THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Defining the Future

for the VCA and Music at The University of Melbourne

A Discussion Paper

November 2009

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The University and the VCA share the conviction that great universities are characterised by richness and excellence in the visual and performing arts…

Integration offers the opportunity for cognate activities in the two institutions to optimise opportunities for staff and students through a renewed or enhanced range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, drawing where possible on the strengths of both institutions…

Integration offers a precious and significant opportunity to enrich for students the 'Melbourne Experience' by providing a campus-based education characterised by a rich architectural, cultural and contemporary artistic heritage, excellent student support services and an intent to provide the best education in Australia and the region.

—VCA/University of Melbourne Heads of Agreement, November 2005

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Defining the Future for the VCA and Music at the University of Melbourne

A discussion paper

In recent years there have been substantial changes to the structure and governance of the way visual and performing arts courses have been offered in the city of Melbourne. The University of Melbourne increasingly is involved in these programs, and not surprisingly found itself at the epicentre of discussion about how they should be organised, funded, and taught. In times of change it is important to articulate a well-founded strategy to ensure that the key players—in government, on campus and in the community— help define the future, and have the impetus to achieve it.

The University's integration with the former VCA in 2007 means that it now offers a wide range of training, education, research and community programs in the visual and performing arts. There are programs in Art, Dance, Drama, Film and Television, Music, Production, and Community Cultural Development, and the prospect of other new or emerging areas.

Over the last few months, the perceived future curriculum of the former VCA, its funding, and its relationship to the University have been the subject of wide, and sometimes heated, public commentary. Much of this commentary supported the pre-2007 arrangements. As many now understand, however, these arrangements involved—and still involve—a significant diversion of resources intended for programs from across the University of Melbourne to courses traditionally offered at the Southbank campus. It is also reasonable to expect that all parts of the University periodically review their curriculum, in light of academic developments and the shifting needs of graduates.

This discussion paper sets out options for the Faculty of the VCA and Music and the future of higher arts education. It invites ideas and comments from students, staff, graduates and the wider community. The paper outlines key challenges and opportunities facing the University in higher arts education, and asks how we might respond. It asks what the Faculty of the VCA and Music already does well and should keep doing, what needs improvement, what to create and perhaps what to relinquish. The paper starts broad, with discussion of educational tradition in the arts and recent developments in Australia and beyond before turning to the path followed by the University of Melbourne. The paper concludes with some detail about challenges and options before us.

There are suggested questions throughout the paper, but feel free to raise more and to comment on any issue raised here. Consultation meetings will be organised for staff, students, graduates, employers and interested members of the public in the coming months. Written responses by 12 February 2010 would be appreciated, and can be sent to vcam-feedback@unimelb.edu.au or addressed to the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010.

The results of this consultation process will inform the new strategic direction for the University's programs in the arts.

Sharman Pretty
Dean of VCAM

Glyn Davis
Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

This discussion paper covers the following:

Sections 1, 2 and 3 consider aspects of the tradition of higher education in the arts, recent changes in the Australian context, and the University's role in this field.

Pages 9–16

"Achieving the Vision" restates the challenges for the University's Faculty of the VCA and Music four years after signing the integration Heads of Agreement.

Page 17

Sections 4 and 5 cover the dilemmas presented by the current curricular, financial and physical arrangements, raises some new issues to consider, and poses a series of questions.

Pages 19-28

How can you respond?

There will be discussion forums and consultations which staff, students, graduates, employers and community representatives are invited to attend in the coming months.

Further information about this process is available at

http://vcam.unimelb.edu.au/discussion

We encourage all stakeholders to conduct their own discussions and concentrate on the issues most relevant to them.

Colleagues should get together to work out their response and proposals, which need not be confined to the questions raised in this paper. Critical perspectives, creative ideas and robust solutions on these and other University issues are welcome.

Your responses would be appreciated by 12 February 2010 and can be sent to vcam-feedback@unimelb.edu.au

The Consultation Process

The consultation conducted by the University of Melbourne will be an open process designed to achieve the best structural and educational outcomes for the current Faculty of the VCA and Music.

During the consultation period, briefings for VCAM staff and students on structural and curriculum options will be provided. These briefings will include structural and curriculum examples from other faculties of the University of Melbourne, in addition to educational examples from other institutions.

With the distribution of this discussion document, a Review Committee will be established. The Committee will evaluate the responses to this discussion paper and carry out detailed discussions with key stakeholders at both the Parkville and Southbank campuses.

Membership of the committee will include

- An independent chair
- A representative of the Vice-Chancellor
- A representative of the VCAM Advisory Board
- Five VCAM staff (one academic from each School, one professional)
- Two VCAM students (one undergraduate, one graduate)
- One University academic from outside VCAM
- One community representative with a background in the arts

and will be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Dean of VCAM.

The final report and recommendations of the review committee will be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of VCAM

Recommendations affecting the former VCA will be presented to the VCA Integration Committee for approval prior to submission to the University of Melbourne Council in early 2010.

Any changes in curriculum will require further consultation within the faculty followed by approval through the University's normal governance processes including Academic Board and Council.

Section 1

What is higher education in the arts for, and is a university the right place for it?

In our rapidly changing world, arts education does more than train artists. And in the face of ongoing global financial pressures, arts institutions within universities and without are increasingly joining forces to shore up their survival.

> We are living in times of unprecedented change. The globalisation, the powerful dynamics of commercial pressure directed particularly at young people, and the increasing interaction between traditional, ethnic, religious and national communities are all creating a cultural climate of immense complexity. Education systems everywhere are also being reformed to take account of these changes…
>
> ….Higher arts education is integral to artistic development. Without opportunities to experience the arts, without research and development which enhances creativity, without innovative training, the arts become less dynamic. The future of the arts is dependent on the creativity, knowledge, skills and motivation of people who experience, teach and practice them. Higher arts education institutions should be laboratories and not museums. They should be embedded in their cities and develop a continuous dialogue with their citizens. They have not only an educational but also a civic responsibility to meet the challenges faced by mankind. Those laboratories should initiate new developments through new technologies towards a transformation process of art forms and new ways of teaching and learning. Consequently, higher arts education institutions are deeply affected by technical and political developments. They should neither seek to back away from this complexity, nor should they feel compelled to look for a separate status.
>
> *—Manifesto, European League of Institutes of the Arts*

The primary purpose of higher education in the arts is to prepare artists to enter the arts professions and to support the continuing education of professional artists. Arts education also fosters broad skills such as teamwork, independence of thought, reflective decision-making, self-motivation and entrepreneurship. Such qualities translate readily to many professional and community environments inside and outside the arts.

Higher education in the arts addresses four pillars essential to a professional artist:

1. The development of artistic practice in the student's chosen discipline
2. An understanding of the background and context of that artistic practice
3. An understanding of the pedagogy of the artist's discipline
4. An understanding of the broader aspects of the environmental context in which the artist will work.

Higher education in the arts contributes broadly to the artistic engagement, development and enrichment of society at large. The arts hold the potential to offer hope, inspiration and new ways of understanding in dramatic and uncertain times. Through the arts, the aspirations of individuals can be realised, and the quality and meaning of the lives of communities can be enriched through new ways of engaging, challenging, celebrating and persuading. They are an avenue through which the most intimate of circumstance and detail can be explored and expressed, while at the same time, national boundaries can be transcended, diversity celebrated, and cultural understanding fostered.

