

Centralised Faculty Student Services:

Is it possible to Offer an Enhanced Student Experience and Maintain the Connection with Faculty stakeholders? The Sequel!

Presenter:

David Donnelly, Deputy Academic Registrar- Governance & Academic Administration

Presentation Outline

- About the University of Newcastle
- The Story So Far....Student Hubs – Concept
- What's Happened Recently?
- Internal Review of Student Hubs 2012
- Survey Results – 2010 & 2012
- Discussion



Introduction to the University of Newcastle

- 48 years old
- 35,000 students
- \$500+ million revenue
- Top 10 in Research
- Comprehensive
- Non-metropolitan
- Multi – campus
- International – Singapore Campus
- Member of the IRU



1. The Story So Far

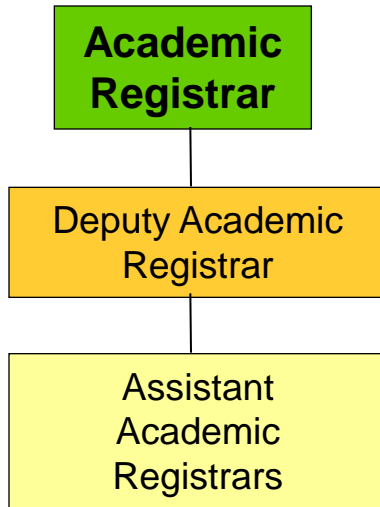


Financial Crisis and Response

- 2005 /6– financial crisis identified
- 20% reduction in staff
- IT program of works
- Shared Services Model



