RSHA Change Management Proposal

Feedback and submissions approved for publication- student

Name
Aaron Kirby
Ada Fitzgerald-Cherry
Ayesha Kaak
Catherine Baxendale
Clare Southerton
Duncan Stuart
Elaine White
Elisabeth Cherry
Elise Terrell (acknowledge Jason Andrews)
Ellen Wignell
Hannah McCann
Jason Andrews
Jason Andrews (2\textsuperscript{nd} submission)
Jenna Maurer
Jonathon Zapasnik
Karyna Jansons
Lachlan Angus
Leanne Santoro
Marion Kruger
Martin Spencer
Michael Bartlett
Miranda Bruce
Patricia Stone
Scott Walker
Student anonymous
Susannah French
To whom it may concern:

I refer to the proposed RSHA structure. I will keep my remarks brief, given that I assume as a mere former student they carry no weight.

Nevertheless:

1. I valued highly my studies at the ANU. Without the time and care of my teachers my life would be significantly poorer. My studies have led me to be a better thinker, a more critical adult, more awake to the drama of human life, a more responsible citizen.

2. The continued and exclusive focus of the university executive on applying the theory of comparative advantage to its institutions and members is creating an overspecialised and pointless organisation which is losing sight of the actual intellectual and academic value of the disciplines involved. It is building an intellectual banana republic. I might refer you to Goodhart's law; this focus draws away from the creation of perceptive adults and will contribute to the decay of social fabrics, of human politics, of a people's ability to think. It is profoundly anti-modern. By such small steps you are dooming your own dreams.

3. The dulling of reason asserted at point 2 is highlighted by your use of declining student numbers in some of the affected disciplines. Might it be that students are moving away from these disciplines because there is no longer critical mass of courses or academics in these areas? I refer particularly to gender studies, where available courses have shrunk seriously in recent years:

2000 level GEND courses on offer 2009-14:
Semester 1, 2
2009 = 2, 2
2010 = 2, 2
2011 = 2, 2
2012 = 2, 1
2013 = 1, 0
2014 = 0, 1

4. I refer also to the continual ageism demonstrated by the ANU in seeking to pressure academics over 55 to retire. It is as if older human beings no longer have anything left intellectually to offer the young. This is certainly counter to my experience at the ANU, where the better teachers tended to be those with longer and deeper experience.

As I say, I imagine these thoughts carry no weight. I only hope to shame you.

Yours sincerely,

Aaron Kirby
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my consternation at the planned restructuring outlined in “Change Management Proposal: RSHA Restructure” released on 22 July 2013. As a former ANU student, I understand that my voice is perhaps deemed irrelevant.

I am aware that the humanities are not a lucrative field of study. I understand that the university is under immense financial pressure. I am not dogmatically attached to the status quo, nor do I feel that the current arrangement of the RSHA is the best arrangement possible. I have no opposition to interdisciplinary study; indeed I believe it to be both necessary and important.

This being said, the proposed restructure saddens me for a number of reasons.

For interdisciplinary study to be meaningful, one must have clear and distinguished disciplines. Lumping together disciples that display a facile similarity (English Literature shoved in with languages, for instance) demonstrates a cavalier lack of respect for their divergent theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical frameworks. I find it hard to conceive how meaningful majors can be maintained under the proposed restructure.

Without meaningful majors, what is left of the humanities? It appears that they are considered to be little more than an optional add on to an institution that would be content to confine its offerings to the Sciences, Economics, Actuarial Studies and Law. It would be more honest to cut the humanities altogether, rather than to continue to offer them in this impoverished form.

Further, it concerns me that tutorials are being phased out. I found tutorials to be one of the most valuable aspects of my university education. The intimacy of a small group fosters engagement in ongoing academic discussion, allowing for debates that stretch over an entire semester rather than isolated queries in a crowded forum. It was in tutes that I developed the confidence to express my point of view - even if it were in opposition to opinions expressed by someone with a much louder voice – and to argue for it with diplomacy and accuracy. I fail to see how this experience can be replicated in a larger workshop.
Finally, the lack of consultation with the student population – both undergraduate and postgraduate – is perhaps the most grievous of injuries.

Yours, &.

Ada Fitzgerald Cherry | Event and Venue Manager

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Good evening,

After having read the proposal documents available online I must admit that I am somewhat disappointed with the plan to abolish the School of Cultural Inquiry. One of the key reasons I chose to complete my cross-institutional studies at ANU was the fact that Gender and Sexualities Studies is under the SCI rather than under the School of Sociology - much of the research in this area could not be strictly defined as sociology. My fear would be the impact that this restructure may have on future research coming out of the Gender and Sexualities area at ANU (which given I had intended on applying to study Honours and Postgraduate work at ANU is deeply troubling!).

Kind regards,

Ayesha Kaak
To whom it may concern

Please be assured that Sasha Grishin is not the only dissenting voice regarding the proposed merger of Art History & Curatorship and the School of Art. Such a proposal does not consider the important differences in focus and approach between the two areas and would fatally compromise the quality of the art history programme currently offered by the ANU.

Kind regards

Catherine
I am writing in regards to the RSHA Restructure that is being proposed. I am deeply concerned that the measures suggested in the proposal are based on saving money at the cost of education.

Many of the proposed changes represent fewer classes available to students, which is counter-intuitive as a reduction in the availability of courses has already resulted in fewer enrollments. It seems like this approach is not concerned with the learning experience of students or creating a productive environment for staff. Trying to squeeze more out of already over-worked staff will reduce the quality of courses and inhibit the ability of staff to produce innovative research.

Though I understand that there are financial pressures on the University, these proposed changes are only going to encourage students to look elsewhere for institutions that value the Humanities.

Without being able to attract brilliant students I don’t see how the ANU could maintain its good reputation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Clare Southerton

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To whom it may concern,

just what exactly is going on at ANU? Dismantling the School of Cultural Inquiry seems to be a decision made to dilute the intensity and variety of course offered. To limit the courses available in unprofitable areas, to do things for international prestige (explicitly mentioned in rationales) is against the nature of education. Education is not about turning you into a workhorse, it is about crafting critical, rounded and informed human beings. The less variety on offer, the more quality diminishes, and the more we make economic decisions instead of human ones, the more we degrade our education. It is something the ANU administration consistently fails to understand. In the grand scheme of things education comes before money, and I know that dismantling the school of Cultural Inquiry, ending tutorials for arts, or restructuring the School Of Music are and were decisions that do not need to happen. There are other options, but eventually it seems the only option that is explored is the one that makes the undergraduate population suffer. I stress a longer consultation period, and a willingness, in deed, not in word, to take students and their concerns seriously. ANU is nothing without undergraduate students, and the current onslaught of changes is colouring ANU's reputation.

It seems naïve to move English over to languages. The soon to be defunct School of Cultural Inquiry brings together a broad range of subjects, all of which focus on a questions of humans and humanity. This seems wishy-washy, and in part it is, but English certainly is a subject about people, about humanity. Only superficially does it belong in a language school. The reading of texts, engagement with them, is a key way we gain access to the ideas and ideologies of the world. The motion to move English into the language department shows a clearly infantile understanding of the subject itself.