Is a university the right place for such education? Internationally, higher arts education has resided both in universities and in independent, stand-alone institutions. Many examples of success can be cited of both models. In the US, the independent Juilliard School of Dance, Drama and Music and the Californian Institute of the Arts (Calarts) sit alongside

practice-based schools of music, theatre, art and film fully integrated within universities like Yale, New York, Illinois and Southern California. Other institutions, like the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, are embedded within a university while retaining their distinct identity. In the UK a similar mix of models exists, with the various Royal Colleges and Academies of Music, Art and Drama side by side with practice-based schools within the Universities of London, Manchester, Edinburgh and many others. In the UK, the degrees of most stand-alone institutions are accredited through a university partner.

Though structures remain mixed, arts institutions are increasingly joining forces to secure the future of professional training in the practice-based arts. In the UK, the University of the Arts London brought together six of the top London Schools of Art and Design; the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, established in 2001, comprises eight institutions including RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art); and Trinity Laban purports to be the UK's "first conservatoire of music and contemporary dance", from a 2005 merger of the former Trinity College of Music and Laban Contemporary Dance.

The integration of the VCA with the University of Melbourne in 2007 had the same initial motive of the mergers in the UK— to build robust, well connected, engaged and relevant higher arts education programs within a sustainable environment. Yet the integration also offered real opportunity for a broader range of course possibilities both for VCA and University students, and for an enriched campus experience overall. Those opportunities remain to be fully seized. Nevertheless, there are alternative models worth exploring. It is clear in Australia, as abroad, that higher arts education can function outside universities with distinction, as it does within.

Section 2

Models of higher arts education

Given the mix of higher arts education institutions in Australia and abroad, large and small, degree awarding and non-degree, local and international, how should the University proceed? This section identifies higher arts education course and institution types across the national and international landscape.

International

Internationally, there are almost as many models of higher arts education and training as there are institutions. The websites of organisations such as the European League of Institutes of the Arts (http://www.elia-artschools.org) and the International Council of Fine Arts Deans (http://www.icfad.org/) reveal hundreds of single and multi-disciplinary higher arts education member institutions in dozens of countries. Given this diversity, it is difficult to generalise. In broad terms, however, it can be observed that in single field organisations (eg conservatoires of music) in most countries, the nomenclature of degrees, diplomas and certificates normally reflect the specific higher arts education (e.g. Bachelor of Music, Diploma of Dance), whereas in multi-disciplinary arts institutions, a broader generic terminology is commonly used across all disciplines. In the United States, the term "Fine Arts" tends to be used for the structural organisation of disciplines, (i.e. Bachelor/Master of Fine Arts) whereas in the United Kingdom, Bachelor/Master of Arts is more common in such circumstances.

Degree programs in the practice-based arts in the majority of universities and many stand-alone institutions contain significant "academic" content related to the discipline, such as theory, history and contextual studies. In some, these studies are integrated with practice. In such circumstances, that academic content normally has well-articulated objectives, assessment strategies and accountabilities. As well as this related academic content, many institutions require undergraduates to undertake breadth, or liberal arts, studies as part of their degree.

The Juilliard School of Dance, Drama and Music in New York, for example, requires all undergraduates to take liberal arts studies, from such areas as European history, philosophy, languages and cultural studies. Juilliard argues that a liberal arts education "provides the humanistic, ethical, social, and aesthetic background essential to personal development and professional excellence" and helps its students "to become active, well-informed citizens; develop their awareness of the social and humanistic dimensions of professional work; and acquire the basis for a fulfilling cultural and intellectual life".

To meet their liberal arts requirements, in their first two years, Juilliard students are required to take a total of four courses designed to introduce them to a significant range of Western and non-Western texts and traditions. Core subjects include the heritage of the ancient world, human nature and ethics, the individual and society, and arts and aesthetics.

As a course structure example, take the requirements for students doing a Drama major within the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. The program offers a rich blend of practical skills development through studio, together with lecture/seminar based learning. The major studies required in this case include practice elements Dramatic Interpretation (years 1-4) and Dramatic Techniques (years 1-4) together with academic studies Theater History (year 1), Prose and Poetry (year 1), and Shakespearean Text (year 2 or 3). In addition, students are required to take Humanities

subjects for years 1 and 2, and must complete a Liberal Arts elective in year 3. Earlier years focus on a broad understanding of drama and societal context, leading to a full production-based fourth year culminating in public performances of plays.

The programs in the Dance major have a similar balance between practice and academic subjects for students. On the academic side, subjects such as Literature and Materials of Music designed to overview musical periods, styles and forms, introducing students to all orchestral instruments and musical theory. Students also study aspects of Anatomy/Kinesiology in their third year, exploring skeletal joint mechanics and the muscles associated with movement. The same Liberal Arts requirements in years 1 and 2 exist for Dance students as for Drama or Music students.

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London offers an array of degree programs in Music, Acting and Technical Theatre with each degree named separately by discipline, and each incorporating different amounts of theoretical or critical studies. Student time is focused on practice, divided between classroom activities and rehearsals, with the balance towards the latter in later years. Masters level programs in many cases share performance studies with undergraduate students. Students with substantial undergraduate or professional experience are able to enter graduate level courses. Over the past 20 years, the Guildhall School has placed special emphasis on its continuing professional development and community engagement programs, reflected now in formal and informal programs in New Audiences and Innovative Practice, artistic leadership and creative workshop leading.

Institutions in the Asian region demonstrate a similar profile. In Singapore, for example, the recently established Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, modeled on the curriculum of the Peabody Institute, sits within the National University of Singapore, while La Salle College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts are outside the university system and do not have degree awarding powers. Their degrees are validated through universities outside Singapore (normally UK universities that have long provided that service to these institutions). In Hong Kong, a similar mix of higher arts education inside and outside the university system is in place. In China, the situation is dynamic as leading universities ramp up their international profiles and align their systems with leading European and US universities, resulting in a new focus on the place of the creative arts within the institutional profile.

National

In Australia, there are two parallel models of Commonwealth-funded higher arts education, delineated by funding source and level. One group, known as the "Australian Roundtable for Arts Training Excellence" is funded from the Federal arts portfolio (currently the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts—DEWHA) and comprises the following organisations and institutions:

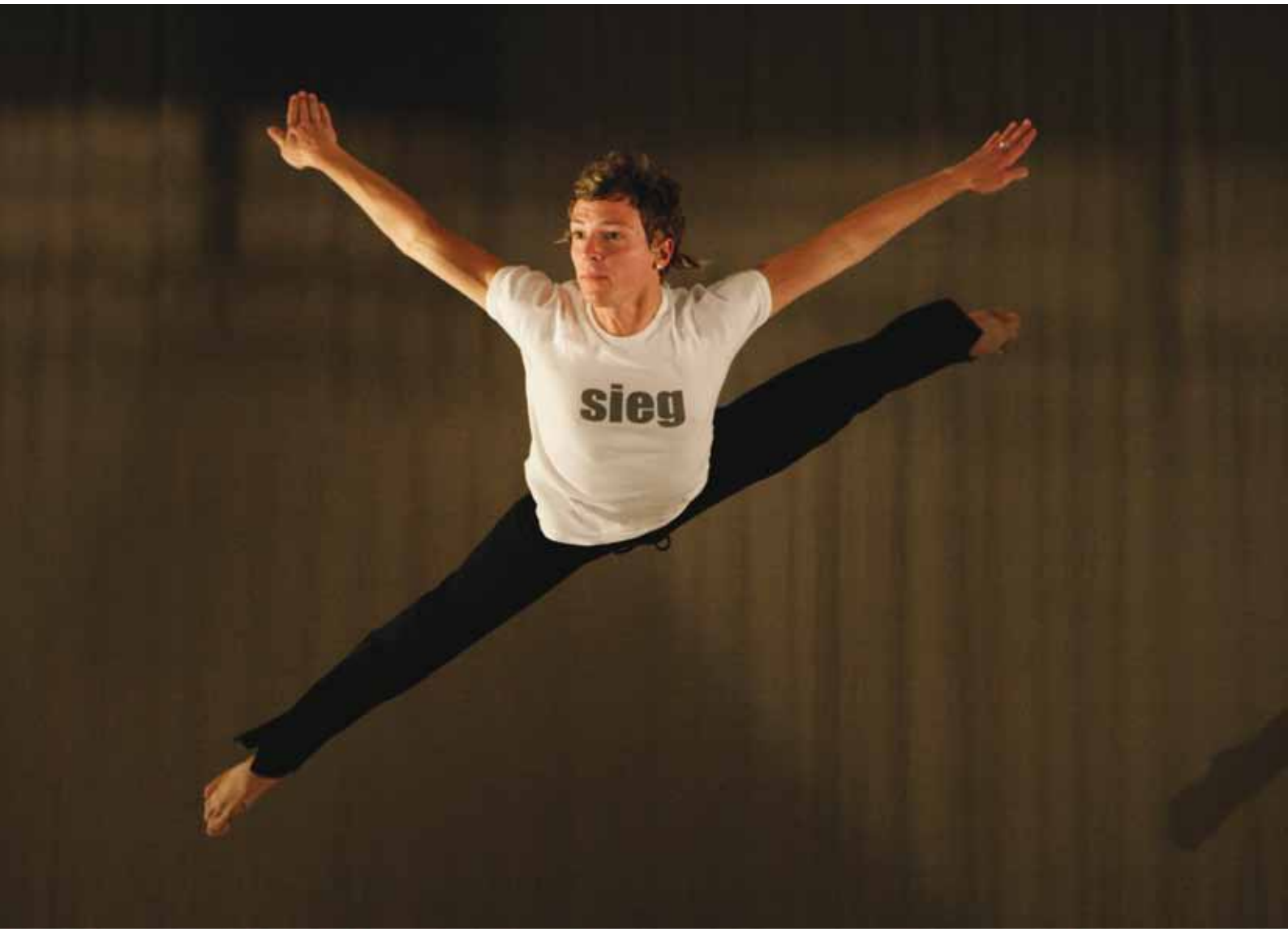
- Australian Ballet School
- Australian Film Television and Radio School
- Australian National Academy of Music
- Australian Youth Orchestra
- Flying Fruit Fly Circus
- National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association
- National Institute of Circus Arts
- National Institute of Dramatic Arts

These institutions receive direct funding from DEWHA. The funding levels are unique to each institution, without regard to funding levels of other higher arts education institutions within the university sector.

The other group is those higher arts education institutions that reside within universities. Some of these have always been inside universities historically e.g. the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide, whereas others, like the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Sydney College of the Arts, were amalgamated with universities under the so-called Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s. These institutions are funded by the Commonwealth education portfolio (currently the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations - DEEWR) through their university, and the amount received is determined by the "cluster" funding rates. Clusters are groups of disciplines with common government funding rates. These funding rates are the same for every public university, and significantly lower than the amount of funding per student received by members of the Australian Roundtable for Arts Training Excellence group—in most instances by a very significant margin.

The institutions that form the Australian Roundtable for Arts Training Excellence offer a range of programs at different levels. These include foundation programs, certificates, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees; although some organisations do not offer accredited programs. Degrees—normally undergraduate and postgraduate—are offered by all higher arts education institutions within the university sector. These programs include varying proportions of theoretical, historical, contextual and breadth studies.

Some university-based higher arts education institutions also offer Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs. The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) is an example. It offers a wide array of Bachelor, Graduate Certificate and Diploma, coursework and research Masters programs, and a PhD. In parallel, it also offers Certificates and Advanced Diplomas through the VET system. In most instances, although not exclusively, the VET programs tend to be solely practice-based, whereas the degree programs incorporate theory, history and/or contextual studies.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Section 3

The University of Melbourne, the VCA and Music

The teaching of the visual and performing arts at both the VCA and the University of Melbourne have a long and distinguished history, and have passed through several configurations.

The Victorian College of the Arts

The Victorian College of the Arts has had a long and distinguished history. Originating as the National Gallery of Victoria Art School, and thereafter becoming the School of Art, it admitted its first cohort of students in 1867. Many of Australia's most significant artists can trace their roots back to the School of Art.

In 1972 the Victorian College of the Arts was proclaimed and the School of Art became its first school in 1973. Just one year later it was joined by the School of Music, then by the School of Drama in 1975 and the School of Dance in 1979. The Victorian College of the Arts absorbed the School of Film and Television from Swinburne Institute of Technology in 1992. The same year also saw substantial expansion of the college with the incorporation of the Fine Arts programs from the former Faculty of Art and Design at Victoria College. In 2001 the School of Production was created, emerging from its previous status as a department within the School of Drama. Many of Australia's leading artists, performers of all kinds and film makers had their training in one of the schools brought together as the VCA. At the time of its merger with the Faculty of Music, the VCA provided courses to approximately 1200 enrolled students

The Faculty of Music

The University of Melbourne appointed its first Professor of Music in 1891, and in order to offer a full array of practical teaching established the University Conservatorium of Music in 1894. As a result, a comprehensive musical training program, unlike the purely academic departments of European universities, became available to Melbourne students. The program provided a balance between practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

The University Conservatorium of Music became the Faculty of Music in 1926, and absorbed the Music Department of the Institute of Education in 1994. At the time of its merger with the VCA, the faculty offered a comprehensive range of music courses, from Bachelors to Doctorates in both practical and academic specialties, to approximately 700 enrolled students.

The VCA and The University of Melbourne

The Victorian College of the Arts became associated with the University over two decades ago in 1988, as a result of Commonwealth (Dawkins) education reforms. Many smaller colleges and institutions were required to amalgamate or affiliate with larger ones. The VCA was no exception, entering into an affiliation agreement with the University of Melbourne. From then on, students enrolled in VCA courses had their degrees conferred by the University of Melbourne and Commonwealth funding linked specifically to VCA students was channeled through the University of Melbourne to the VCA. The VCA preserved its autonomy whilst maintaining its eligibility for Commonwealth funding under the unified national system. It maintained its own council, its own chief executive, and its own arrangements for staff employment and workplace relations.

In 2000, a new agreement was reached between the University and the Commonwealth, in which the Commonwealth acknowledged the high

costs involved in training VCA students and subsequently approved a reduction in the VCA component of the university student load, but with no corresponding decrease in the associated operating grant. The effect of this adjustment was to increase the per-student funding to the VCA.

2007—Integration: The Faculty of the VCA

The arrangement from 2000 was not continued under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA). Under the funding cluster system, VCA students would be funded at a standard rate for students in the visual and performing arts. Under this new arrangement, Commonwealth per student total funding for the VCA was significantly reduced from 2005.

The Commonwealth then used its discretion under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 to impose a condition on the University's annual funding agreement that it make up the shortfall in VCA funding. In 2005 the University and the VCA began to investigate options to solve the ongoing funding difficulties. After detailed negotiations, a Heads of Agreement was approved in late 2005 by the University Council and the VCA Council, allowing the VCA to integrate with the University as a new faculty from 1 January 2007. To achieve this goal, a VCA Integration Committee was established to consider issues such as structure, financial issues, and student support.

