Research School of Humanities and the Arts

Change proposal- CASS Student Forum

Professor Howard Morphy, Director, RSHA & Dr Royston Gustavson, Associate Dean, Education, CASS

Tuesday 23 July, 12.00-1.00pm in the Humanities Conference Room, A D Hope building

Approximately 20 students in attendance

Outline of meeting

Introduction- There will be no changes to educational programs and the proposal will not diminish in any way the educational experience. The proposal has been developed over a long period of consultation within the College and the School. There will be a reduction in the number of Academic Organisational Unit’s (AOU’s), creating larger units with more synergies to better sustain programs and greater staff numbers to support leave arrangements..

Outline of Research School of Humanities and the Arts success in the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), Australian Research Council (ARC), current Centre of Excellence bid for School of Language Studies (SLS), and outstanding graduates.

Purpose of proposal - This proposal is not sudden or the result of any recent announcements by the VC. It is part of longer term planning.

Background – Outline of the change proposal and reviews in CASS since 2010 and development of this proposal. College wants to ensure that students have access to the best research-led teaching and supervision opportunities. The proposal has been developed from Working Party reports and staff discussion. There will be no changes in curriculum or staff losses.

Outcomes outlined in the document - It is proposed that there will be a higher profile for Literature and stronger synergies for Literature placed in a larger School with Classics and Languages. There will be creation of a larger, more visible Art History and Art Theory department; the largest nationally, bringing the staff of two small units, into one unit to create broader offerings and more sustainable teaching profiles. A larger School of Archaeology and Anthropology (SOAA) will now offer undergraduate program in Heritage, Museum and Collections, Material Culture and Museum Education. The relocation of the Centres of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Group (IHUG) into AOU’s will bring research expertise in rock art, cultural heritage, public culture policy and tolerance studies into closer contact with undergraduate teaching, opening up greater opportunities for graduate students for supervision and professional development.
We enter a two week consultation period. This will be followed by an implementation plan released on 3 September and then the new structure will begin on 1 January 2014.

Students are also encouraged to contact the Associate Dean, Education, CASS or Heads of School if they have further questions or please make submissions through the advertised email addresses.

Questions from students

1. **Comment**: name of School of Art (SOA) should include Art History; should have a Higher Degree Research (HDR) and Art History staff representative on the Steering Committee; CASS should assist to foster greater collaboration between all HDR students of the RSHA; and CASS should create academic positions that can be jointly held between ANU and the national cultural institutions.

   Regarding representation, membership of the Steering Committee is not representational and members are not there to represent their individual School. The Heads of Schools in RSHA jointly agreed on the 2 nominees for the Steering Committee. Along with the School of Cultural Inquiry the draft document also includes a proposal to disestablish the Interdisciplinary Humanities Group and this School is also not included on the Steering Committee.

2. **Can there be consideration given to student availability during the process so that meetings are not scheduled to clash with exam or busy semester periods?**

   The launch of the consultation paper was timed to coincide with when staff and students were back at the University. The timing was designed to distinguish this process from the broader Budget Solutions process of consultation.

3. **Can you please clarify the arrangements for Gender Studies in the new structure?**

   There is no proposed change to educational offerings of the RSHA as a result of this process. By restructuring the Schools we will be bringing together ‘like’ elements to make disciplines stronger and more visible. The College has a strong commitment to Gender Studies and the only change is that Gender Studies will be solely administered by the School of Sociology. This does not require the Academic convenorship to be from Sociology, it may move between areas. For example, the Indigenous Australian Studies Major is now permanently administered by CAEPR but currently convened by a staff member from the School of Music. Students will see no change in course offerings as a result of this change management proposal.

   Any changes to educational offerings as part of this process will be administrative rather than content based. Students will not see any academic difference.

4. **RSHA Museum Studies student who is located in the Sir Roland Wilson building enjoys the interdisciplinary nature of her location and wonders if this might change with the Centres going into AOU’s? In addition will the name of her PhD program Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Research (ICCR) change?**
The RSHA will ensure the interdisciplinary atmosphere will not be diminished and in fact would like to see it extended across CASS. The name of the ICCR degree will not change.

Curriculum renewal is an ongoing process and a number of initiatives are underway that are not related to this process; for example, the current review of the BA and the recent disestablishment of the Bachelor of Digital Arts due to the changing nature of that discipline.

5. Are there plans to link the Asian Art History program from College of Asia-Pacific (CAP) with programs in CASS?

There are no plans for a change in arrangements for co-teaching with CAP or a merger of the two Colleges.

6. Why isn’t a member of School of Cultural Inquiry (SCI) included on the Steering Committee?

Membership of the Steering Committee is not representational and members are not there to represent their individual School. The Heads of Schools in RSHA jointly agreed on the 2 nominees for the Steering Committee. Along with the School of Cultural Inquiry the draft document also includes a proposal to disestablish the Interdisciplinary Humanities Group and this School is also not included on the Steering Committee.

7. Will Art Theory courses be more available to Art History students?

Following the 2010 Review of the School of Cultural Inquiry we worked with the SOA on the undergraduate offerings. A number of courses from the SOA are now cross-listed—such as ‘Old Masters’—which means Art History students can already do Art Theory courses based in the School of Art. That review of our undergraduate offerings has already taken place.

8. Is the decline in undergraduate load as detailed in the proposal normal?

There has been some decline and we are not clear why. The naming of the Schools comes from a sense that the CASS offerings have not been promoted/understood by potential students. There is some sense that it is cyclical but there is a worldwide discussion on what appears to be a decline in student interest in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) areas. This may be due to greater media and government attention given to disciplines such as Science and Engineering. It is incumbent on the College to respond and ensure that its offerings are attractive to potential students. This is highlighted by the changes in the names of the Schools in this proposal.