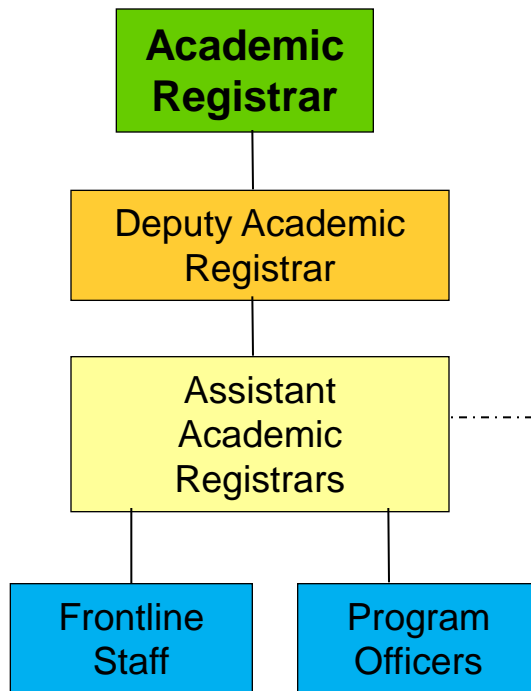
Student and Academic Services Staff



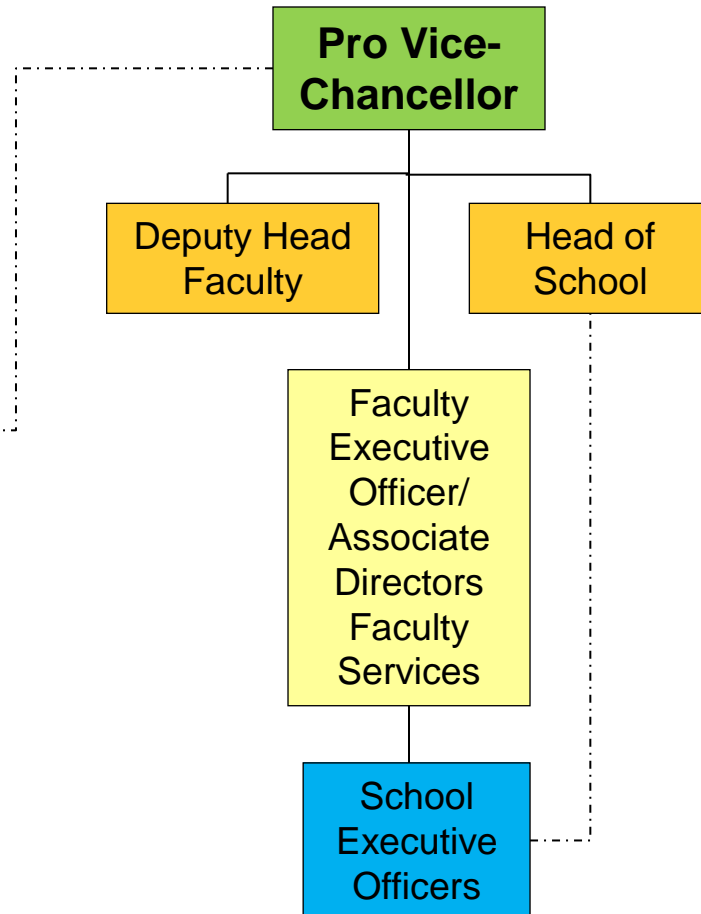
Role of Assistant Academic Registrar

- Dual reporting line
 - Academic Registrar through the Deputy Academic Registrar
 - PVC (dotted line)
- Hub Manager
- Member of Faculty Board
- Link to Governance
 - Academic Senate
 - Policy
- Facilitator

Student and Academic Services Staff



Faculty Staff



2. What's Happened Recently?



What's Happened Recently?

New Vice-
Chancellor!
Professor
Caroline McMillen



Appointment
announced
December 2010.

Commenced
October 2011.

What's Happened Recently?



What's Happened Recently?

Review of Teaching, Learning and Student Services

- Student and Academic Services to move into Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic's) portfolio
- No mention of Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers returning to the Faculty – despite expectations!
- AARs and Program Officers receive a commendation!
- Future direction not clear



What's Happened Recently?

Student Experience and Engagement Funding

- Largely Faculty focussed
- Lots of activities and very useful outcomes
- Disconnected, fragmented effort
- Faculties in a stronger position – rare discretionary funding



3. Internal Review



Internal Review of Student Hubs

What?

- Assess Services
- Benchmarking
- Virtual Service Delivery
- Consider Services offered by other Service Providers at University, eg, IT, Library
- Staffing Structures

Internal Review of Student Hubs

How?

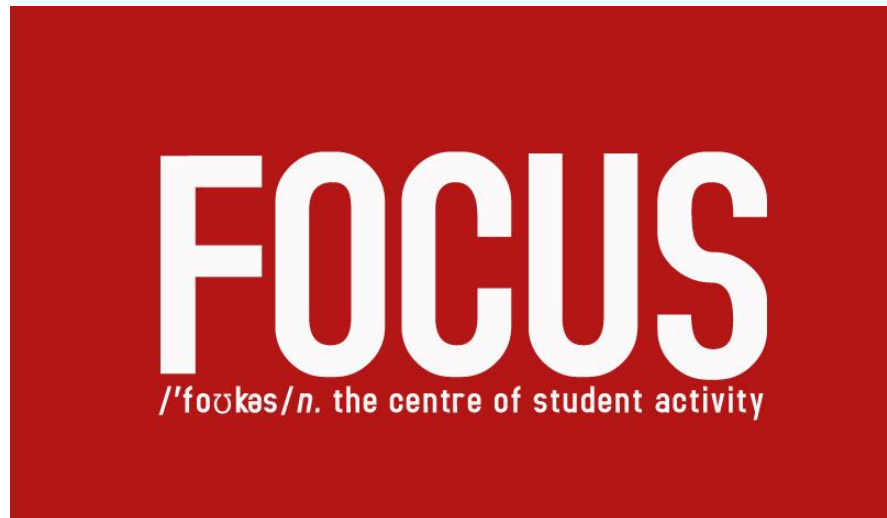
- Literature Review
- SWOT analyses
- Benchmarked within sector – visited UQ, Griffith, UNSW, UTS, Melbourne, RMIT, Swinburne, Uni of California, Uni of San Diego, Uni of Hawaii
- Benchmarked external – Apple, JB Hi-Fi
- Examined service points and services offered by Schools
- Stakeholder Survey