2009— The Faculty of the VCA and Music

An immediate consequence of the 2007 integration was the University now had two music schools, each with its own focus, but in competition with each other, at least for undergraduate music performance students. In June 2007 it was agreed that there should be a Review of Music at the University, chaired by Professor Pip Pattison (then Deputy President, Academic Board) and including a distinguished international expert Professor Don Maclean (Dean, Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Canada). The review panel proposed that the VCA School of Music and the Faculty of Music could form a single prestigious School of Music. In consequence, in 2008 the VCA Integration Committee unanimously endorsed and the University Council then approved the merger of the two Faculties, to be renamed as the Faculty of the VCA and Music. The Faculty would have four divisions, embracing all its schools—Art, Music, Film and Television and Performing Arts—and would operate from 1 April 2009; enabling legislation was enacted in the State Parliament to allow this to proceed.

In the merger, a key principle was that neither one Faculty would subsume the other: a new entity was to be created. In particular, the new structure was designed to embrace all the existing Music and VCA courses delivered at both the Parkville and Southbank campuses in a single coherent offering. Discussions began with the State and Federal Governments about a new building for the new music school, to be erected at Southbank.

The Faculty currently comprises programs in Art, Dance, Drama, Production, Music, and Film and Television, and specialist programs offered through The Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and the Centre for Cultural Partnerships. The Faculty has 160 full-time academic staff, 90 professional staff, 1300 undergraduate students and 340 graduate and research students. From 2010, teaching, research and performance in Music will be spread over the Parkville and Southbank campuses with significant facilities in both locations.

Achieving the Vision

The University and the VCA agreed in 2005 that the vision and purpose of their integration was "to strengthen the overall provision of training and education in the visual and performing arts in Victoria and Australia to the mutual benefit of both".

In November 2005, the VCA/University of Melbourne Heads of Agreement specified that this joint vision would be achieved by:

- creating an expanded VCA, as a new faculty of the University of Melbourne, within the Southbank Arts Precinct, committed to innovation and leadership in contemporary, professional, practice-based visual and performing arts training and education and to expanding the boundaries of arts practice within both discipline-specific and multi-disciplinary curriculum models;
- expanding the capacity of the University to provide broad-based visual and performing arts training and education to non-practitioners as part of other disciplinary curriculum models;
- bringing into the University the international reputation and distinctive pedagogy of the VCA;
- providing within the University a secure, certain and sustainable framework that will enable the VCA to expand and enhance its role as Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training and education;
- improving opportunities for collaboration between the VCA and the University's faculties and provision of visual and performing arts training and education on the VCA Southbank site;
- fulfilling the potential of the VCA Southbank site to become an internationally-recognised precinct for training and education in the visual and performing arts; and
- enhancing the reputation of both the University and the VCA.

Part of our challenge now is to consider the progress that has been made to date to achieve this vision, and how the vision and its delivery might be enhanced to achieve the best outcome for all stakeholders.

Sections 1 and 2 outlined trends in higher arts education which suggest there are structural and curriculum choices in the way we might proceed on many of the key strategic issues.

Sections 4 explores key issues and options for the future curriculum in the Faculty.

Sections 5 opens up some of the key issues about the way forward, particularly in the faculty's structure and international positioning.

In what follows, questions are posed for discussion.

Section 4

Curriculum options

The two heritage institutions from which the Faculty has been born have had different approaches to curriculum development and delivery. This section considers the challenge of integrating these two cultures and considers alternative options.

The curriculum of the former Faculty of Music had been governed by university processes throughout its history and, like many music schools around the world, had long since found an appropriate "fit" and balance between practice, teaching and research. In their first year all Bachelor of Music students take a common program that focuses on performance skills, historical, theoretical and contextual studies, aural studies and applied music skills. From the second year onwards the students have a choice to focus primarily on either performance-based subjects or follow a pathway towards composition or musicology/ethnomusicology. Students in their third year are strongly encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to study abroad or to take up 'capstone' subjects to network them with the music profession through work placement.

As part of the Parkville campus, the Bachelor of Music now follows the Melbourne Model with students who have enrolled since 2008 taking core music 'depth' subjects and one 'breadth' subject per semester for the duration of the course (75 points total out of a course total of 300). Students are directed to subjects that help augment their skills in preparation for a career in music, providing a balance between knowledge of the contemporary world and depth of competency in their chosen music specialisation.

Although the degrees of the former Faculty of the VCA had been awarded by the University of Melbourne for nearly 20 years, the former VCA has had considerable independence in developing and delivering its curriculum in ways significantly different from the University.

Currently, a Southbank student completes a Bachelor degree (3 years), followed in some cases by an Honours year and/or a Masters (2 years). A total of six Bachelor programs exist, in Dramatic Art, Fine Art, Dance, Film and Television, Production, and Music Performance; there is also a range of graduate diploma and postgraduate diploma programs. In each course there is a combination of art-form specific subjects and "common" subjects. The common subjects are provided by the Centre for Ideas and are required for all Bachelor course students, designed to complement specialist arts practice with broader educational programs. Students must accumulate 12.5 points of common subjects in each year of their course (37.5 points total out of course total of 300) in order to be eligible for the Bachelor degree. For example, students must take a two-part common subject in first year called "The Artist in the World". This subject is designed to introduce students to key themes and ideas central to the performing and visual arts as interpreted by artists, philosophers and theorists, and involve a combination of lectures and tutorials.

The 1998 Curriculum Review

The Southbank curriculum was reviewed in 1998 in an external audit chaired by leading arts educationist, Sir Ken Robinson. The review panel also comprised publisher Hilary McPhee, musician Paul Grabowsky, composer John Rimmer and physics professor Tony Klein. The team was tasked with determining whether the VCA programs of the day would ensure provision of excellent training and education in the 21st century, and the most efficient and effective ways of delivering a curriculum to make the VCA a 21st century leader.

They wrote that *"training in itself suggests too narrow a role for the VCA. Our assumption is that the VCA is interested in the broader education of artists not just in producing technicians: that it aims to produce people who will be competent to work in rapidly changing economic and artistic circumstances; that there is a level of professional development here which complements, but goes beyond, training the artist's 'voice'"*.

In order to achieve this vision of an educational experience fit for the 21st century, the review articulated the type of VCA graduates that should be produced "…*people who are highly specialised in particular disciplines. ….At the heart of this process is the quality of the specialist training that the College offers. But any specialist now has to have more than their disciplinary skills. A specialist that does not have a broader understanding of the developments in the arts is at risk…..There is a distinctive opportunity at the VCA to facilitate a broader vision because of the number of schools working side by side. … Collaboration is not a substitute for specialist training but a complement to it. We recognise that there are practical issues to face in achieving this, but we think it is essential to do so"*.

In addition to proficiency in particular disciplines, it was also noted that students of the future would require a degree of "cultural literacy" as well as professional skills: *"It is not enough to be a gifted technician. It is important now for artists to have a breadth of cultural knowledge and cultural understanding. Artists need to know something of the wider cultural worlds in which they live. … Increasingly, artists live, move and will work in a global culture. They need to have some grasp of cultural movements, cultural policies, cultural theories, and the dynamics of cultural change.*

Most people who work in the arts are freelances. They manage their own careers and rely on their own entrepreneurial skills. All graduates, even the very good ones from the VCA, are moving into a highly competitive, international climate. They need to know how to handle themselves; how to handle their career; where to secure funding; how to operate as a professional, as well as a gifted artist".

The complete listing of final recommendations of the review is attached (Appendix 1). In some cases, as with the establishment of the Centre for Ideas, changes have been made to address the recommendations. Nevertheless, there are a number of recommendations that have not been addressed. In some cases, they are no longer relevant. Many however point to gaps that still exist today and need to be considered.

