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Melbourne Uni drops business school plan

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MELBOURNE University has backed away from a contentious proposal to merge its prestigious Melbourne Business School with its economics faculty after not enough people supported the move.

Confidential documents leaked to *The Age* in July showed that the two had planned to amalgamate in a bid to form a super school for business and economics students.

The proposed faculty would have taken the form of a body corporate with a board of five university-nominated directors and five donor director members, led by an executive dean, Professor Margaret Abernethy, who currently heads economics and commerce.

At the time, Professor Abernethy said the merger had almost been concluded, and he was unable to rule out job losses if it went ahead.

But in a surprise move, the university and the business school yesterday announced that the change would not proceed.

MBS chairman Ron McNeilly said that it had become apparent that the move would not be endorsed by enough people, several of whom advised that they would vote against the proposal when it was due to be put to a vote at an extraordinary general meeting on October 7.

"In these circumstances, the board has decided that it is not in the interests of MBS for members to be asked to vote on a resolution which will fail," he said.

Melbourne University has been criticised in recent months over the planned axing of 220 jobs, as well as the restructure of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, which will require a major reduction in academic and administrative staff over the next two years.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/melbourne-uni-drops-business-school-plan-20090930-gcrg.html>