Again, I accuse those involved in the proposed restructuring of the RSHA of naivety. Suggestions like moving Gender Studies to Sociology show an a superficial and indifferent engagement with what these subjects actually consist of. It suggests to me that the engagement with these course is purely bureaucratic. The decisions are not made based on value or student enjoyment, but on which course are lacking enrolment and costing too much money. This economic approach to the humanities is dehumanising.

Finally I would like to address the proposal to remove tutorials from the arts. The whole point of tutorials is that lectures are large and not beneficial to everyone's learning. Thus we have tutorials, so everyone can get more out of the course, undergraduates can interact with academics, and learning can be facilitated in a group where we can be exposed to different and varied analysis of a single topic via small and intensive discussions. Tutorials are beneficial even in the more "loner" subjects, say physics or math, they are indispensable to arts. A university without tutorials is a cold and heartless monolith, that offers nothing but the illusion of an education. I am disturbed to hear this was an "executive decision" (this may be just idle chatter), such a significant change demands a lengthy, full on and well organised consultation period that doesn't just work for ANU administrators' timetables, but students' as well.

I am sickened by these changes. In two years I should graduate, and if these changes go through, I will no longer sing praises of ANU to friends and family, peers and workmates and I will be glad to finally turn my back on an institution driven mad with administrative power and self-interest.

Duncan Stuart
I wish to comment on the proposal to disestablish the School of Cultural Enquiry and the relocation of the various components. Specifically, the proposal to move Art History teaching to the School of Art is a concern to me as a student, as is the proposal to locate heritage and museum studies within Anthropology and Archaeology.

As a student of Art History who has also undertaken Visual Arts studies (although not at ANU) I am disappointed that the University would take this route for teaching of Art History. While it is beneficial, often integral, to be aware of the technical aspects of visual art, there is no intellectual benefit to be gained from this co-location. Indeed the intellectual rigour of Art History can best be maintained by co-location with other humanities studies, for example with literature studies, cultural studies and to a lesser extent languages. The interrogation of art history is not reliant on artistic techniques, but more often relates to co-developments across the humanities, to social and anthropological change and to philosophical and historical values. Close relationships with these disciplines should be maintained to ensure a more rounded view is gained by students. In the modern era, it is imperative that students and teaching staff do not exist in a ‘bubble’ which can limit their ability to see past their own favoured discipline.

I do not wish to suggest that the Art School is not disciplined or intellectual, but its focus is by necessity to encourage and develop practising artists, not to develop art historians, and moving art history teaching staff to the Art School would not enhance the School’s primary function – the Art School does that well in any case. It would not be considered essential to literature studies for students to have undertaken or be familiar with creative writing, for example, it is the analysis and research skills which are important. Some interaction with the School of Art is desirable, and beneficial, but not critical to the study of humanities subjects.

In addition, there is considerable cross-over in the teaching of Art History and the development of cultural and heritage studies. In Canberra, with such a range of cultural institutions, it is important to encourage the study of both, recognising that many of our institutions have collections which are fairly eclectic, not limited to visual art, but encompassing a wide range of objects and media. It is not appropriate to separate the curatorial functions and heritage studies from art history, as these areas are closely related.

I think the proposed changes should be re-considered so that the intellectual integrity of the art history discipline is maintained, and it should be properly located with relevant humanities subjects which promote research and analysis, not practice, an entirely different focus.

Regards

Elaine White

u5196314
ANU I don't know who you are now.

As an Australian who has spent many years abroad, I used to boast about the ANU - how it was in the top 10 Universities globally, how it supported creative learning and ideas exchange, how it promoted discovery and improvement across all disciplines, how it was easily one of the most innovative and secure establishments in which to earn an internationally highly respected degree, and how it served as a springboard for work, further study, and personal enrichment.

Now I cannot say I would recommend it to anyone, anywhere, for any reason, when there are so many colleges and universities elsewhere that blossom with possibility, and do what the ANU used to do.

I used to feel inspired by the very buildings. Now I somehow feel ashamed, and disappointed.

There are many jewels in Australia; the ANU used to be one of them.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Lis Cherry
To whom ever this may concern,

I am a second year undergraduate student studying International Relations (IR) at ANU, and I am also the radio subeditor at Woroni. I am disgusted by the College of Arts and Social Science's (CASS) recent proposal to axe funding for tutorials, as this once again demonstrates the ANU’s tendency to place profit margins over the welfare and education of students. The proposed CASS-wide adoption of the 'Minn's' model for educating students is factually erroneous and blatantly ridiculous. I am currently enrolled in John Minn's course International Political Economy (IPE), which consists of a two hour lecture, a one hour workshop and a one hour tutorial each week for us to engage with professionals in the field in a small, manageable setting. These tutorials, whilst not compulsory, are well attended and integral for understanding the complex theories and themes within the course and their 'phasing out' will have a detrimental affect upon the quality of the education received by students in this course.

Furthermore, to suggest that the absence of tutorials have no impact on the quality of undergraduate education is a blatant lie. How does CASS propose to conduct the assessment of students without tutors? How will lecturers facilitate the marking of written assessment (essays and examinations) without the assistance of tutors? Are you seriously proposing that lecturers mark up to 300 essays by themselves, twice a semester? If not, then how is CASS actually planning to assess Students' progress and learning? By multiple choice questionnaires? By short-answer ‘pop-quizzing’? By contracting-out and having graduates or lecturers not involved in the course marking the papers? How would this situation not functionally cripple the quality of undergraduate education in CASS?

What about student welfare? How does CASS anticipate being able to adequately identify students in need of academic and personal support without tutors in courses being able to have close face-to-face relationships with the students? How does CASS propose to help students with intellectual or learning disabilities? A lecturer who must deal with anywhere between 50 and 300 students per lecture certainly cannot do this task, so how does CASS anticipate being able to identify and help those students who need personal support from their respective school?

How does CASS propose to cater for students who are required to work in order to study? To date, there have almost always been tutorials slated for the early evenings so that students can still remain engaged with their coursework outside of 9-5 working hours. The forum/workshop proposal seems to imply that there will be no contingency in place for students who are unable to attend lectures and/or ‘forums’ due to work commitments. This proposal places part-time working students at a structural educational disadvantage precisely because they are already fiscally disadvantaged! How do you plan to accommodate for this given that student poverty is on the rise and students are working harder than ever to support themselves through their studies?

What about the Post-Graduate Students and Doctoral Candidates? Where are our future educators to get hands-on experience with actually teaching students face-to-face? Why would any university hire a graduate to teach students when that graduate has never had any experience with actually teaching students? This is not only an issue of damaging the employment potential of Post-Graduate Students and Doctoral Candidates by denying them the opportunity for learning to teach, it will create long-term systemic issues for the ANU and Australia by premise of the fact that the ANU will
no longer be graduating Scholars who can research and teach, but by graduating researchers with no teaching experience! Where will our future tertiary education teachers and educators come from if not from Post-Graduate Students? And, please explain to me, what better way there is for Post-Graduates to gain teaching experience than by supervised tutorial teaching under the guidance of senior academics?