Questions for discussion

1. Which of the remaining 1998 recommendations listed in the appendix should be addressed and what are the possible options for achieving these goals?

Artistic practice and breadth

In all the great arts colleges of the world key importance is placed on learning through practice. Since its inception, the former VCA's teaching philosophy has reflected the long-held belief that learning comes from doing. All are committed to practical, intensive and studio-based programs as a continuous feature of learning within the Faculty. Equally, in almost all programs in great arts colleges, students take subjects which help to augment their arts practical skills with the broader skills needed for career success in the arts.

For many students who seek further study at other institutions abroad, an education which gives them the ability to move to other international schools is also highly valued. At the Juilliard School, required liberal arts or broader subjects serve to meet these needs. At the former VCA, the establishment of the common subjects of the Centre for Ideas was a step in this direction.

Much has been written about Melbourne's 'breadth' requirements. Like the liberal arts requirements in other higher arts education institutions, the breadth component of the programs at Melbourne is designed to build knowledge and intellectual skills beside the main specialisation. For Southbank students they might take courses in other creative fields, such as English literature, or in foreign languages to better understand the cultures of non-English speaking peoples, or start building their understanding in areas of possible future interest. These breadth requirements are not unchanging and inflexible: the length and nature of the breadth requirement is currently under review at the University, to ensure they are tailored for the needs of each course. If such requirements were introduced at Southbank, they would be carefully matched to the needs of practiced-based arts courses.

Questions for discussion

2. In what ways might the students at VCAM who don't currently have access to University of Melbourne breadth be introduced to subjects that broaden their knowledge whilst maintaining the depth of discipline excellence?

Internationalisation

There are opportunities for the Faculty of the VCA and Music to internationalise its enrolment and curriculum. Internationalisation is a multi-dimensional

challenge that extends well beyond the international reputation of an institution or its direct activities in international student recruitment. It also embraces the international dimensions of the undergraduate and gradate curriculum. In the context of curriculum development, internationalisation should be considered.

Success in attracting international students would reflect a genuinely international recognition and status for the Faculty. Internationally, the most prestigious schools like the Juilliard and the Guildhall are filled with the best students from all over the world. Some 40% of Guildhall's students[1] and 30% of Juilliard students[2] are attracted from other countries. This is achieved in part by reputation but also (at least for Juilliard) through extensive scholarship programs. Although the Australian context is different, especially with regards to fees, the Faculty of the VCA and Music only attracts 8% of its students from outside Australia providing an opportunity for further development in this space.

Leading schools have international networks of student exchange and mobility programs. These allow students to gain experience in a range of institutions across most continents, with many students spending part of their (normally undergraduate) study time at key institutions abroad. The desirability of an institution as a partner for the purpose of staff teaching and research projects and exchange is a mark of international institutional recognition. Despite some notable relationships built by individual members of staff, this is an area in which the Faculty has considerable scope for growth in order to achieve sustained relationships that are not dependent on individuals or idiosyncratic circumstances.

A priority for VCAM, therefore, needs to be the development of a sound and focused international strategy with clear and challenging targets for international development in institutional partnerships, student mobility and recruitment. An internationally engaged faculty would promote staff and student mobility from Melbourne to other great arts locations around the world. Graduates should have international options available to them based on their educational experiences at VCAM. The Faculty should be able to attract the best educators in the arts, both local and global.

Questions for discussion

3. What changes might be made to enhance the Faculty's attractiveness to talented international students, given the absence of major scholarship programs?
4. What changes might be made to enhance the Faculty's involvement in international partnerships and student mobility, including within South-East Asian and Pacific arts contexts and influences?

Curriculum alternatives

Given international models and the local context, issues of internationalisation and contemporary models of higher education in the arts, there would seem to be three broad directions curriculum development could follow. These options are presented to cover a wide range of possible curriculum pathways, each with a range of potential trade-offs, reflecting numerous viewpoints and educational models.

Option 1: Practical degrees and diplomas only

One option would be for practical degrees in Theatre, Production, Dance, Art and Film and TV, and Music Theatre to be offered separately from University courses at the Southbank campus. Music, which is already taught using both campuses would remain in its current form and continue to progress with broader educational offerings.

Practical diplomas (or perhaps associate degrees) offered as VET courses could be considered for the Southbank campus programs in Theatre, Production, Dance, Art, Film and TV, Music, and Music Theatre. VET courses do not necessarily require the involvement of a university. One option, therefore, would be for Music to remain a University program taught over two locations while the remaining programs de-amalgamate from the University of Melbourne, and either seek alliance with another University with a practical orientation, or a VET provider, or else seek autonomous status as a VET institution. In this scenario, the University would focus on refining its degree in Music, and would be free to explore other means of offering a Melbourne Model degree in the visual and performing arts other than Music independently of Southbank.

Structurally this option would likely require 'disaffiliation' of the VCA from the University. As indicated in the finance section of this document, such an approach could hold greater risk for the Southbank campus than the University. The accreditation requirements that have been met by the University of Melbourne for the past two decades would need to be addressed.

Option 2: Melbourne's New Generation Degrees.

The Parkville campus offers a three-year Bachelor degree in Music quite different from the Southbank programs. Designed as one of the New Generation degrees, the BMus ensures that first-year students take a common core that focuses on performance

[1] http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/school/introduction.html

[2] 2009 Juilliard Scholl Staff Handbook, p.42

and other customary music studies, but from the second year onwards offers a choice of specialising in performance, composition or musicology. Students also undertake one 'breadth' subject per semester throughout their course, chosen from the vast array of subjects available outside Music at the University. In their third year, students are encouraged to study abroad or to network with the music profession through work placement. A basic tenet of the Melbourne Model is that graduates will emerge from any of the three-year New Generation programs not just with depth in a single specialisation, but also with enough breadth to face ever-changing local and global work opportunities.

The New Generation degrees are also intended to offer pathways into the University's Graduate Schools—not just in the arts, but in education, law, and a range of other professions. A strength of the Melbourne Model is that a student is not forced to make a career-limiting choice in secondary school, but has the three years of their undergraduate degree to decide on a graduate field with maturity and conviction. Just as many Bachelor-degree graduates from other fields have later decided to pursue an arts career and enrolled as postgraduates at the former VCA, so under the Melbourne Model option Bachelor graduates from the Faculty of the VCA and Music would in future have the option of enrolment in graduate schools in other fields. Given the high degree of uncertainty in arts careers, this would leave open other employment opportunities should graduates choose to pursue these.

One option, therefore, would be for the Faculty to fully integrate its Southbank undergraduate and graduate degree programs into the Melbourne Model, by combining the two music degree programs (already well underway), and developing a New Generation degree program for the other arts, with majors tailored to the specialist needs of Theatre, Production, Dance, Art, and Film and Television. Such programs would be practice-based, supported by appropriate discipline-based critical and theoretical studies, and by engagement with breadth subjects (in proportions yet to be determined). Students who successfully attained such a degree would be eligible to progress to graduate studies (notwithstanding the special requirements for entry to particular graduate programs).

There are several challenges with this option. Southbank students of practical arts may not be interested in academically challenging breadth subjects in other fields. Differences in selection criteria may significantly disadvantage some students. Integration with the Melbourne Model assumes students could commute freely between Parkville and Southbank to undertake the breadth components of their programs. These challenges are not insurmountable, but will require innovative solutions that are fair and equitable to all students and staff.

Option 3: Parallel course types—degrees and associate degrees

Another way forward would be to offer parallel degree and associate degree (or diplomas) programs at undergraduate level. Those students to whom it is important to attain a degree would follow a Melbourne Model degree program as described above. Those students for whom it is not important to attain a degree and wish to focus solely on practice, would follow a practical associate degree stream. For the majority of the time both degree and associate degree students would share practice-based classes.