Internal Review of Hubs

Recommendations:

- Co-locate services with Library and IT
- Create more informal learning spaces
- Introduce a concierge service
- Introduce 'pop-up' or mobile Hubs
- Extend use of AskUON to improve on line services
- Review staffing and management arrangements
 - Separate front-of-house v back-room services
 - AAR as Manager – is it still a viable model?

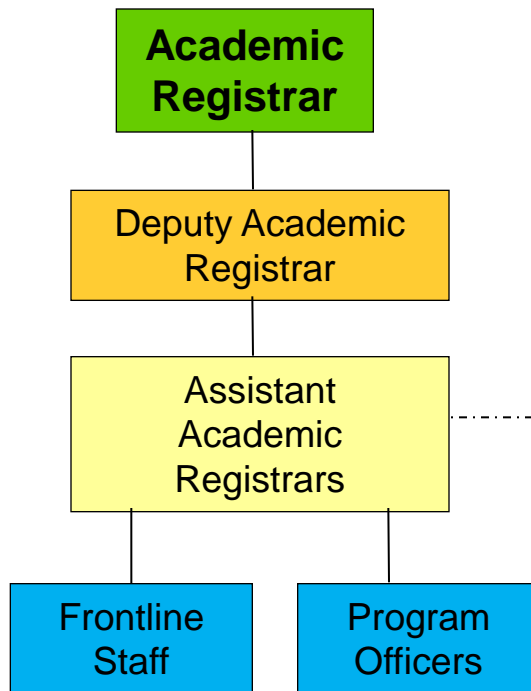
4 Stakeholder Survey 2010 and 2012



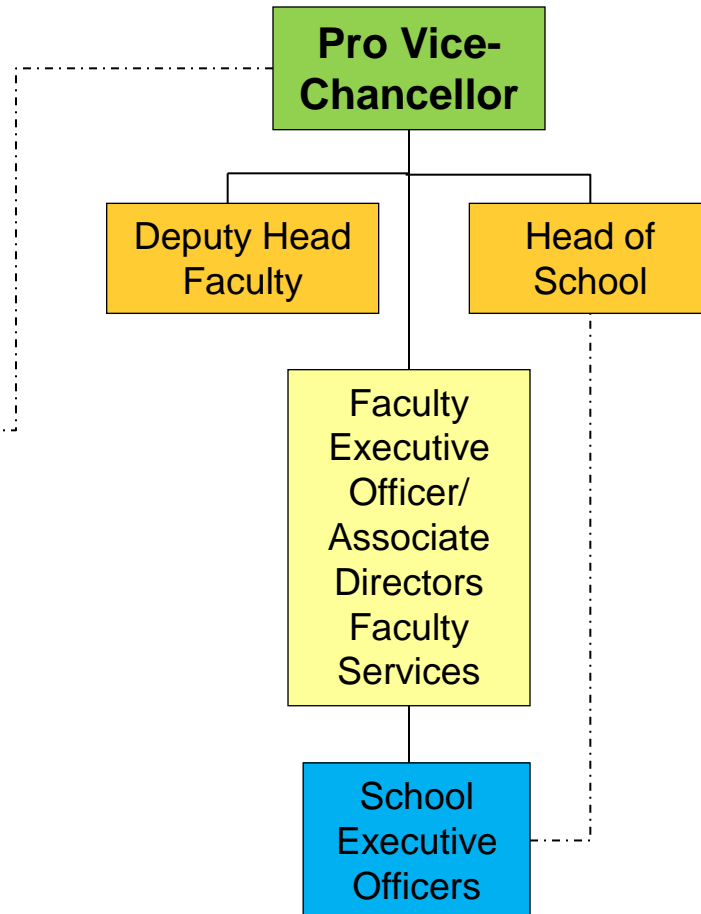
Stakeholder Survey 2010 and 2012

- On-line survey, 9 questions
- Student and Academic Services Staff = 37 (2012), 47 (2010)
- Faculty Staff = 30 (2012), 30 (2012)
- Opportunity to add free text