CASS’s proposal strikes to the very heart of education at the ANU, which is further compounded by the recent RSHA proposal and insulting notion of a 2 week consultation period! I am disgusted by CASS’s explicit attempts to avoid the sort of outrage that was seen last year with the School of Music by attempting (and failing) to schedule the student consultation in our break, and informing staff members of the staff action meeting two days before the event.

Once again, the decisions made by ANU’s management demonstrates that the ANU truly is being co-opted by corporate and military forces to the detriment of quality of tertiary education and research.

If these proposals are enforced, I certainly will not remain a proud ambassador of this institution and I will reconsider my desire to study here during my final year of my degree program.

Yours sincerely,

Elise Terrell.

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with acknowledgement to Jason Andrews
Dear RSHA

As a current student of the ANU Art History and Curatorship Honours Program I am concerned about the proposed Art History and School of Art Merger and how it will negatively effect the quality of education that ANU is renowned for.

Kind Regards

Ellen Wignell
ANU: Art History and Curatorship Honours
Submission on RSHA change proposal

Professor Howard Morphy
Director - ANU Research School of Humanities and the Arts

Dear Professor Morphy,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed changes outlined in the “Change Management Proposal: RSHA Restructure” released on 22 July 2013.

I am currently a PhD candidate in the School of Sociology at the ANU. I also completed my undergraduate training at ANU, with a Ba Arts/BA Science (Psychology), first class honours in Philosophy, 2009. In 2011 I was awarded the Inaugural PhD Scholarship from the ANU Gender Institute to conduct my HDR studies at ANU. In 2012 I received the CASS award for Excellence in Tutoring as well as the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating. I am also an academic committee member on the ANU Fenner Hall Diversity Learning Community.

My concerns regarding the change management proposal are multiple, and I have a number of questions regarding the possible impact on students, graduate and undergraduate alike, should changes go ahead. There have already been significant educational disruptions due to earlier reforms within the humanities area and this new proposal is again providing uncertain footing. There are numerous students currently studying within RSHA who are distressed by the unknown future implications of this “disestablishment” proposal. What follows are some specific examples of concerns relating to the proposed changes.

Gender, Sexuality and Culture (GSC) studies students are highly concerned – they have seen the way in which Film Studies was recently demoted from a major option to a minor one due to staffing issues – and are worried that current guarantees to maintain GSC as a major option will also be reneged upon in the future.

• Can you confirm what the practical strategies are to ensure that the proposed changes will be feasibly carried out without major deleterious impact on the subjects being moved, such as GSC, which will be subsumed under different disciplines?
• Though the proposal acknowledges that “planning” on exactly how the changes will be carried out is not included, given the promises being made within the proposal, particularly with regard to the GSC major, can you confirm when more information regarding plans will be made available?
• Can you confirm that adequate consultation with students and staff in areas that will be impacted by the changes, such as GSC, have been carried out?
  o Further to this question, page 10 of the proposal states: “Gender, Sexuality and Culture remains as a major in the BA and is convened out of the School of Sociology”. It is my understanding that GSC is not currently administered by Sociology. Can you clarify this statement? Can you confirm that staff (academic and administrative) within Sociology who will be responsible for GSC in the future have been informed and consulted with on the plan for GSC to sit within Sociology?
• Can you provide evidence that GSC will continue as a major at the ANU in the coming years?
• Can you confirm that since 2009 one staff member who taught GSC major subjects has left the ANU and has not been replaced? Are there plans to replace this position in the future to ensure the continuation of the major?
• What plans are in place that will support the continuation of GSC as a major at the ANU?
• What GSC courses will run past 2014 and which staff members will run them?
• What supports will be in place to make sure that enough GSC courses run to form a major?
Can you confirm whether there will be adequate numbers of staff to support the continuation of enough GSC courses to constitute a major?

A further concern that I have regarding the change management proposal is the way in which consultation has been conducted thus far.

- What measures have been taken to get students who will be directly affected by the changes involved in the consultation process aside from the forum held in May prior to the release of the proposal, and the forum held the day immediately following the proposal’s release?
- Can you comment on why there was such a short turnaround between the release of the proposal and the meeting held with students?
- Can you confirm that the forum held on the 23 July had approximately 24 students were in attendance?
- Can you comment on the rationale behind the particular change management planning regarding the number and timing of student forums?
- Can you comment on the wording on the RSHA site that uses language that suggests the changes will definitely go ahead – “Proposed change finalised: 3 September”?
- Can you comment on whether you have obtained the views of the majority of undergraduate and graduate students directly affected through your current method of consultation?
- Can you comment on whether in your consultation process you employed any of these methods with regard to the most recent student forum held 23 July 2013: multiple emails; flyers; social media announcements; media announcements; announcement in Woroni? If not, can you comment on why any of these practices have not been utilised?

Related to these consultation issues is the statement made on page 12 of the document that claims “staff directly affected” will be made aware of the proposal.

- Can you confirm that this statement is correct? Can you comment on how “staff directly affected” is defined?
- Considering that many areas of the Arts and Social Sciences will be restructuring and absorbing different subjects (such as the Art School taking up Art History and Curatorship), have these Heads of Schools been informed? Have administrative staff from these areas been informed?
- Can you comment on the concern that if the people who will be administering and organising restructured disciplines in the future are not aware of these proposed plans, how can you be sure that the restructure will not have several unforseen negative consequences in regards to courses on offer in the future?

As a student and staff member deeply involved in issues of gender and sexuality in research, consultative and teaching capacities, I would like to offer my services in helping to ensure that the GSC major remains secure into the future. Further, I would be more than willing to be involved in future change management processes in CASS to ensure that the voices of students, particularly those from the graduate cohort of which I am part, are heard and integrated into planning solutions. For these reasons I would like to offer my services into the future as a graduate representative in the following capacities:

- Graduate representation on further change management developments related to the RSHA restructure indicated in the proposal;
• Graduate representation on planning on maintenance of the GSC major for 2014 and onward, to ensure its survival and strength into the future; and/or
• Helping to promote future student forums to ensure that the majority of affected graduate student voices are taken into consideration.

Students care about these kinds of changes being made to their university. I am letting you know that I care about the changes, but have concerns as outlined in the questions I seek to be answered. These are regarding: the promotion of an uncertain context for students in the RSHA, the content of the proposal in regards to the practicalities of the promises made, and the way in which “consultation” on the proposal has been conducted. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the questions I have raised, and the possibility of my involvement as a graduate representative in future change management planning for RSHA and the GSC major.

Yours sincerely,
Hannah McCann

PhD Candidate
School of Sociology
College of Arts and Social Sciences
Australian National University
To whom it may concern,

Seriously. What on earth is going on in CASS? The proposal to axe funding for tutorials, let alone set the expected tutorial size at 20 students per tutorial is an abominable decision by the CASS administration. I am speaking specifically here to Toni Makkai, Royston Gustavson and Jeffrey Karp - all of whom I know to be supporters of this proposal. The proposed CASS-wide adoption of the 'Minn's' model for educating students is simply ridiculous. To suggest that this will have no impact on the quality of undergraduate education is a blatant lie.

