

INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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Theme:

Summary



The University of Sydney

NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

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21 February 2005

Ms Jan Burnswoods MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Social Issues
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Burnswoods,

This letter constitutes a submission by the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney to the inquiry into teacher recruitment and training which is being conducted by the NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on Social Issues.

This inquiry comes on the heels of a number of other inquiries conducted in recent years into teacher shortages and teacher quality. In NSW, these include the Ramsey inquiry in NSW (2000) and the independent Vinson inquiry (2003). There have been a number of Commonwealth Government inquiries within the past three years (see bibliography, attached), and the State of Victoria is currently conducting two related inquiries. While much effort has gone into these inquiries, to date, we have not seen many changes as a result, although in NSW, the Institute of Teachers has been established following the Ramsey report. No doubt, your inquiry will also be interested in the newly established National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership.

Below, each term of reference is addressed. We would be happy to elaborate on any of the issues raised either in this submission or in your deliberations in the inquiry.

- 1. The best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools and meeting the needs of school communities*

Except in the important areas of mathematics, science and technology, we are currently enjoying strong demand both by well qualified recent school leavers and older students for the teacher education courses offered by the Faculty. The information below shows the number of new students enrolled by the Faculty this year in its various courses, and the corresponding UAI admission criteria. The total number of students recruited into first year in 2005 are as follows:

B.Ed (Primary) 129 (4 year course) UAI 86.15

B.Ed (Secondary)

With B.A. 41 (5 year course) UAI 83.10
With B.Sc 34 (5 year course) UAI 81.90

B.Ed (Human Movement and Health Education) 63 (4 year course) UAI 80.00

B.Ed with B.A or B.Sc majoring in psychology 48 (5 year course leading to school counseling qualification) UAI 92.60

B.Ed (Design and Technology) 15 (4 year course, with TAFE component) (UAI n/a)

Master of Teaching

Primary 100 (2 year, postgraduate course) (UAI n/a)

Secondary 150 (2 year, postgraduate course) (UAI n/a)

In addition, the University of Sydney offers a B.Ed (Secondary: Aboriginal Education) course via the Koori Centre, and B.Music Ed via Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Toward the end of the last decade, demand for teacher education courses was low, which raised questions about the academic preparation of some candidates for admission to these courses. However, with changes in the labour market in recent years, demand has increased strongly.

Unfortunately, demand for particular courses does not necessarily match areas of teacher shortage. There is little doubt that the primary teaching course is the most sought after by students. However, shortages exist in mathematics, science and technology areas but demand for these courses is such that we are unable to fill the available places with suitably qualified candidates.

The provision of more scholarships would undoubtedly assist in creating greater demand in areas of need.

One impediment to the recruitment of teachers in some difficult to staff areas (such as Physics, Mathematics and Computer Studies) is the NSW DET's classification system for teachers, which is based on Key Learning Areas, and the consequent limitations placed upon universities in their recruitment of students into pre-service graduate courses such as the Master of Teaching or a Diploma in Education. For example, it is not possible for many Physics/Mathematics graduates to be accredited by the DET as Physics/Mathematics teachers because of the requirement that Physics teachers must also have an additional Science subject in their undergraduate degree to enable them to teach Science 7 - 10. This university has declined to offer places in the MTeach (and before that the DipEd) to graduates with a Physics major, Mathematics and Computer Studies in their first degree - all areas of need - because they would not be accredited by the DET as a Science teacher. A similar impediment applies to Computer Studies graduates who are required to have Design & Technology subjects in their undergraduate degrees in order to meet DET's accreditation requirements for Computing, which is part of the DET's Technological & Applied Studies KLA. Few universities would offer design & technology subjects as part of their undergraduate degrees in computing, thus severely limiting the possibility of graduates in that area meeting DET accreditation requirements.

A broader impediment to the efficient recruitment of secondary teachers is the general expectation for them to be qualified and accredited in two teaching areas, "the main subject" and "an additional subject". This classification is largely historical and bears a tenuous relationship to what teachers actually teach in schools (are they, by implication, less expert or competent in their 'additional subject'), and limits the recruitment of teachers in specialist areas, particularly those where there are significant needs.

Some potential applicants for teacher education courses perceive the current structures and processes of appointment and promotion as disincentives. Pathways for career development and promotion within the teaching profession are not always transparent nor well understood by the potential teacher education applicant.

2. *The effectiveness and efficiency of current means of recruiting teachers to NSW Public Schools, including (a) recent graduates, and (b) career change teachers.*

While colleagues in the Faculty have a strong commitment to public education, large numbers of graduates are employed in Catholic and independent schools. Of those graduates who are employed in NSW public schools, a significant number are employed in selective schools. This is in part due to the high calibre of the Faculty's graduates, but it is also a reflection of the hiring practices of different employers. Non DET employers often hire students prior to graduation and are able to offer inducements such as a paid internship, which occurs at the end of teacher education courses. The paid internship is a major incentive which is cost effective.

Other employers are recasting internships as targeted induction where interns are remunerated with a training wage to support them during their internship (targeted induction). If other employers develop this concept further it is less likely that interns will seek internship in public schools with the consequent loss of strong new teachers to the non-public sector. The Faculty believes that a recommendation to remunerate internships would assist the Department of Education and Training to hire staff in both geographic and discipline areas of shortage.

