchmarking Project revealed that:

- The proportion of women at Level E (Professorial level) compared reasonably well with Australian benchmarking partners, but the ratio was lower than the proportion in two of the Australian partners and the Canadian benchmarking partner.

Data collected for Project stimulated

- other benchmarking projects (e.g. benchmarking with UK universities)
- a heightened awareness of the need to strengthen the University's commitment to increasing the number and proportion of women at professorial level
- an examination of successful strategies and interventions taken by other benchmarking partners and by other universities.

As an aspect of this process, the following outcomes were achieved at The University of Melbourne.

- A review of internal professorial promotion procedures was undertaken
- New targets were identified in University's strategic plan
- The contribution of International Equity Benchmarking Project was acknowledged in the University's report to AUQA (Australian Universities' Quality Agency)
- There has been an increase in number and proportion of women at Level E (Professorial level).

The Equity Index

The 'Equity Index', is a data analysis tool developed in Canada in 1990 by the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service (also known as the Glass Ceiling Commission) and further refined in the late 1990's by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity in Western Australia. It is a tool for analysing the representation and distribution of women and occupational or diversity groups in your workforce.

Depending on the size of the organisation and providing there are sufficient numbers of the cohort under analysis, the Equity Index tool can also be used to compare divisions within an organisation or changes in an organisation over time.

The Equity Index enables an organisation to gain a clear picture of the distribution of women, or any other selected group, through the organisational strata in proportion to the overall distribution of staff. An Equity Index score of 100 indicates equitable distribution through levels, irrespective of the percentage of total staff constituted in the cohort under review. An Equity Index under 100 indicates the group is compressed into the lower levels whereas an Equity Index score over 100 demonstrates an over-representation in the higher levels of the organisation relative to the overall distribution of staff. The Equity Index is a calculation which takes the total number of staff at each level and the proportion of the equity group and then provides the distribution for the total organisation.

Benchmarking partners agreed that the Equity Index would provide a more robust basis for comparison of institutional performance than other current measures to hand. The capacity of the instrument to be used for various groups was also attractive. Initially, however, it was agreed to use the Index for Gender distribution.

The Benchmarking partners found that there was under-representation of females at higher levels in both academic and non-academic staff in all their universities, and that therefore female staff were compressed into the lower classification levels. What was interesting was

to understand that this trend represented an advantage to men who were *over-represented* at the senior levels, even when male staff constituted a minority.

Such a different perspective has potential for reviewing the focus and objectives of women in leadership programs and the ways in which our ‘taken-for-granted’ institutional practices advantage men. All agreed, that while it was still imperative to recruit high-quality female staff or to assist current staff in obtaining the skills required to warrant their progression through the classification levels, equity would only be achieved by obtaining a balance between nurturing and promoting current talent while also recruiting high-quality staff as well as examining the organisational practices and assumptions that led to male staff having a faster career trajectory than their female counterparts.

Women in Architecture, Engineering and IT

Comparison of data between the benchmarking partners in the areas of Engineering, IT and Architecture did not really provide any real surprises, although it was gratifying to note that longitudinal data has shown slow but incremental improvement in all institutions of a definite and sustained nature. There was significant variation in between institutions.

The percentage of academic women at senior lecturer and above in engineering varied from 3.85% a 17.5% and women represented between 3.62 and 26.6% in the IT field. Three of the benchmarking partners did not have women at senior lecturer level, two had no women at Associate Professor and two had no women at professorial level.

The statistics by themselves therefore did not provide the Benchmarking partners with any new insight but did provide an evidentiary basis for previous hypotheses. The ‘snapshot’ statistical collection has been useful – inasmuch as it has confirmed that all our universities are struggling to attract and retain female staff into senior positions in non-traditional discipline areas.

Conclusion

While the generation of statistics has been of value, it has been extremely difficult for some institutions where previous data collection in the area has not been undertaken. Finding commonality to enable the statistics to provide a basis for comparison and discussion has proved to be a challenge.

It was essential that trust was built between the partners so that the exercise was not about trying to show ourselves off in our best light but about identifying areas of good performance, looking at common problems, and teasing out strategies to address these.

All participants in the Project agreed that the greatest benefit from involvement is the opportunity to discuss and critique programs, share information and commence investigations into the contextual factors which might impact on the effectiveness of strategies and approaches taken.

Some of the significant gains from the International Equity Benchmarking Project have been of a strategic nature. Within the participating institutions, equity practitioners have been able to use the International Equity Benchmarking Project to improve data collection processes and perceptions of validity and professionalism, as well as to gain traction for strategic initiatives.

There are many challenges remaining. Partners have deliberately sought to focus on the ‘hard nuts to crack’; those issues that have traditionally difficult and remain hard to change shift and improve. Much of the work undertaken by equity practitioners is difficult to measure, so the Project is keen to keep striving to understand how to demonstrate that what we do is effective and finding ways to better understand, measure and represent this.

Not the least challenge has been to sustain energy, given the commitments in other work areas, and the difficulties posed through conducting such an exercise across different countries and hemispheres. All agree, that at this stage at least, the benefits continue to outweigh the disadvantages and benchmarking partners look ready to embark on Stage 3 of the International Equity Benchmarking Project.