How does CASS propose to conduct the assessment of students without tutors? Without a sufficient body of tutors to facilitate the marking of written assessment - essays and examinations - who is going to do all the marking of those essays? Are you seriously proposing that lecturers mark 100 essays by themselves, twice per semester? If not, then how is CASS actually planning to assess Students' progress and learning? By multiple choice questionnaires? By short-answer 'pop-quizzing'? By contracting-out and having graduates or lecturers not involved in the course marking the papers? How would this situation not functionally cripple the quality of undergraduate education in CASS?

And what about student welfare? How does CASS anticipate being able to adequately identify students in need of academic and personal support without tutors in courses being able to have close face-to-face relationships with the students? A lecturer who must deal with anywhere between 50 and 300 students per lecture certainly cannot do this task, so how does CASS anticipate being able to identify and help those students who need personal support from their respective school?

And what about the flexibility of tutorials to cater for students who are required to work in order to study? To date, there have almost always been tutorials slated for the early evenings so that students who need to work in order to study can still remain engaged with their coursework outside of 9-5 working hours. The forum/workshop proposal seems to imply that there will be no contingency in place for students who are unable to attend lectures and/or ‘forums’ due to work commitments. This proposal places part-time working students at a structural educational disadvantage precisely because they are already fiscally disadvantaged! How do you plan to accommodate for this given that student poverty is on the rise and students are working harder than ever to support themselves through their studies?

And what about the Post-Graduate Students and Doctoral Candidates? Where are our future educators to get hands-on experience with actually teaching students face-to-face? Why would any university hire a graduate to teach students when that graduate has never had any experience with actually teaching students? This is not only an issue of damaging the employment potential of Post-Graduate Students and Doctoral Candidates by denying them the opportunity for learning to teach, it will create long-term systemic issues for the ANU and Australia by premise of the fact that the ANU will no longer be graduating Scholars who can research and teach, but by graduating researchers with no teaching experience! Where will our future tertiary education teachers and educators come from if not from Post-Graduate Students? And, please explain to me, what better way there is for Post-Graduates to gain teaching experience than by supervised
tutorial teaching under the guidance of senior academics?

Your proposal strikes to the very heart of education at the ANU - and this is to say nothing of the RSHA proposal and your excuse and pathetic and insulting notion of a 2 week consultation period! You are explicitly trying to avoid the sort of outrage that was seen last year with the School of Music. Not only are you deceiving the students and staff, you are taking a coward's approach to these issues.

I will be personally writing to The Canberra Times and directly agitating against these proposals irrespective of the conclusions of your insulting and derogatory 'consultation' deadline.

As a graduate of the ANU who achieved double first class honours in Philosophy and International Relations - I am appalled by this callous and cowardly proposal and feel ashamed to be associated with a College that intends to undermine the very fabric of the education for future generations of undergraduate students. These proposals are a blight upon the name of the ANU and the very concept of Education.

Jason Andrews.
Dear Linda,

I am well aware that the RSHA Proposals are distinct from the Tutorial Proposals. I am equally concerned about the RSHA Proposals, I have not, however, had the chance to study the proposal document as closely as I need in order to formulate substantive criticisms of it.

My incipient understanding, however, is that, given that it is coming in the wake of the past 4 years of restructuring programs, the RSHA Proposal appears to follow in the footsteps of its forebears: i.e., cost-cutting, increasing academic workloads, progressively polarising the academic body into distinct 'teaching' and 'research' bodies, compromising important fields of study by deference to claims of 'inefficient use of teaching resources' and, overall, running the University as a corporate service-providing entity that treats tertiary education as any other exportable commodity - quality be damned. The specific effects on specific disciplines I have yet to research in terms of the fluctuations of course offerings between 2009 and today, but it is clear that Gender Studies, in particular since 2010, has suffered greatly from diminished resources and diminished support. Undoubtedly, it will be relegated from the position of a 'major' to the that of a 'minor' in the next year or two, much in the same fashion as Film Studies is under the current RSHA Proposals.

Moreover, I am hardly convinced by the argument that the RSHA Proposals have nothing to do with budgeting given that it is understood that CASS, on the whole, is currently running a serious deficit.

In short: The RSHA Proposals seem to be no more than a mop-up job of the damaged wrecked on the Humanities by broader restructuring of the ANU into the current College System. In this, the reasons for it are the same: an ERA Ranking driven research agenda (a deeply problematic issue in its own right), more responsibility on fewer academics and, more immediately, trying to balance the CASS budget by making cuts and demotions wherever possible.

Regards,

Jason Andrews

On Tue, Aug 6, 2013 at 3:09 PM, CASS - RSHA Consult <rshaconsult@anu.edu.au> wrote:

Dear Jason

Thank you for your submission on the RSHA change proposal.

I am writing on behalf of the RSHA Change Management Steering Committee, which noted that in your submission you commented on the changes to the College’s service delivery mode.
The proposal on educational delivery is separate from the RSHA change proposal.

The Vice-Chancellor has initiated a review of the proposed changes to CASS course delivery and you can find information at http://cass.anu.edu.au/current-students/education-policies/Latest-changes-CASS-delivery-model

In the meantime, classes will continue as normal in the format selected by the individual lecturers.

Your comments about the changes proposed in the RSHA Change Management Proposal will be considered and addressed in the response to be developed by the RSHA Change Management Steering Committee.

Kind regards,

Linda Addison

a member of the RSHA Change Management Steering Committee
To whom it may concern,

I am a student in my second year of a BA at ANU, and I am extremely disappointed in the proposed changes to the College of Arts and Social Sciences. As an English major, I cannot stress how detrimental to the study of literature the phasing out of small group tutorials would be. When studying a work of literature, the most beneficial and influential learning occurs during the discussion of those works in tutorials. Trying to discuss books or poetry with groups as large as eighty would not just be difficult, it would be near impossible to have an kind of meaningful discourse. I feel that these forum teaching arrangements would only benefit those people who are comfortable speaking publicly in front of large groups. Anybody who did not have that confidence, or people who are more introverted would suffer significantly in such an environment. ANU is an institution where, theoretically, everybody can receive an education without being put into uncomfortable situations. I feel these changes would make ANU a far less appealing institution for many people. If these changes go ahead, I would no longer recommend ANU to prospective students as an inclusive and encouraging place to pursue higher education.

I will be incredibly discouraged to see these cuts go ahead. Why is it that whenever any kind of budget cuts are made it is the Arts which suffer? If budget cuts have to be made, they should be made across the board. If this goes ahead I will no longer have any faith in Ian Young's leadership, as he has clearly demonstrated that he favours some disciplines over others, and this bias is distressing in someone who holds such a high position at our university.