Such associate degrees might be offered under the auspices of the University, or may be able to be offered as Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. As noted earlier, WAAPA offers both vocational and higher education programs, and this model could be examined further.

As with other VET articulation arrangements, it would be possible to establish pathways for conversion of associate degrees (or diplomas) to degrees should students decide at any point that they would prefer to move across into degree studies.

This option could be supported by a number of structural options, including through the current Faculty of the VCA and Music, or through a return to two separate faculties. The specifics of these options are addressed in the next section.

Questions for discussion

5. Which of the options will provide the most appropriate educational outcomes for students?
6. How will the different educational requirements of students within the faculty be addressed and what compromises are possible?
7. For the option selected, are there structural possibilities other than the ones indicated that could enable effective provision?
8. Are there other options that have not been considered?
9. Are there consequences to these options that have not been articulated in this section?

Section 5

The Structure of the Faculty

In the face of difficult financial circumstances, it is more important than ever that the Faculty of the VCA and Music explores ways to become sustainable in the long term. And with activities split across two campuses, there are physical difficulties to consider.

Regardless of the curriculum choices made, the accommodation and financial challenges of the faculty need to be addressed.

Accommodation Challenges

The city of Melbourne is often described as the arts capital of Australia: extraordinary performance and exhibition spaces are spread throughout the central business district. Melbourne's arts centerpiece, the Southbank Arts Precinct, is unmatched in Australia for its first-rate arts venues and leading arts organisations. The State Government has plans to continue to transform the Southbank precinct, a vision that the University of Melbourne supports with enthusiasm. VCAM is appropriately positioned close to the National Gallery of Victoria, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, the Australian Ballet, Chunky Move Dance Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and many others.

The Southbank campus is home to five of the Faculty's six disciplines. The sixth, Music, is located at both the Southbank and Parkville campuses. This Faculty spread across two campuses is problematic in terms of developing coherence, shared culture and a sense of community, as well as in terms of achieving efficiencies. However the split is likely to remain into the foreseeable future.

As noted in section three, the distance between the Parkville and Southbank campuses also creates a number of practical problems. No matter how attractive breadth subjects may be, the need to build in significant commuting time may limit the appeal and timetabling feasibility of subjects at either campus to students of the other. Financial travel constraints for some students may also hinder curriculum options.

There is also the current state of the accommodation on the two sites to consider.

The Southbank campus

The Southbank campus has a collection of buildings, some of which are relatively new and in good condition, others are heritage buildings in various states of repair from fair to poor, and still others are non-listed, relatively run-down building stock, including demountable/portable buildings. A project is already underway mapping the functions currently offered in the demountables, transferring them into more permanent spaces, and then removing the demountables. This project is intended to improve teaching and practice facilities for all staff and students, and enhance the overall campus environment by removing unsightly structures and opening up the previously cluttered grounds. But there remains much more to be done, for which resources have not yet been found.

One of the key incentives of the merger of the two Faculties was the prospect of building a single, contemporary School of Music building at Southbank to international best-practice benchmarks and standards. With State Government support in 2005-06, the University consulted extensively and developed a comprehensive brief and architectural designs for such a building. Since then, although the University has pursed funding opportunities at State and Federal level with vigour, to date it has not

achieved success. Thus, there is at present no solution in sight to the split-campus dilemma.

The Parkville campus

The University's main campus at Parkville incorporates the historic Conservatorium building, the centrepiece of which is Melba Hall. This building will remain available to the Faculty into the future, regardless of new development and consolidation on the Southbank site over time, for there will always be a need for a base and for a performance venue for the Faculty at Parkville. However, the Conservatorium building has long been outgrown by the some 700 students enrolled in Music there, with Music activities at Parkville distributed across eight other buildings, with a long-standing claim on part of a ninth. It was hoped these pressures would be relieved by the building of a new music school at Southbank. And like some of the Southbank facilities, the historic Conservatorium building is also in need of repair.

Questions for discussion

10. What are the challenges and long term impacts of running a single music school split across two physical locations? How could these challenges be resolved?
11. Could a new building to facilitate all music students resolve these problems and if so, how would it be funded?

Financial Challenges

The two heritage institutes that formed the Faculty of the VCA and Music came from different financial positions. The former Faculty of Music entered the merger with a robust financial position: annual surpluses, one of the largest endowments of any Faculty in the University, and resources including a valuable collection of rare and historic instruments and the largest collection of Steinway pianos in the region. Despite this strong financial position, physical infrastructure problems were significant and facilities did not match growth in student numbers.

The former Faculty of Music has long drawn a significant part of its revenue from endowment income, has had marked success with attracting fees from international and domestic graduate fee-paying students, and recently also has benefited from sizeable numbers of "breadth" enrolments from other faculties. Of course endowment funds come with strict requirements from donors. In the case of the endowments acquired by the former Faculty of Music, there are a variety of conditions attached to their usage. In some cases these endowments must support 'Music at the University of Melbourne'. Although this would allow the support of programs in Music delivered at the Southbank campus, it would not allow expenditure on non-Music related areas. Other endowments come with specific links to the former Faculty of Music (Parkville), whilst others are less restrictive.

Similarly, if the new Faculty is to utilise funds generated by offering breadth subjects, it is important that all parts of the faculty contribute to earning this money. Failure to do so would introduce disincentives and imbalances within the faculty.

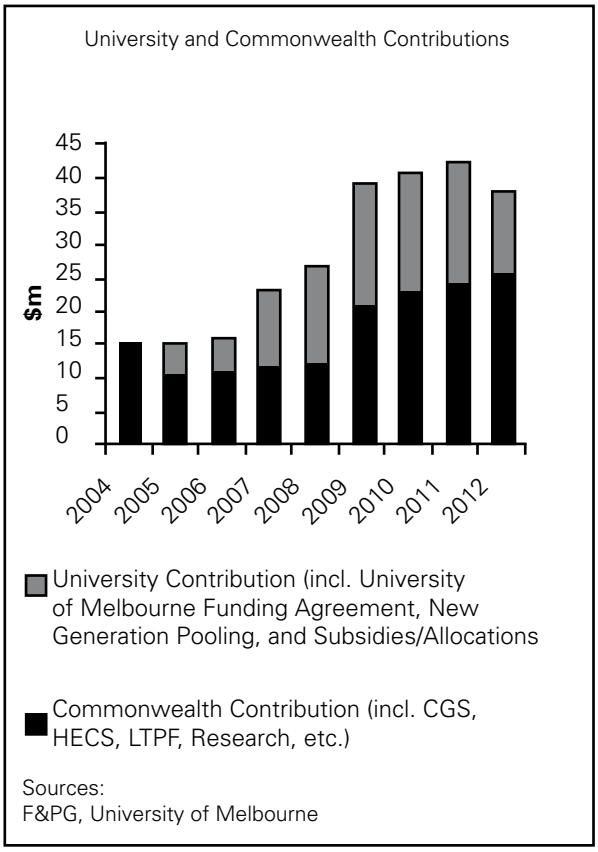
The Faculty of the VCA entered the 2009 merger in a less robust budget position. Post the Nelson reforms in 2005, the former VCA had a budget dependent on sizeable subsidy from other Faculties with a significant and growing deficit. As with the Faculty of Music, the Faculty of the VCA's infrastructure was in varying condition. A significant challenge, if the Faculty is to succeed as a coherent entity, is how to address these issues.