3. *Differences and similarities between primary and secondary school recruitment needs*

If present trends continue, there will be strong demand for primary education courses which will be adequate to meet the state's need for teachers at this level. However, incentives need to be provided, particularly in the secondary subject areas of mathematics, computer studies, English and drama, science, technology, school counsellors; and in non-coastal rural areas, to attract student teachers.

4. *Existing initiatives and programs of the Department of Education and Training, including (a) Teach NSW, (b) scholarships for undergraduates, and (c) accelerated training courses.*

The *Teach NSW* and associated recruitment programs such as *Beyond the Bridge* and *Beyond the Line* are producing good results. There is also scope for more flexibility in hiring at the local levels, and in particular in attracting student teachers to difficult to staff schools.

Consideration should be given to devolving aspects of recruitment decisions to individual schools.

Schools which have difficulty recruiting teachers, in particular, should be encouraged to take as many students on practicum placement as they can, and provide positive experiences in a supportive environment for these students. In our experience, student teachers develop a commitment to particular schools following a successful practicum placement. The Teacher Mentor Program, implemented as a pilot during 2004, was considered to be a significant positive initiative for the support and retention of early career teachers. A range of financial and professional supports should be considered included paid internships, and the provision of travel, accommodation and living expenses for students who are assigned to rural schools.

There is no doubt that scholarships are an effective means of attracting students in difficult to staff areas. Greater consideration may need to be given to fine tuning the levels of these scholarships. For example, relatively small scholarships may be effective in some curriculum areas, whereas full fee scholarships, perhaps even with a stipend, may be required for other curriculum areas or to guarantee staff in remote parts of the state.

The Faculty is experienced in the retraining and accelerated training of teachers. In general, Faculties of Education have doubts about accelerated training, particularly in terms of the quality of graduates and their ability to meet professional standards, especially in terms of pedagogy and related skills. Similarly, Faculties of Science have serious doubts about retraining of teachers, especially in terms of their ability to cover the curriculum to an adequate standard. Our experience is that the retraining of existing teachers in new subject areas is much more effective than accelerated training of new teachers.

5. *The role of the NSW Institute of Teachers and its accreditation and endorsement requirements*

The Faculty welcomes consideration of ways to improve teaching standards. It notes that as the stated aim of the Institute of Teachers.

We have some concerns about the demands this will place on educational institutions in terms of documentation and on potential supply because of cost. Faculty is keen that ongoing consultation and collaboration continue in the development of the Institute's policies and regulations.

6. *The role, distribution and effectiveness of university pre-service teacher education*

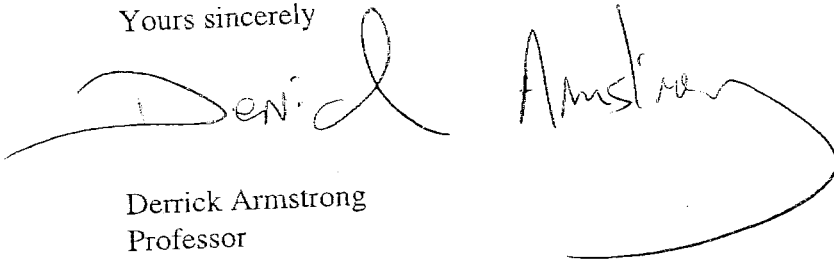
The role of universities in the pre-service teacher education is crucial. Students come from across the state to study in our programs. The effectiveness of our programs can be judged in part, by the high level of employment of our graduates. Fifty percent of our graduates have job offers before they complete their studies with us.

An increase in the effectiveness of our programs will come from greater access to and support for working with schools in the practicum component of our degrees. The cost of the practicum component of pre-service teacher education is a major burden for Faculties of Education. Extra funding needs to be provided to support this activity as well as provide financial or other incentives to encourage teachers to play a mentoring role in the education of new teachers.

7. *Any other matters arising from these terms of reference.*

Other professions take a more proactive role in meeting future supply and demand situations than education. In nursing for example there are annual meetings between tertiary providers, state Ministry of Health and Federal Ministry to discuss the demand and supply situation in nursing. This sort of approach needs to take place more formally in education, with the various stakeholders represented under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Training or the TEC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derrick Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Derrick Armstrong
Professor
Dean

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Lawrence, Geoffrey A. & Palmer, David H. (2003) *Clever Teachers, Clever Sciences: Preparing teachers for the challenge of teaching science, mathematics and technology in 21st century Australia*. Canberra: Evaluations and Investigations Programme; Research, Analysis and Evaluation Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, Commonwealth of Australia

Ramsey, Gregor (2000) *Quality Matters: Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices. Report of the Review of Teacher Education, NSW*. Sydney: Department of Education and Training

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Ongoing Inquiries

Education and Training Committee, Victorian Parliament (2005) *Inquiry into the suitability of pre-service teacher training courses* (ongoing)

Education and Training Committee, Victorian Parliament (2005) Inquiry into the promotion of maths and science education (ongoing)

Department of Education, Science and Training, Commonwealth of Australia (2005) *National inquiry into the teaching of literacy* (ongoing)

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The Director, Standing Committee on Social Issues

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No. of Pages: including this one

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Dear Director,

Attached please find the submission from Professor Derrick Armstrong, Dean of the Faculty of Education & Social Work, to the "Inquiry into Teacher Recruitment and Training".

Yours sincerely
Marian Hupton