Yours Sincerely,
Jenna Maurer
Dear Professor H. Morphy,


My key concern about the changes outlined in this document pertains to the future of the Gender, Sexuality and Culture (GSC) Major. Such concern comes from an anxiety about the disestablishment of several Gender Studies programs across Australia in the past year, notably the programs at the University of Queensland, University of Wollongong, and La Trobe University.

I am currently a PhD Candidate in the School of Cultural Inquiry. I graduated from the ANU in 2012 with a Bachelor's degree with First Class Honours in GSC and was the joint recipient of the 2012 ANU Gender Institute Prize for Excellence in Gender Research for an undergraduate thesis.

Over the past 5 years, I have watched the gradual collapse of the GSC Major. When I came to the ANU in 2009, the GSC Major was administered in the School of Humanities and had three FTE teaching staff (Dr. Rosanne Kennedy, Dr. Helen Keane, and Dr. Gaik Cheng Khoo). At this stage, GSC had the appearance of a coherent and concrete discipline; it offered a diverse range of courses, which drew on the particular research interests and strengths of its three teaching staff.

As you will be aware, following the disestablishment of the Faculty of Arts in 2010, Dr. Keane was relocated to the School of Sociology, while Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Khoo remained in the renamed School of Cultural Inquiry (SCI). Having the GSC program split between these two areas certainly raised a lot of questions at the time and made my time as an undergraduate student difficult.

Then, in 2012, Dr. Kennedy was moved into the English program and Dr. Khoo into the Film Studies program, effectively dispersing the GSC program between three disciplines. This, in combination with other reasons, saw the resignation of Dr Khoo in late-2012, without replacement. Dr. Khoo’s departure has drastically reduced the amount of Later Year GEND-coded courses on offer in the last year (Fig. 1). Now, with only two FTE teaching staff, split between two research schools, having two compulsory First Year courses (GEND1001 and GEND1002) to teach each semester, and a small, but consistent Honours/HDR cohort, it has become nearly impossible for either Dr. Kennedy or Dr. Keane to run their own specialised Later Year courses.

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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Fig. 1. 2000-level GEND-coded courses on offer 2009-14.
Furthermore, it should be noted that three out of the nine Later Year GEND-coded courses currently on the books were specific to Dr Khoo’s research interests and will have to be removed from the Major course list. These courses include:

- GEND2030 - The Politics of Dance/Musicals
- GEND2031 - Cinema in Southeast Asia: Genre and Cultural Identities
- GEND2032 - Multiculturalism in Australia through Food and Sport

As this outlines, the need for staff to run courses for a Major is essential. As I see it, the GSC Major lacks the resources to continue as a Major, especially subject to the BA review currently in progress. Here, things such as the proposed reconfiguration of course delivery methods (i.e. move towards problem based learning), as outlined by Professor Royston Gustavson in an email to students on 31 July 2013, are simply incompatible with the current administration and staff levels of the GSC Major. How are you going to ensure the GSC Major remains viable in 2014 and beyond?

On Page 10 of the “Change Management Proposal,” it claims, “Gender, Sexuality and Culture will continue to be a major in the BA and be convened by the School of Sociology.” The Major is currently administrated out of the SCI, not Sociology. Has the Head of Sociology even been consulted about this possible convenorship? Who will be taking responsibility of the GSC Major?

In May 2013, I attended a Student Forum hosted by the ANUSA CASS Representatives and, most recently, I attended the CASS Student Forum, as part of the formal consultation process for the proposed RSHA restructure on 23 July. At both of these meetings, the information delivered was presented in the form of “this is happening” and leaved little room for student involvement, with the exception of a rather short consultation period. Would you consider having HDR student representation on the steering committee of the RSHA restructure? Or possibly, establishing smaller planning groups for individual disciplines, such as GSC?

I wish conclude by highlighting my experience as a GSC graduate. I came to the ANU in 2009 with an aspiration of becoming a historian, however, given the flexible nature of the Arts degree, I was able try a little bit of everything. Fortunately, I enrolled in Dr. Keane’s “Introduction to Gender Studies” course. Taking this course, not only caused me to change Majors, but it also opened me up to a completely new ways of thinking about complex ideas pertaining to everyday concepts, such as gender, sexuality, and identity. As a result, I graduated with a degree that facilitated a critical capacity to think and communicate creatively and independently about the world I live in.

I am really passionate about the GSC Major and its future at the ANU. As an emerging academic in the field, who will be representing the ANU, I would like to say with confidence that the GSC Major is going strong, if not, expanding.

Yours sincerely

Jonathon Zapasnik
PhD Candidate in Gender Studies
School of Cultural Inquiry, RSHA
To Whom it May Concern,

As an Art History and Curatorship student here at the ANU, I am strongly disappointed to hear about the possibility of restructuring regarding the Art History and Curatorship discipline be merged with the School of Art program. I believe that this restructuring is unnecessary and will impact negatively upon students from both the School of Art and Art History and Curatorship disciplines. Art History and Curatorship is a humanities degree, and though we both focus on the 'visual arts', Art History and Curatorship is a degree which requires an entirely different skill set and our academic focus is also entirely different.

This proposed merger will weaken both faculties and therefore will weaken the standing of both disciplines at the ANU, resulting in poorer career opportunities for both myself and my fellow students who are currently studying Art History and Curatorship. We do NOT want this change, we believe there has not been significant enough consultation with current staff and students and we do NOT want to see our future go down the bathroom sink.

I am entirely opposed to this idea.

Sincerely,
Karyna Jansons
Current Art History and Curatorship (Hons) Student.
Dear Howard,

Please consider this a continuation of my formal submission to this proposal. Despite your assurances I remain deeply concerned. In regards to the consultation process, I reiterate my former point that these 'discussions' have not taken adequate consideration of the views and interests of undergraduate students. These working parties were not elected by the student body and thus their opinions cannot be taken as representative of all students affected. Given the brevity (2 weeks) of the consultation period and the lack of effort which has been made by the organising committee to inform students about this proposal, I think it it's reasonable for us to question whether the input of those most directly affected by these changes (the undergraduates and post-graduates who are receiving the education which is being altered) was ever sincerely sought or desired.

In regards to the continuation of the gender studies major, the practical reality of situation apparently belies your assurances. It is my understanding that the head of Sociology, Stewart Lockie, was until yesterday unaware that his school will be required, under this proposal, to run the gender studies major. He was referred to your proposal by an enquiring student rather than the RSHA steering committee. This once again seems to point to a failure of the consultation process. Moreover, the positions of two academics who have recently left ANU and were responsible for teaching in the gender major have not been filled. This leaves only two academics responsible for the entire course load of the major. Only one these is in Sociology. How is it practically feasible to teach a major under these conditions? Can you provide me and all concerned parties with the details of exactly how gender will remain a major?

Sincerely,

Lachlan Angus

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Dear Lachlan,

Thanks you for your email. The proposals that have been put forward are the result of a long period of discussions which have involved the Schools concerned and a number of working parties which reported on the proposal. The University is strongly committed to maintaining excellence in the humanities but over time there will inevitably be changes in course offerings as disciplines change.

