

Big Picture
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Professor Daryl Le Grew
Vice-Chancellor

To date, I have stressed the priority in EDGE # 2 for the Excellence and Distinctiveness end of the spectrum, and there is no resiling from this. In fact work is already underway to reinforce the concept of a high performance academic culture (see EDGE # 2 Priority A) by allocating \$12m over the next five years for New Star Appointments – key academics strengthening existing areas and creating some new initiatives, especially in the inter disciplinary space.

This of course, builds on the Quantum Leaps program of EDGE # 1 which has seen 16 very strong new appointments already. Additionally, EDGE # 2 will make funding available for the Rising Stars Program – staff development packages to work with the potential of our existing staff. The Comets program will allocate funding for a raft of visiting fellows – academics of distinction who can stimulate and work with our people across a wide spectrum of disciplines.

All well and good! But growth will continue to be vital to UTAS' sustainability. In the (very disappointing) absence of early funding increases from the new government in Canberra, and in the face of the rapidly escalating costs of operating a complex university, growth remains the key to financial viability and long term success. Amazingly, we have grown across our spectrum by 33 per cent over the past five years – an extraordinary achievement which has lifted Tasmania's prospects and made us comparable

in terms of higher education participation and employment to other states on our 'northern island'. The next growth phase will have a different emphasis. Over the next five years, we will grow in some quite specific ways as a result of a strategy that targets particular sectors, and creates and delivers specifically designed coursework and research training products catered to their needs. In outlining these initiatives, I will also point to shifts that will be necessary in our thinking and, most importantly, in our processes and protocols for marketing, course design and structure, flexibility and our capacity to devolve and delegate to colleagues at the faculty and school teaching face. Let me identify some key directions.

First, **UTAS College** – this is clearly a priority and keys well with the state Governments plans for developing the Tasmanian Academy, in part replacing the senior secondary colleges. The potential for UTAS to offer its first year programs within the State Government's proposed Academy is very exciting. Adding an accelerated learning component will allow us to identify and attract into UTAS a more significant number of the eligible matriculating cohort.

Given that the expressed intention of the Academy is to provide a broader conduit to the University, then we should see both growth in numbers and improvement in the entry qualities of students. To do this means of course that we must work very closely with our senior secondary colleagues – in all instances being involved in the design of the Year 11 and 12 curriculum, adding our 1st Year into the mix. We will need to work closely with our secondary colleagues to make this a success.

Flexible entry points will see some students accelerate into UTAS according to talent and merit, and continue to accelerate through our degrees to the highest level in minimum time. For others, broader and somewhat slower pathways will be required. The aim, of course, is to see a Tasmanian model emerge in which UTAS College and the Academy, working closely with

associated Independent/Catholic sector institutions, form a unique structure that increases participation and provides as seamless conduit into UTAS mainstream.

Clearly, and in complementary style, the UTAS College system will have an enhanced set of entry portals to the Tasmanian State Polytechnic system as well. Articulation arrangements with appropriate bridging programs, cross credit arrangements and the possibility of combined UTAS Colleges and Polytechnic double award programs are also on the planning desk.

Second, UTAS has a strong priority for enhancing our **postgraduate coursework program**. From a very low base (by national comparison) we will build numbers rapidly by heavily targeting client groups and keying our new coursework development into the human development and training programs of the client group themselves.

This continuing professional development market offers enormous potential nationally and internationally, providing we have the right attitude to our clients – first ask what they need, then use our very considerable capacity to deliver it. This initiative is effectively a national UTAS venture ('UTAS Australia') – setting ourselves to be a major player in delivering high quality, cutting edge corporate professional development programs to (say) Australia's top 100 companies, government agencies and associations and NGOs. Most universities struggle in this environment because they cannot bring themselves to empower their faculties, schools and/or strategically constructed organisational units to work with client groups. The secret to success is for UTAS, through the Academic Senate, to quality assure a flexible system – units and minimum rules for their combination so that faculties and schools can tailor courses with maximum efficiency and in a very responsive manner. Course appraisal times in such a delegated system can then include the requirements of clients to be developing their staff rapidly and effectively given their market place and / or social requirements for responsiveness.

This will be a challenge for UTAS and we do not start from a strong base of experience. In this case it is my strong view that one never tries to catch-up. One always leapfrogs ahead. Even mentioning this in the corporate market place has already brought some significant approaches – all of which will be followed up with the appropriate faculties. But I will need your cooperation and that of Senate and Faculty/School executives if we are to make headway – as we must. UTAS is, with its excellent work in the health sciences in Sydney, already a national player. And one that is well regarded for our flexibility matched by quality programs and student outcomes. The essence of UTAS Australia is rapidly emerging.

I have mentioned in a previous UniTas that there are still around 2000 Tasmanians enrolled in mainland universities – the vast majority by distance education. I see UTAS College and other Growth initiatives targeting these Tasmanians. Even to attract 50 per cent of these back into our newly branded courses would be a fillip to our EDGE # 2 objectives.

Third, there is a need to grow our **Research Training program** to its full potential. We do well in HDR but we have the capacity to do much more and to innovate the processes so research students focus early, produce publications early, are well integrated into teams and networks, and superbly well supervised and backed up, kept on track, examined both through thesis and defending by viva – all in the most efficient manner. All this are quite traditional outcomes but we should be thinking about a unique UTAS approach to the HDR experience. Why? So that we can grow the program. We should have the supervisory capacity to double our current numbers. How can we innovate? Well, maybe we should expose students to a range of research methods so that they realise that models differ among and between the disciplines. Should we be using our Honours program or should we enrol students in a Masters/PhD track after their basic degree? Or maybe even before that if they are super talented and high achieving? Should they be

producing a series of publications along the way as a matter of UTAS policy? And what of life after? Maybe we need to ramp up our post doctoral programs with more variation – not just for research but to train full blown teaching and research academics for the future. For all HDR students there is a crying need for the kind of entrepreneurship that encourages them to better utilise their intellectual property. Even if they cannot commercialise, they need to understand the full potential of their work in the commercial market and in entrepreneurship.

Many of you will have other ideas of how we can grow in these and other targeted and strategic ways. Let me know because you know my preferred style – all ideas are good ideas in the first instance, especially when they come from quality people.

Warm regards,

Daryl Le Grew