Student and Academic Services Staff



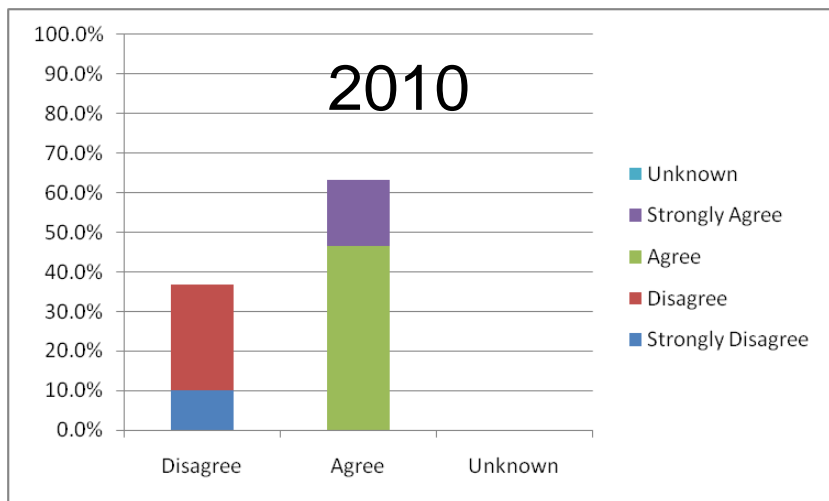
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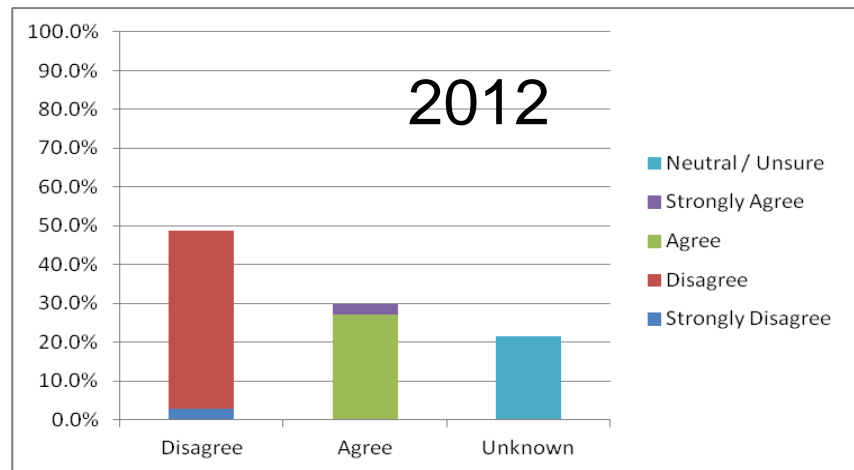
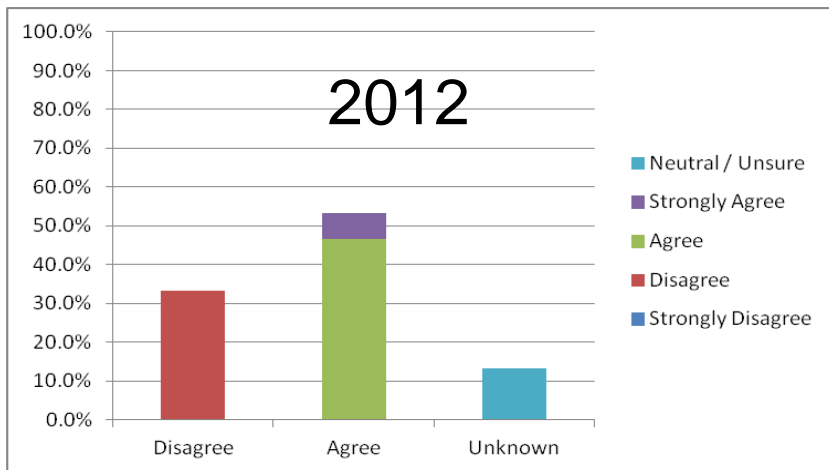
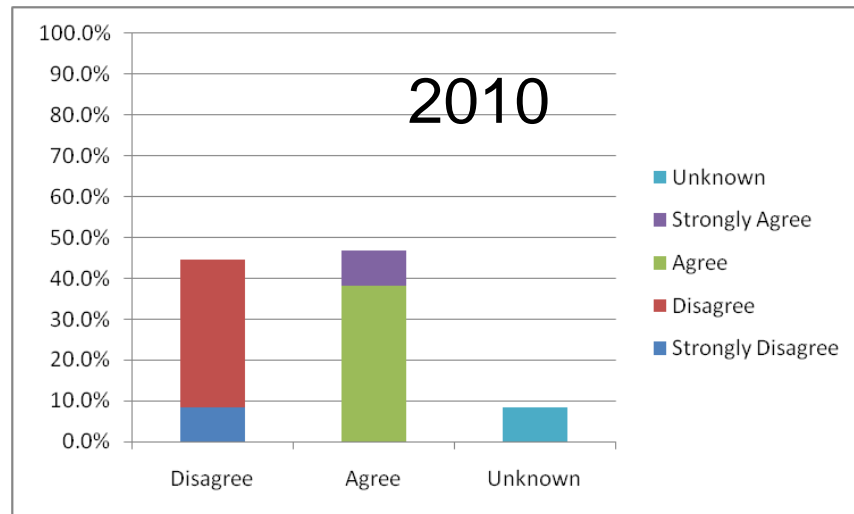
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Faculty Staff