There will not be any changes to courses offered as a consequence of the proposed restructure. The Associate Dean (Education), Dr Royston Gustavson, on Wednesday 29 May at the CASS Student Forum hosted by ANUSA (reported in Woroni), and again at the student briefing on Tuesday 23 July, made a firm commitment to the continuation of the Gender major. If the proposed restructure goes ahead, the major is expected to be administered by the School of Sociology, which teaches GEND1001 Sex, Gender and Identity, but there will be no changes to the academic structure or content of the major as a result of this proposal. In the case of film studies following on from discussions that began last year the Film and New Media major and minor will be disbanded as of 31 December this year. This has been approved by the CASS and University Education Committees, which have also approved a Film minor from 01 January 2014. The process in this case was unrelated to the current proposal, which will not involve any changes to student offerings.

Best
I am writing in answer to the call for queries and submissions regarding the proposed restructuring of the RSHA. In the proposal, it is stated that no academic positions will be lost. Does this merely mean that there will be no redundancies as a result, or does it mean that any staff who leave in the future will be replaced by new staff? If it is the former, can you guarantee that the majors which are taught by these staff, such as film studies and gender studies, will remain on offer? Given the deleterious effects of the disestablishment of the Faculty of Arts back in 2009, and recent changes to the ANU school of music, which the proposal draft document explicitly refers to as laying the foundation for the current proposal, how can we as concerned students be sure that the ANU will allow us to complete the education upon which we have embarked?

I also have concerns about the consultation process surrounding this proposal. Two weeks, which is the period designated within the proposal draft document for the first stage of consultation, hardly seems long enough to inform all relevant parties (especially undergraduate students) and allow them to formulate reasoned responses. Moreover, there seems to have been a remarkable lack of effort on the part of the RSHA steering committee to inform the student body of this proposal. As far as I am aware, there was one meeting with students held the day following the announcement of this proposal in which 24 students participated. No posters or fliers advertising the proposal were placed around the campus. If the university administration sincerely wishes to have a ‘broad and extensive’ consultation on this issue, it behooves it to ensure that knowledge of this proposal is disseminated broadly and extensively.

Sincerely,

Lachlan Angus
As a student in the Art History and Curatorship program I am writing to STRONGLY protest against the proposed changes which will see this area merge with the Art School. This area belongs in the humanities and is NOT compatible with the School of Art's focus. This change will dilute the quality of education and future job prospects in this field and I urge that it does not take place.

Sincerely,

Leanne Santoro.
I think the proposed changes, especially "disestablishing" the School of Cultural Inquiry is a terrible idea. I came to study humanities at ANU because it was a world class institution in the field. In the four short years I have been an undergraduate (part-time) student, I have seen downsizing of fields and the struggle maintain the expected high standards of ANU.

Yes, research brings in money, but how can the ANU expect to attract world-class researchers (who in past years have enriched the intellectual fiber of the university) if our courses are limited and uninspiring to the undergrads? (which is surely the result of dividing the department)

As a Gender Studies & English student I am at home in the School of Cultural Inquiry and have no desire for my work to be considered Sociology or Languages, especially if I go onto postgraduate study (if that's even possible when I graduate). It isn't the same thing.

As a national institution you have a responsibility to provide education in ALL fields at all levels, not least the very important sociocultural field that is humanities.

Marion Kruger
U4856896
Good Afternoon

I read with dismay an article in today's *Canberra Times* "Spare art history this shotgun marriage" by Professor Sasha Grishin. I am an honours student at the ANU School of Inquiry, studying Art History and Curatorship, having commenced my studies at ANU in 2010, as a mature-age student. One of the primary reasons I chose to take three, initially, now four years off from the workforce was the opportunity to obtain a degree from a local institution with an outstanding reputation, particularly in the Arts. What Professor Morphy has proposed will damage the reputation of the qualification of Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship and have a detrimental impact on future employment prospects. Additionally, any thoughts I have been toying with regarding post-graduate study at ANU under the proposed re-structure will need to be completely reconsidered, with any further study now needing to be undertaken at either Sydney or Melbourne Universities; universities that value the discipline of Art History.

I urge you to reject Howard Morphy's proposed changes.

Yours Sincerely

Martin Spencer
U3444193
Dear Professor Morphy and members of the steering committee,

As a higher degree research student in the discipline of English, I would like to offer some feedback on the proposed changes to the structure of the RSHA.

I believe that the present arrangement whereby English, Drama, Art History and Film Studies form a collaborative school is a far better arrangement than the new one proposed by the working party. I note this as a student whose own research has drawn on Linguistics, so I can see there is some merit in establishing closer co-operation with the Departments of Languages and Linguistics. However, this can be achieved in numerous other ways: inter-school workshops, reading groups, joint seminars etc. Restructuring the two schools is unnecessary and will damage established links between the Humanities disciplines.

In my time as an undergraduate at ANU, I majored in English and Drama, and I found these two subjects complemented each other extremely well. In my experience as a PhD candidate, I have found that working in an environment with HDR students studying Film, Drama and Art History to be very beneficial to my own research. There is a community here that is united by our common pursuit of understanding the cultural artefacts of our society, by explaining and articulating them. Although the methods and techniques we rely upon are nuanced and distinct across disciplines, working together gives us new perspectives. For instance, I have been engaged in research about the effects of sound in literature, and I have found it very useful to share my reading with one of the film students here who is engaged in research into sound in film. By sharing sources and bouncing ideas off each other, own our projects are strengthened. The same can be said for Art History – some research I have just finished focuses on the connections between impressionism and literature, and the input of people with extensive knowledge of the theory of art has been very useful to this project.

My point is that these collaborations happen naturally in our current arrangement. If the school is broken up, it will be harder for new students to form the same links I have experienced already. Moreover, although there will always be ways in which collaboration will happen with Languages and Linguistics, I feel that ultimately this arrangement will leave future students worse off because there are fewer natural connections between the two departments. Students of Languages at undergraduate level are primarily engaged in enhancing their written and speaking skills in their chosen language: becoming acquainted with the literature of the language is not the priority it is for English. This puts undergraduate students at different levels, making natural collaboration unlikely. In terms of postgraduate studies, while there are some students examining literary texts and translation theory, a majority of students are engaged in projects charting the grammatical structures of regional dialects and cross-cultural semantics. This kind of research is arguably more related to the principles of Anthropology than it is to English Literature. Generally speaking, the work being done in these two departments is quite different.

While it is possible and indeed important to foster collaboration everywhere, it is most beneficial to maintain it where it falls naturally. It makes little pedagogical sense to force English and Languages,
along with Art and Art History, to break apart and form new schools but to allow Archaeology and Anthropology to remain a separate school, despite the close links these disciplines have with Languages, History, Sociology etc. I believe that a far better way to strengthen the research output of the school as a whole is to maintain the existing structure but foster more cross-disciplinary research and collaboration through ventures that will not disrupt existing natural relationships.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Bartlett

PHD Student, English.
To whom it may concern,

I am a sociology honours student who plans to start a PhD in 2014. I have read through the proposed restructuring of the RHSA and, frankly, I am deeply disappointed and disgraced. Education is not simple or free. But budget constraints should never trump the growth of the students, lecturers and researchers at any university. The proposed restructure not only inhibits growth, but destroys the humanities discourse at the ANU.