2004 was the last year during which the VCA was able to depend solely on the per-student funding rate of the Commonwealth grants scheme. From 2005 to 2008 the Commonwealth contribution was greatly reduced and essentially remained static, and during this four-year period the University compensated for the inadequate Commonwealth funding and increased the overall budget of the VCA.

In 2009, the per-student funding rate for Commonwealth-supported students in the visual and performing arts is $15,518. About two-thirds of this is Commonwealth subsidy, and the remaining one-third is the student contribution. This is the main source of government funding for the VCA: it is funded on the same basis as other degree-awarding arts institutions, including the Sydney Conservatorium and the Queensland College of Art. Although it is important to note that every university distributes governmental funding differently, making direct comparisons challenging.

In the May 2009 Budget, the Federal Government announced a review of the base funding rates for all disciplines. This is expected to be conducted during 2010, with new funding rates introduced in 2012. While to date no terms of reference have been announced for this review, it is likely that there will be an opportunity to show that the visual and performing arts, within the university environment, are under-funded.

With additional funding likely to be at least two years away, the University continues to supplement Commonwealth provision for Southbank. Between 2007 and 2009 the University has cross-subsidised its programs more than $40 million beyond the available



Commonwealth funding. This contribution—only made possible by redistribution from other faculties—is set to continue, with in excess of an estimated $30 million additional subsidy committed to the Faculty for 2010-11. The graph above shows the increasing input from the University of Melbourne since 2005, with the cross-subsidy essentially matching the direct Commonwealth contributions in 2009. By 2012, it will be essential that the reliance on support from other faculties diminishes, with the Faculty becoming more sustainable in its own right.

There are various options to explore. On the revenue side, a curriculum which attracted greater numbers of international students by talent-based entry could contribute significantly to the Faculty budget. A well marketed and globally competitive program would enable the Faculty to lift its current international student cohort to a level consistent with the University average. Similarly, graduate programs remain almost unregulated by the Commonwealth, with universities able to set prices and student numbers. If the Faculty could develop and market successful fee-paying graduate courses this would also contribute to the building of new revenue streams.

If the Faculty as a whole could teach breadth subjects that attracted significant numbers of students from other faculties, perhaps on the Parkville campus or in an intensive format at Southbank, this too could yield significant financial gains. All students across the University must choose some breadth subjects, and the performing and visual arts can prove highly attractive as breadth options. Indeed, the Parkville based Music staff already offer breadth subjects in music which have attracted nearly 1,000 subject enrolments from other faculties in 2009.

Another cost-side option would involve addressing the Faculty's average student: staff ratio, which is the lowest of all the University of Melbourne faculties, including those with commensurate intensive practical programs such as in the clinical programs of Veterinary Science and Medicine. Within the Faculty itself there are also discrepancies. Despite revenue across the divisions being the same per student, there are substantial differences in costs per student (such as in facilities, productions, supplies, and salaries). This imbalance results in cross subsidies within the Faculty, which might also be addressed.

Would another solution be to bid for Commonwealth funding on a different basis? Some visual and performing arts institutions currently receive direct government operating grants instead of, or as a supplement to, per student funding rates. The best known of these is NIDA. Direct grants enable these institutions to offer more expensive forms of education than would be possible on prevailing per student funding rates. This is an attractive option for and independent VCA. However, the previous government rejected arguments for the former VCA to be funded on a similar basis to NIDA. We understand that similar arguments from other arts education institutions have also been rejected. Nevertheless there have been significant changes since these past failed attempts, making a new attempt to secure direct grant funding a possibility worth exploring.

Other than the student contribution amount set by legislation, institutions operating within the public university system cannot charge Australian undergraduate students fees. However, an independent VCA could choose to stay outside the public university system and charge self-determined fees. Eligibility for the FEE-HELP loan scheme, which provides income-contingent loans to fee-paying students, is based on objective criteria which an independent VCA could satisfy. NIDA students pay their tuition charges with FEE-HELP assistance. Especially in combination with a direct grant, the FEE-HELP system avoids the problems of Commonwealth-supported places, where funding rates have been set without regard to costs and indexed at below inflation. The deficiencies of the Commonwealth-supported places system are a substantial contributing factor to the Faculty's funding problems, and would ideally be avoided in any

new arrangement. Any move to a new system must give due consideration to the potential for substantial changes in student fees.

Questions for discussion

12. What can be done to bring the Faculty's budget more in line with currently available revenues (not including cross-subsidy) without compromising program delivery?
13. How can we further galvanise support to lobby for more appropriate funding from government? Should the University again make a case for special funding to the Commonwealth and if so, on what basis?
14. If an independent VCA operating with the FEE-HELP program is established, how will the corresponding significant increase in student fees be avoided?
15. Given recent strong support from the public regarding education in the arts, is there scope for substantial endowments to be provided to facilitate changes to the current VCAM structure?

Structural Options

This discussion paper is aimed at securing the best possible visual and performing arts education for the city of Melbourne. There are a number of structural options to consider.

The Existing Structure: Faculty of the VCA and Music

The University of Melbourne and the former VCA have a long history of engagement dating back over two decades, as described in section 3. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Faculty of the VCA and Music is a newly formed combination of two faculties, and of distinctive cultures. Progress towards a fully integrated and appropriate environment continues. This option needs to be considered in light of the 'youth' of the Faculty and the difficulties experienced in any significant merger.

The current Faculty is one of the largest providers of visual and performing arts education in the region, particularly in Music. A large enrolment base makes it possible to offer a wider range of options as a single faculty than as two separate smaller faculties/institutions. Students will be able to take subjects from other faculties, contributing to a broad education for careers in the arts and the academic basis for future postgraduate study in other fields. A merged faculty can also give other University of Melbourne students access to visual and performing arts subjects in the breadth component of their New Generation degrees.

Despite these positive attributes of the current faculty structure, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed. The Faculty currently operates over two campuses which is not ideal and further serves to exacerbate existing cultural differences. Overcoming problems relating to 'heritage' of the two programs will require substantial efforts in communication and management.

Questions for discussion

16. Is the existing structure viable given the described challenges?
17. What changes are required to ensure the success of a combined faculty model?

Separation of the VCA and Music within the University

An alternative model would be to keep the Faculty structure, but to centralise the New Generation Music degree and graduate program at Parkville, as a self-contained School, with the other disciplines at Southbank. Parkville Music would keep its Melbourne Model course, while the Southbank campus would offer courses with a more intensive practical component. There could be opportunities for interested Southbank students to take subjects in the other School, without joint courses, as in the past. This approach would restore the individual traditions, allegiances and cultures of both campuses, allowing them to operate separately. The practical difficulties of conducting courses over two locations would be eliminated, but the challenges that lead to integration in the first instance, such as competition for the same set of music students, would be revived.

Though the former VCA would still need to review its curriculum, the most controversial pedagogical challenge—the Melbourne Model— would confined to Parkville. Within its funding constraints, it would maintain its specialised and performance-based training pedagogy. The Parkville Music School, which has been through a recent curriculum review, would continue to offer Melbourne Model courses, including breadth subjects to non-music students. The separated Southbank programs would be required to address the significant financial challenges to ensure ongoing standards for students and staff.

This model is in some ways consistent with many of the faculties on the university campus, many of which have numerous large departments and schools which operate independently, with teaching and research coordinated between them where beneficial. A significant difference however would be that the University would end up with two music schools, essentially competing with each other, within the one faculty, whilst at the same time sharing physical resources.