Services Staff



Q4. Roles and responsibilities between the Hubs and the Schools/Faculties are clearly understood by all parties.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2010):

Degree programs are the responsibility of Faculties, so the administration of them is best managed at Faculty level. My understanding is that the centralisation of these tasks at UoN was adopted largely on grounds of efficiency. I think this absurd nonsense has been perpetrated by management companies and their theorists who, in my considerable experience, have little or no experience themselves of how universities operate. Degree programs are the Faculties' "product" offerings and I can see little if no efficiencies to be gained by "outsourcing" their administration. In fact, I see only a blurring of the lines of responsibility, which is my motivation for disagreeing with this particular proposition.

Q4. Roles and responsibilities between the Hubs and the Schools/Faculties are clearly understood by all parties.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2010):

Student services should have remained within the Faculties where they belong. One-stop shop service could also be provided at Faculty level by putting the hubs back in the Faculties where they rightfully belong.

Q4. Roles and responsibilities between the Hubs and the Schools/Faculties are clearly understood by all parties.

Program Officer (2012):

Even though the restructure took place in 2006, many staff in PVC Units and Schools, still don't understand what happens in a HUB. They associate them with Special Circumstances and assignments I think and that's about it.

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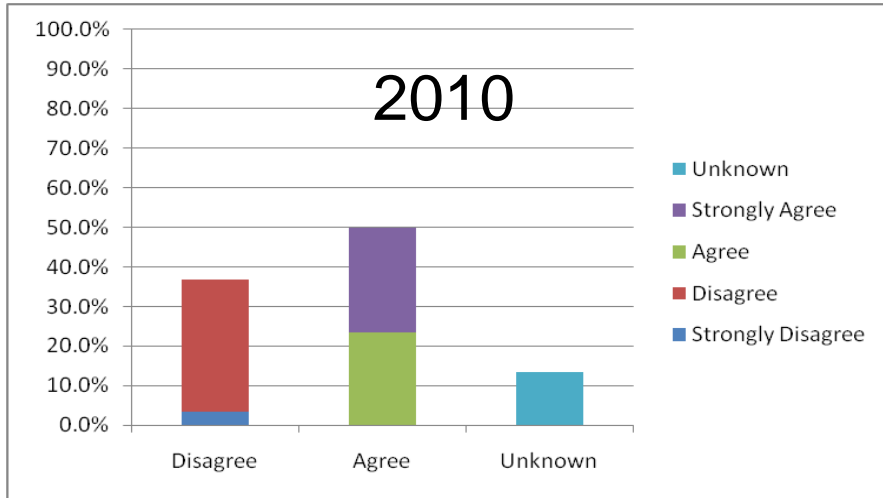
Program Officer (2012):

I think confusion has increased over the past 12 - 18 months in respect to student related responsibilities, particularly in regards to activity and responsibility around the student experience.

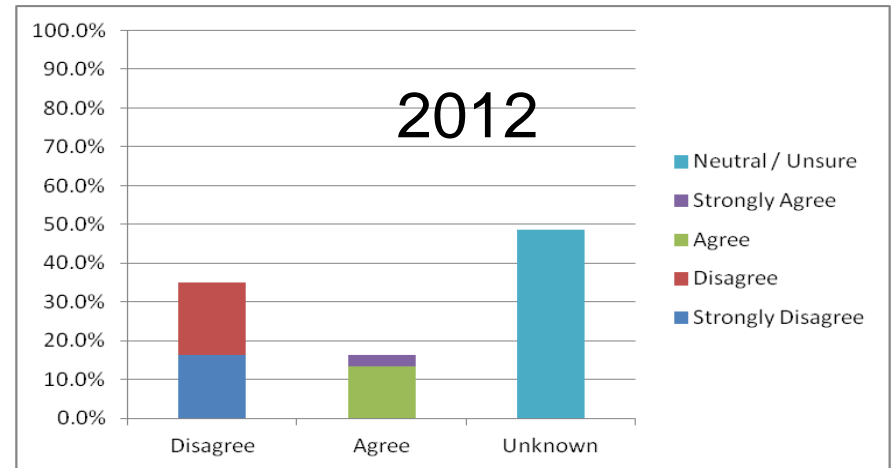
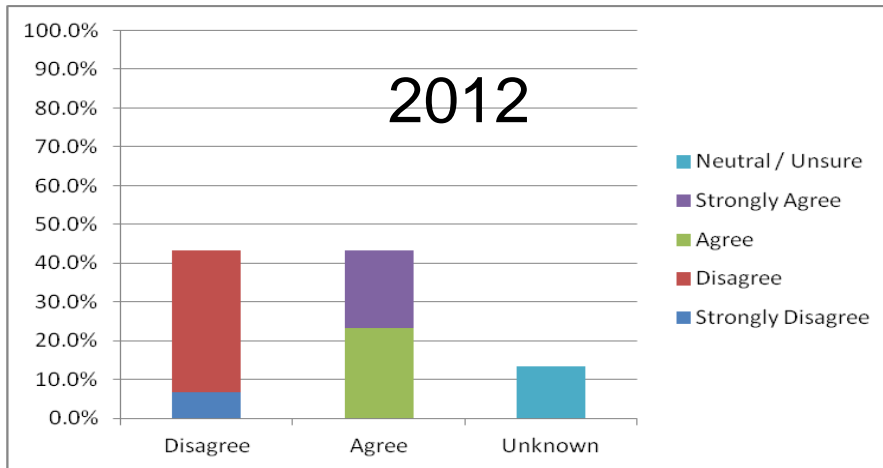
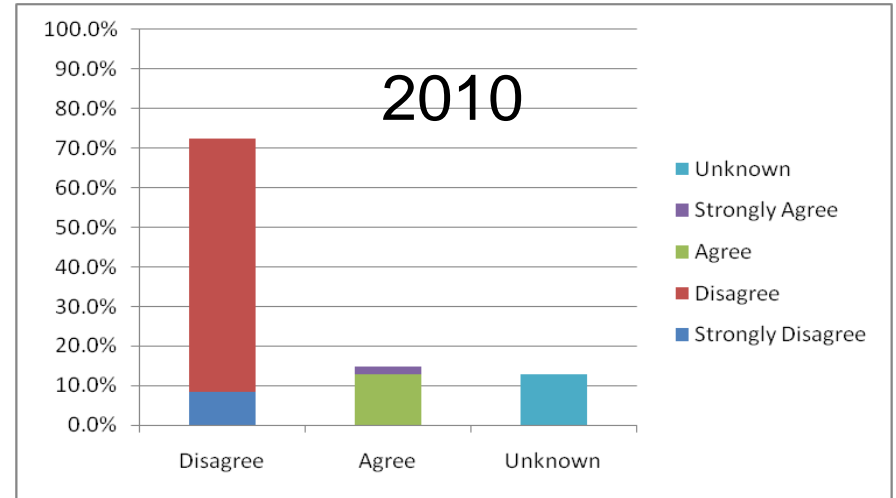
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Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2010):