I planned on tutoring while studying next year. Tutoring is something I have been looking forward to since my first year at uni—not just because it would have been convenient to work where I study, or because it would have opened up networks and opportunities in teaching, or even because it’s useful for undergraduate students to be tutored by someone closer to their age and experience at ANU. Mostly, I wanted to tutor because I genuinely enjoy learning and helping other people learn. It’s this desire that makes university worthwhile. It’s what the humanities, possibly more than other disciplines, thrives on.

Taking away the opportunity to tutor from students like me, current PhD students, and hopeful undergrads, hurts us—but it hurts the ANU more. It’s not just a matter of bad press; stopping the flow of academically excellent students from undergraduate studies into academic positions effectively stops the flow of new and promising staff in the department. I have heard from a number of reliable sources (tutors, lecturers and heads of school alike) that temporary staff hired from outside the ANU pool of staff consistently receive low to mid range feedback from students—whereas tutors and lecturers who have gone through honours and PhD programs receive much better feedback. Excluding students from ANU’s academic community is a wasted investment. We have spent years cultivating the best academic practices, knowledge, interests and relationships. And now you are pushing us away.

The fact that you’re justifying increased tutorial sizes by saying that it’s “normal practice” across the university shows how little you understand or care about the student and lecturer experience. Ask any science, maths or business studies student whether they benefit from large tutorials, and you’ll hear a resounding “no”. Ask any lecturer whether they benefit from large tutorials, and you’ll hear the same. Increasing tutorial sizes creates an enormous pressure on lecturers not only to teach, but to workshop—whatever that means—and to do research. After three years of full time study, I could easily tell which of my lecturers were feeling the pressures of their jobs. And I can tell you, it made an enormous difference to how well I learned and performed in their class. I believe, as you do, that the ANU hires some of the best academic minds in Australia, if not the world. But those academics can only work so much and devote their attention to so many tasks. To ask too much of them degrades their performance, their standing, and their ability to contribute to the ANU as a whole.
All of which can only lead to the conclusion that the changes are based entirely off considerations of budget and profit. To dress it up as anything else is despicable and dishonest. Crying “pedagogy!” in the face of those who are actually affected by it is one of the highest insults at the top university in Australia. Have the decency to admit that your motivations are entirely financial. Have the intelligence to realise that financial problems are not the fault of students, lecturers, researchers or support staff. Have the courage to stand up to those who are at fault, and take action against them. Have the dignity to protect the university where you work, and which drastically changes the lives of those who go there.

Finally: here are a collection of comments gathered from an online group that were informed of the proposed changes to the RHSA:

- Wow. So glad I got out...
- Thinking about dropping out now.
- I was looking forward to starting a Masters at ANU next year. Shit like this is making me seriously consider overcoming my Go8 snobbery and going somewhere else.
- I am appalled by the business-isation of universities and the particular apparent target of the humanities
- the ANU have been carving away at the Humanities for a very long time.
- What about staff workloads? What about the professional development opportunities for graduate research students who are eventually going to have to teach (if the jobs ever appear)? What about the frigging crucial pedagogical function of small group teaching & learning? I mean, quite apart from the issue of how this is going to blow out teaching workloads for lecturers, meaning research time is totally compromised, it's just fucking balls crazy on all pedagogical counts.
- The least they could've done is just come out and said "We can't afford to pay tutors any more, which sucks for everybody." Claiming this is in any way good pedagogy is plain insulting.
- There goes one of the most enjoyable parts of the program!
- To do this for budgetary constraints is deeply concerning. To pretend that it's for pedagogical reasons is just ludicrous, offensive, and an irredeemable black mark on the intellectual honesty of all involved.

You can also take a look at [http://itsmyhumanities.tumblr.com/](http://itsmyhumanities.tumblr.com/) for more examples of student outrage and distress. These are all comments from past, current AND prospective students. Clearly, these changes will not only damage the existing cohort of undergraduate students, but also
significantly deter students—undergraduates, PhDs and Masters alike—from even considering the ANU as a reputable and engaging institution. The proposed changes are supposedly coming from a desire to allow students to engage better. But it is clear that the changes will do anything but.

At the beginning of this year I believed that the ANU was the absolute best place to finish my degree, embark on my PhD and become an academic. If these changes go through, that will no longer be the case.

Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Miranda Bruce

u4857708
To whom it may concern, I have the following queries and concerns regarding the proposed reorganisation:

1. As background to my questions/comments, may I say that I am a newly enrolled PhD in mature age student in Art History. Until last semester I was an undergraduate student in Arts, and had completed majors in Art History and French. Before coming to ANU I had studied Latin and Roman history, English literature and modern history at tertiary level.

2. In my opinion the proposal to link Classics and English with modern European languages is commendable, encouraging student awareness of, and possibly study of, the broad range of European literature.

3. I am concerned with the proposed relocation of Art History to the School of Art. I have over several years completed CCE courses at the School of Art and have some familiarity with the staff approach to Art Theory, which is more practice/technique based than Art History, and omits the historical and social dimension important in Art History and curatorial studies. Will courses be modified to cater for this need?

4. A quick search of Art Theory staff profiles suggests that not all have doctoral qualifications. Will they be able to supervise Art history PhD students?

5. I am told that there is concern that ANU is not attracting large numbers of undergraduate students. However, during the (recent) years I was working towards an Art History major at BA level a significant proportion of my classmates who were studying towards a art curator career were from interstate, because ANU has a good reputation for career training in this area. Most art curators are not art school graduates, but have a broader arts education, usually including history. Public art galleries in Australia are specialised museums, not sales facilities; their staff have needs for museum studies, and graduate students at ANU have included these in course work Masters. Have these factors been considered in the proposal?

6. May I also point out that a number of my fellow graduate research students in Art History are not ACT residents. The invitation to the Student Forum did not include the website of the proposal, so those who were not in Canberra on the day are at present ignorant of the proposal, and so identify and raise their concerns. Has the committee considered emailing them the web address of the proposal?

Yours faithfully
Patricia Stone
u4538082
Dear Professor Morphy,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed changes outlined in the “Change Management Proposal: RSHA Restructure” released on 22 July 2013. On the issue of shifting away from tutorials, I am quite concerned. In my experience in my arts degree, tutorials one of the only ways that many actually interact with other students, including by providing an accessible forum for ideological development and challenge amongst peers, in a way that is different to a larger format class/forum/workshop.

Regards,

Scott Walker
To whom it may concern,

I would like to submit for consideration with regards to these changes two concerns, one relating to the manner in which they have been conveyed and one relating to the changes themselves.

I feel these proposed changes, while not necessarily negative in themselves, have been handled very poorly from a student point of view.