Questions for discussion

18. With the removal of the potential revenue from a Melbourne Model curriculum, how would a separate Southbank "School" address its current and future funding challenges?
19. How would the Southbank "School" transition its curriculum and structure to meet the remaining consensus 1998 review recommendations in a 'separate' model?
20. Would a separate Faculty of the VCA, and a separate Faculty of Music, help meet the educational objectives of all, acknowledging that there would be strong competition between the faculties for students? Given existing structural and staff changes, is this even feasible?
21. How would the current use of facilities at the two locations by Music be managed if two music schools existed?

An independent VCA

The most radical option is to return to the VCA as an independent institution. For the 'VCA' part of the Faculty, this would give the highest level of autonomy over curriculum and the management of its finances. It would allow it to maintain and develop its distinctive local and international branding as a specialised visual and performing arts institution. It would put it in a stronger position to argue for its own funding arrangement, separate from normal public university funding rates.

While this would avoid addressing the remaining challenges of integration with the University of Melbourne, it would also require an independent VCA to take difficult decisions about its own future. The high current costs would require it to implement significant changes. In this scenario the University would not offer support financially, structurally or through accreditation. If it were re-established, an independent VCA would, at least initially, also have to accredit its courses with the Victorian Government or the new Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency.

Although not the preferred end to two decades of support, an independent VCA would have advantages for the University. The VCA affiliation turned into a significant financial disadvantage for other University of Melbourne students. Millions of dollars in teaching income earned from enrolling students at the University have become cross-subsidies to the VCA and then the Southbank campus of VCAM. As these student places were already under-funded without this added cost, it would benefit University of Melbourne students if this money could be used as originally intended.

If the Southbank campus does not participate in the Melbourne Model by making breadth subjects available to all students, there would appear to be no advantages for other University of Melbourne students from a continued relationship with the Southbank campus.

A de-merger would also leave the University's Melbourne Model prevailing across all the University's undergraduate courses. Like the separated VCA, the University could maintain its distinct brand position, with prospective students and their subsequent employers clear about what to expect. Everyone with a Melbourne undergraduate degree would have academic breadth as part of their education, and the University would benefit from having a consistent educational philosophy across all programs.

Despite the surface allure of this option, it would require many significant changes to the way VCAM operates. Any move towards this option would require careful consideration of the effects of reduced finances and financial options on staff and students. The University of Melbourne has supported the VCA (and more recently VCAM) for more than two decades; a move away from this support would present a significant set of risks to be considered. The risk to the University itself would be low; the risk to the training of students through many of the current VCAM programs and the wellbeing of the existing VCAM staff would be significant.

As noted above, an independent VCA outside the public university system would need to charge self-determined fees, deferrable through the FEE-HELP loan system. Without any public subsidy assistance, fees of at least $20,000 a year are likely to be needed for the VCA to be self-financing. Fees at this level may be prohibitive for many of the students aspiring to attend the VCA.

Additionally, regardless of the structure, the curriculum and financial issues faced at Southbank would still need to be addressed to provide a sustainable and globally relevant education in the arts.

Questions for discussion

22. If the VCA was to 'de-merge' from the University of Melbourne, over what period would this occur and how would it be financed?
23. What structural issues, if any, would an independent VCA need to overcome to be eligible for direct State or Commonwealth grants?
24. Are there other structures that have not been described that could potentially lead to stronger educational outcomes in the arts?

Questions for discussion

The questions on which we invite discussion appear throughout the document. This is not an exhaustive list, and submissions that address other areas of concern are also welcome. None of the choices are simple. Many will be contestable, and involve benefits on one front and collateral effects on another. But the risk is that controversy and a lack of consensus may lead us to having no choices at all.

Afterword

We look forward to receiving written responses by 12 February 2010. As part of this consultation, staff, students, graduates are encouraged to attend the coming briefings, conduct their own discussions, and pick and choose the issues most relevant to them. Details will be listed on the Defining the Future for the VCA and Music website:

http://vcam.unimelb.edu.au/discussion

Even in the face of difficult decisions, a university should be a place where debate is encouraged.

Appendix

The 1998 Robinson Review of the VCA Curriculum

Review Team:

Ken Robinson (Chair), Hilary McPhee, Paul Grabowsky, John Rimmer and Tony Klein

Summary of List of Recommendations

1. That the six Deans form a working group in February 1999.
2. That each Dean convenes an internal school review of the curriculum.
3. That the College appoints a second Deputy Director with responsibility for the quality of the programmes, for course development and co-ordination.
4. That the Board of Studies should be re-organised and refocused to address issues of curriculum development and co-ordination.
5. That the calendar of the six schools should be aligned.
6. That there should be an immediate review and realignment of the time-table.
7. That there should be greater co-ordination of common and core courses.
8. That the titles of degrees and other awards should be reviewed and co-ordinated.
9. That the college investigates the feasibility of extending the existing three year degree programmes to four years.
10. That the VCA should look at establishing combined courses.
11. That the Working Group of Deans should look at the balance across the College in the use of sessional and contract staff.
12. That the College moves immediately to introduce a fuller programme of staff development.
13. That the Schools agree with the Directorate to a 1% top slice of the College budget for staff development.
14. That a mechanism is established through which staff bid for replacement teaching money.
15. That these funds be used to replace teachers using sessional teachers and visiting artists.
16. That as the postgraduate population in the college grows, postgraduates should be engaged in teaching undergraduates.
17. That the sixth College should develop a research policy and strategy. As the school moves into the College, we recommend that it should be redesignated as The Centre for Professional Studies.
18. That the BA Creative Arts should remain as a three-year degree.
19. That there should be the possibility of crossover within the degree programmes.
20. That a separate specialist audit of these resources should be undertaken taking account of their particular uses in a conservatoire.
21. That in the medium term the College should aim to establish a fully equipped centre for new media, as a central resource for all staff and students.
22. That the Council should undertake a review of the links in teaching, research, administration and cultural activities between the College and the University.
23. That the Council of the VCA should renew discussions with the University of Melbourne on ways of co-ordinating provision for music education and training.
24. That the College should review the existing site plan to promote better physical activity flows and functional relationships across the College and to fit the recommendations of this curriculum audit.
25. That plans for any new buildings should be reviewed to take account of this audit.

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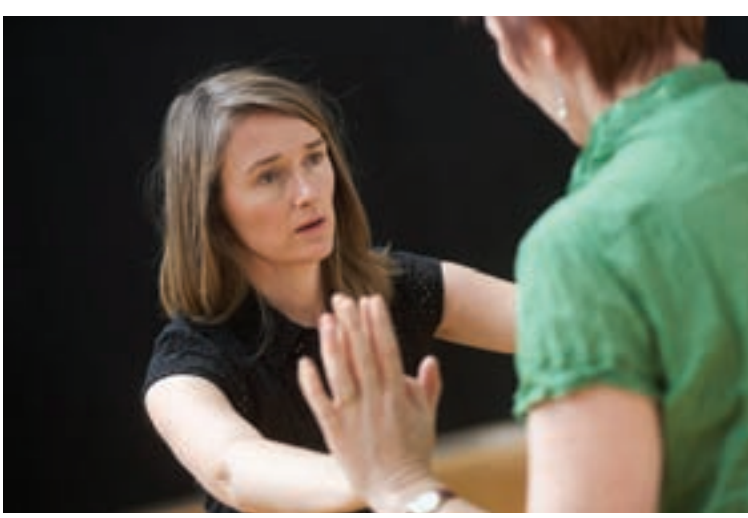
Geraldine Cook, Head of Voice in VCA Drama and Jodie Harris, a graduate actor of the VCA who wears a cochlear implant. Geraldine and Jodie led a 10-week training program for the ARC Vocal Empowerment project - photographer Sash Ilievski



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