An Overview of IRCU’s Activity – Second Quarter 2003

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Purpose

To provide an overview of RMIT’s Institutional Research Consultancy Unit (IRCU) activity undertaken in the second quarter of 2003. This overview follows the report prepared for the first quarter 2003, which can be found at http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/ircu/docs/IRCUact2003q1.pdf

About the Institutional Research Consultancy Unit (IRCU)

The IRCU was established in 2001 and is part of RMIT’s Planning Group.

The Unit's mission is to:
- Assist and contribute to informed decision-making;
- Contribute to strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of RMIT's activities and programs;
- Be proactive in the study and advancement of tertiary education; and,
- Manage, share and create knowledge for the benefit of RMIT.

The main function of the IRCU is to co-ordinate the collection, organisation and analysis of institutional data and other quantitative and qualitative information to support institutional management, operations, decision-making and planning functions of RMIT University. The IRCU is also engaged in applied educational research, performance measurement, evaluation and assessment and is proactive in the study and advancement of tertiary education.

The IRCU Staff are:

- Angel Calderon  Head
- Andrew Brion  Business Analyst
- David Garner  Strategic Advisor - Industry
- Ann Hornsby  Executive Assistant
- Josie Palermo  Institutional Research Advisor
- David Rutherford  Strategic Economist
- Neil Wentworth  Institutional Research Systems Coordinator
**Provision of Information to RMIT Community**

1. Enhancement of web portal
   - IRCU-tabs - generalised web cross-tab system - launched as a pilot system with selected Graduate Destination Survey (GDS and Student Outcomes Survey (SOS) data.
   - New, easier to use interface and graphics introduced. New web directory structure implemented more in alignment with Planning Group structure
   - Additional database structures created by ITS on database server to allow for expansion of Planning Group online databases
   - Developed an interactive online student progress cohort analysis tool (not yet available live on the web portal).
   - Created a section linking to Strategic plans of higher education institutions
   - Created a section containing information about project ‘student feedback at course level’.
   - Developed an online questionnaire for facilitating scenario planning.
   - Created script to allow Planning Group staff to create their own pages and upload to the portal site.
   - Included a web section about analysis of Federal Budget and implications.
   - Completed stage 1 script to analyse individual log files from web server.
   - Updated regularly Higher Education Review page on the web portal with media reports and other information as it comes to light.

2. Dissemination of data
   - Dissemination (oral and written) of CEQ and SOS information to the broader RMIT community e.g. analysis of work relevance questions, postgraduate analysis, employment data. Developed and produced various CEQ and SOS reports for web publication.
   - Distribution of CEQ-XAnalyser to external bodies, including other universities.
   - VTAC data downloaded and stored in SQL database ready for queries
   - Prepared various pivot tables including analysis of 2001 and 2002 national data by discipline clusters

3. Analysis of market segments
   - Competitor and profiling analysis in the postgraduate fee-paying market.
   - Prepared analysis of 2002 enrolment data

4. GATS and tertiary education forum
   - Management of the RMIT GATS conference and subsequent write-ups and dissemination of information. 60 people attended and material accessed by more than 300 people (internal and external).

5. Federal Budget / HE Review Forum
• Prepared and disseminated information to the RMIT Community. Presented RMIT HE review forums at City and Bundoora campuses, ensured material available on web

6. Victorian State Budget:
• Prepared and disseminated information to the RMIT community.

7. Scenario Planning
• Prepared three papers on scenario planning, available on website

8. Student Life
• Assisted with information sessions conducted by Student Portfolio. Developed graphs depicting time series for CEQ results by Faculty. Presented to meetings of Faculty Boards.

9. Pathways Newsletter
• Developed and disseminated under the auspices of the Pathways Domain Community of Practice Group.

10. Stakeholder Development / RMIT Union
• Completed scope and development of project to enhance communication strategies for RMIT Union.

11. Pocket Statistics
• Finalised preparation, printing and distribution of Pocket Statistics

**Interactions with External Organisations**

12. RMIT’s submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Future Opportunities for Australia’s Film, Animation, Special Effects and Electronic Games Industries
• Paper prepared in consultation with Faculties and submitted by VC.

13. OTTE Strategic Priorities Meetings
• Attended meetings held by OTTE to determine methods for establishing industry priorities

14. ATN project: Benchmarking Student Feedback
• The project aims to identify opportunities for improving the collecting, analysing and use of student feedback across the ATN
• One site visit was conducted at Curtin University from 23-25th June 2003. Other visits are scheduled shortly.

15. ATN project: Career Related Student Expectations
• The study will attempt to adapt and / or replicate (and systematise) work conducted at UTS with their successful graduate program across the ATN.
• Project scope completed – initial discussions are occurring currently with Schools of Accounting and Engineering, RMIT.

16. Presentation of use of CEQ at institutional level at the GCCA Surveys Symposium - Graduates: Outcomes, Quality and the Future in Canberra.

Ongoing RMIT Projects

17. Program Viability Project and TAFE profitability
   • Completed a project to assess program profit and loss based on three approaches
   • Established the Program Profit and Loss Technical Group, plus prepared associated analysis, draft of a paper on program profit and loss modeling
   • Briefing note for VC on TAFE productivity and participation in a data collection project for TAFE profit and loss modeling

18. Industry Dossiers 2002/03
   • Completion of briefings to Faculties (5) on Industry dossier work and next steps
   • Industry Dossier capabilities and updates to dossiers
   • Updated Industry Dossiers to reflect Scenario Planning
   • Names for next consultations

19. Industry Dossiers 2003 /04
   • Draft paper on process for next set of dossiers completed.

20. RMIT Budget review:
   • 17 interviews (plus associated analysis) with Central Cost Centres and preparation of the final budget schedule as part of the Budget Review team

21. AUQA Project
   • Provided information and assistance as required by the AUQA project team

22. Student Feedback at the Course Level
   • Conduct and analysis of research amongst Year 1 Accountancy students, and development of a scannable questionnaire for the School of Economics & Finance.
   • Development of agreed principles that refer to the nature of student feedback (at the course level) to be captured and how that information will be used;
   • Developing a framework that comprises policy, procedures and agreed methods (and tools) for implementing principles;
   • Working with Faculties to pilot various approaches within an agreed evaluation framework.

23. Schools Review
   • The review of school structures in the Portfolio, Design and Social Context has been completed. Currently conducting focus groups with staff in Business, expect
to complete a draft report by the end of July. The Review in Science, Engineering and Technology is scheduled to commence in July.

24. Review of Industry Advisory Structures
   • Development of TOR, background paper and associated documentation.

25. Performance Indicators
   • Undertaken project scope and preparation for the consolidation of RMIT’s performance indicator regime.
   • Conducted 16 interviews undertaken to optimise utilisation of key performance measures and integration to business planning.

26. Triple Bottom Line Analysis
   • TBL+1 Working Group setup and initial meeting

27. Draft paper on Centre for Advanced Manufacturing.
   • Preparation of paper with Dean Engineering and a/g Director, TAFE.

**Channels of communication:**

Web portal:
http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/ircu/ircu_home.php
Email:
ircu@rmit.edu.au
Telephone: (03) 9925-9705