As a student representative in the School of Cultural Inquiry last year, to arrive at a rep meeting and be told "There are proposed changes but we don't know what" cause unnecessary anxiety, starting an undercurrent of negativity towards the changes.

Furthermore, the way the recent information about this proposal has been distributed is ineffective - most students consider the ANU websites a bit of a joke (due to the difficulty to navigate, terrible search function and repeated need to log in using the same ID and password), so to place something on an intranet inaccessible off campus and fail to even give a direct link to it is relatively useless in generating an informed, engaged student response.

For those who attended the Student Forum, there was a strong negative feeling among the students. The responses received seemed designed to placate while giving the minimum information - deeper explanations as to why these changes were occurring were only given upon direct request. We are undergrads, not preschoolers, and should be presented with all the evidence. In addition, the rationale provided in the proposed changes document distributed at that meeting was sketchy - three years of data were shown, indicating only a minor downward trend, and by no means justifying a full reshuffle. When this was pursued, the downward trend of enrolments world-wide across humanities was cited, with it being emphasised that ANU Humanity enrolments were slightly more down than the average. Although the presenters did suggest potential reasons for this, they did not have any solid evidence. Thus, the given (verbal) rationale that a restructuring would make it clearer for future students as to what ANU excels in seemed like throwing the baby out with the bath water. I will return to this in my second point. My deepest concerns regarding the information provided to students were only raised at yesterday's English Honours meeting.

At the honours meeting, Professor Rosanne Kennedy took the opportunity to respond to some "RIP HUMANITIES" flyers posted around SCI. This generated a discussion, in which I responded to another student's negativity by appealing to the group not to generate negative press for Humanities at ANU - for hearsay can be very influential to potential future students and, if declining enrolments were the justification for the change, then surely we all needed to do our part to combat this. Imagine my surprise when Prof. Kennedy countered me by saying SCI enrolments were up this semester! The shaky evidence became more shaky.

On an aside, it was evident that students would have benefited from the presence of familiar teaching staff at the forum; staff able to ask relevant questions with level heads, instead of the "What will happen to my *course, desk, major, tute room*?" that did not reach the deeper analysis.

So basically, for my first point, based on my experiences above, I would like to suggest the evidence for this change be either properly collected, or properly presented to the student body before any changes go ahead. The restructuring of entire schools surely warrants
sufficient student input and consideration; more than 12 days for students to research and formulate articulate arguments and proposals on top of full time study.

Secondly, although I can see benefits to the restructure, given the rationale presented, this seems an excessive and costly solution. If student enrolment truly is down, wouldn't it be more effective to ADVERTISE? Why am I able to speak to students in years 10 - 12, and their parents, and be told ANU has not had an information session or in any way approached the students at their schools? How come, as a third year BA Undergrad, I hadn't a clue about any of the prizes and awards ANU staff had received that were mentioned at the student forum?

In conclusion, it is the methodology of communication within and about RSHA that seems to be the problem, both in the negative responses to the proposed changes AND in the need for 'change' at all.

Your Undergrads are your assets - we will be the alumni, we are the ones your future students listen to for 'on the ground' advice, and we deserve to be fully informed in an accessible, transparent and accurate manner.

Delay the restructure by a year, get the justification right and the students on side first.

Yours Sincerely,
To whom it may concern,

I am writing in answer to the call for queries and submissions regarding the proposed restructuring of the RSHA. I have read your proposal and along with many others, I have to put my foot down. We are not blind and we can see that it’s interconnected on the slippery slope of the University making negative changes to the Arts.

For example, simply by putting something like Gender Studies into Sociology will then make way for other disciplines to disappear further and therefore lessening the courses. Gender Studies and Sociology were my two majors during my undergraduate years. Doing Gender Studies separately was beneficial to me considering that it is interdisciplinary and opened up a broader range of thinking and texts to me. Since you work for the university, you shouldn’t have to be told what interdisciplinary means. Gender Studies courses typically include reading a wide perspective of research and literature about issues related to gender. The teaching and learning approach is interdisciplinary and therefore emphasises relationships and connections between traditional disciplines. Because Gender Studies is so specific and applies to many other disciplines, it doesn’t make sense to just tuck it under Sociology. Especially since Sociology is only one part of many that make up Gender Studies. That aside, it is also my understanding that with a relocation of the Gender Studies Major from The School of Cultural Inquiry to Sociology, there will only be one staff member (Helen Keane) to convene the major and I fail to understand the practicality of it. Do you have any suggestions? I also understand that Helen is currently on sabbatical, and has not even been consulted about the proposal. What were you planning to do about that?

I also fail to understand why English has to be moved over to languages. I’ve read your proposal several times over and I am still not convinced. English is not just about the language. It is a subject about people, about humanity. Only superficially does it belong in a language school. The reading of texts, engagement with them, is a key way we gain access to the ideas and ideologies of the world. Surely, all of you executives have studied English and know that is much more than the language itself. The motion to move English into the language department shows a lack of understanding of the subject itself.

Another issue is the cutting of tutorials. Cutting tutorials brings into question as to how academics are going to assess student’s progress and learning. Tutorials are the best way to get academic and personal support. The forum/workshop proposal will only cause students to teach themselves the subjects and potentially, fall through the cracks. As a result, they will not get as much out of the subject material as they should.
Looking into the concerns of my peers, the forum/workshop proposal seems to imply that there will be no contingency in place for students who are unable to attend lectures and/or ‘forums’ due to work commitments. This proposal also places part-time working students at a structural educational disadvantage precisely because they are already fiscally disadvantaged. I read another peer’s letter and I really want to reiterate these questions because these issues are seriously important:

“How do you plan to accommodate for this given that student poverty is on the rise and students are working harder than ever to support themselves through their studies? Where will our future tertiary education teachers and educators come from if not from Post-Graduate Students? Can you propose a better way there for Post-Graduates to gain teaching experience than by supervised tutorial teaching under the guidance of senior academics?”

It also brings into question how PhD students and other doctoral candidates are going to get their hands on experience with actually teaching students face to face. I plan on doing a PhD next year and I do not want these changes affecting my future. I have worked very hard during my undergraduate years and I deserve to be able to have that well-rounded PhD experience so that I can then go on to help ANU live up to its reputation. And this would be by doing the wonderful research that ANU is known for. You are going to need new blood in these disciplines at some point. This is more incentive to remember that ANU is also about the undergraduate students and we deserve to have a well-rounded education. Your proposal is taking that away from us.

I needed to be reminded why it’s important to study arts and this is what I got from StudyAt:

“Your Arts degree will give you the necessary flexibility to adapt your knowledge and keep ahead of the changes that all of us face in our careers. It also gives you skills for life – critical analysis, research, written and oral communication – skills that are being increasingly recognised by employers as providing them with their greatest assets – employees who can adapt to and help shape change, who can think laterally, apply knowledge and express themselves clearly.”

https://studyat.anu.edu.au/programs/3111XBARTS;overview.html

Considering the ‘disestablishing’ and the ‘forum/workshop’ proposal, I don’t see this happening anymore. These are not decisions that need to happen.

Regards,

Susannah French