ABSTRACTS

Measures of Efficiency and Effectiveness as Indicators of Quality – A Systems Approach by Robert Mitchell Carmichael (Head, Office for Quality Education, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria 3122, Australia

The focus of this paper is to examine the systematic use of benchmarks for evaluating educational efficiency and effectiveness and a good practice model for system implementation.
Put in the simplest terms, 'Efficiency' is a measure of the work-rate of a process by which system inputs are turned into system outputs. 'Effectiveness' on the other hand is considered to be a measure of the 'quality' of the outcomes being achieved by the system. This paper argues that effectiveness can really only be defined through the application of some qualitative 'fitness-for-purpose' criteria – and that together with some key efficiency measures, these indicators can be used as proxies for the measurement of quality.
The paper looks at work being done at Swinburne University of Technology Australia, which uses a combination of 'criterion reference' and 'quantitative' benchmarks to measure both efficiency and effectiveness, in a planned program of institutional self-review.

The Effectiveness of Flexible Provision of Higher Education in Australia by Peter Ling (Senior Educational Development Adviser, Learning and Teaching Support, Swinburne University of Technology) and Geoff Arger (Director, Learning and Teaching Support, Swinburne University of Technology)

This paper reports on an investigation of the effectiveness of models of flexible provision of higher education in Australia. The study was commissioned by the Australian Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. In this study flexible provision is defined in terms of providing choice for learners because this is expressed or implied by educational providers in using the adjective 'flexible'.

The methodological challenge faced in this study was how to address hard-edged research questions in the context of a variety understandings of key terms, the individuality of the approaches taken by providers, and a want of agreed measures of effectiveness. In response the investigation employed case studies researched and described around a set framework of topics and evaluated against criteria for flexibility, effectiveness and cost effectiveness. A summary of each case was depicted graphically. The depictions – referred to as 'depictograms' – provided a means to readily compare the cases.

Implementing Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education by Professor George Gordon (Centre for Academic Practice, University of Strathclyde,Glasgow, Scotland)

The paper outlines some of the principal issues and models, before turning to a more sustained consideration of quality assurance in the UK. That treatment explores both external pressures and institutional responses. In the concluding section a multi-axial approach is outlined as a possible means of aiding understandings and facilitating implementation of quality assurance in tertiary education.

Strategies for Total Employee Involvement in Ensuring Quality in Tertiary Education by Maimunah Ali, Mohd. Shoki Mohd. Arif, Zainab Khalifah, Noor Abidah Mohd. Omar and Norzarina Sulong (Lecturers, Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, University Teknologi Malaysia)

Ensuring quality in teaching and learning in tertiary education is crucial for quality output. Critical to quality assurance is total employee involvement. In its effort to achieve quality assurance, the Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, UTM boldly adapted the ISO 9001 Quality System as its quality model. To achieve total employee involvement, it employed a number of successful strategies: obtaining full management support, maximizing staff involvement, employing the 3A strategy and empowering middle management. These were translated respectively into the formation of key committees, appointment of key process owners, adoption of the 3A strategy, organization of numerous quality programmes and optimisation of academic expertise available.

Determining Instructional Quality in Higher Education: Transforming Learners into Consumers by Caroline Kamini Thangiah (Universiti Teknologi Mara, Penang, Malaysia)

In Malaysian institutions of higher learning, students are still seen in their traditional role of learners. But in a more contemporary approach learners are also regarded as consumers with the right to decide on the quality of 'service' they receive. However, empowering students in the Malaysian education system requires changes in current evaluation policies and practices. Should students be allowed to participate in quality management? What are the implications? These are some of the issues this paper aims to examine in the light of findings of a study on the validity of consumer feedback. Taking into consideration the benefits and the limitations revealed in the study, the paper proposes a co-operative model for more relevant and comprehensive evaluation of instructional quality.

Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation of Academic Programs in Higher Education: An Australian University's Experiences by Dr Raj Sharma (Swinburne University of Technology) and Dr Harch Thandi (Senior Lecturer, Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship, Swinburne University of Technology)

Progressively during the 1990s, both in Australia and in many countries throughout the world, Governments have reduced public funding to universities. This has resulted in universities seeking alternative sources of revenue and with the Government encouraging commercialisation of Higher Education – particularly the selling of degree programs. Today universities have diversified their funding sources from all varieties of activities including foreign students, local fee-paying students (mainly postgraduate course work in Australia) leasing university facilities, organising conferences and commercial research and consultancy activities such as patrons, industrial research etc. This situation is also true for the Case Study University, which is located

in a South Eastern Australian State. The University's graduate school offering management and entrepreneurship programs is almost entirely student-funded. Indeed, during year 2000, the Government funded only 5% of the student load of the school, with the balance (95%) being financed by local fee-paying students and International fee-paying activities. The commercialisation of this school together with its entrepreneurial efforts and selling degrees is considered.