I don't care whose payroll they are on, but they should be located within identifiable Faculty precincts and answerable to the Faculty Head, i.e., the PVC. These people are very important in terms of Faculty operations. They are the equivalent of "product managers" for the Faculties, where the so-called "products" are our degree programs. To have the product manager not answerable to the "CEO", i.e., the PVC (or Dean in the old days) is, in my view, bordering on the absurd. To me, this is a clear case where a shared services model is not the best option.

Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Enquiry Centre (2012):

Program Officers definitely need to sit in the hubs to give students easier access to them.....having POs in the hubs will give quicker service to students and easier access. For example on Callaghan campus, students only have to go to one of 2 hubs to get access to a PO. If the POs were located in the faculties, POs would be spread out over 10-20 buildings? This would be a barrier for students.

Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Deputy Head of Faculty (2012):

Call centres exist in India and the Philippines.

Location is unimportant.

Assistant Dean (2012):

Where are the Faculty precincts? Most faculties are spread across many buildings. And which Faculty is headquartered at Ourimbah or Singapore? I think that moving hubs staff into a faculty building would hinder not help the student experience. The admin-academic interaction.....depends on the attitude of the people involved, not where they sit.

Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Program Officer (2012):

Service to students and to Academic staff was more personalized and targeted under the pre-Hubs system. Partly this was because there were more support staff.

Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Frontline (2012):

Program Officers have become somewhat hidden and more distant from the students they serve.

Program Officer (2012):

This would be true if it meant that all Faculties were resourced in the same manner and did not have revolving doors on positions as Faculties would ensure that positions were filled and that there were sufficient Program Officers to service the needs of students.

Q7. It would be better for students if the Assistant Academic Registrars and Program Officers were located in the Faculty precincts.

Program Officers (2012):

Working in a central location has been very beneficial in terms of consistency with respect to following policy and procedure. It has exposed PO staff to the wider community in administration.

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Program Officers (2012):

Many Program Officers can be across faculties and having all the Program Officers in the Hubs, means we can explore other programs. We are in hearing distance of each other and what goes on around us. PO's can pick up information from each other or compare what one PO does to another or one faculty does to another, identifying change or questioning processes. It's really important in networking your resources and keeping everyone up to speed with information, especially if staff are on leave and assistance is required with students or academics.

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Associate Director Faculty Services (2012):

We are more likely to have a consistent approach with the current model. If we located AA in the Faculties we would still have the same delineation of responsibility problems. On the other hand it would be nice to feel more like a team than we are now....

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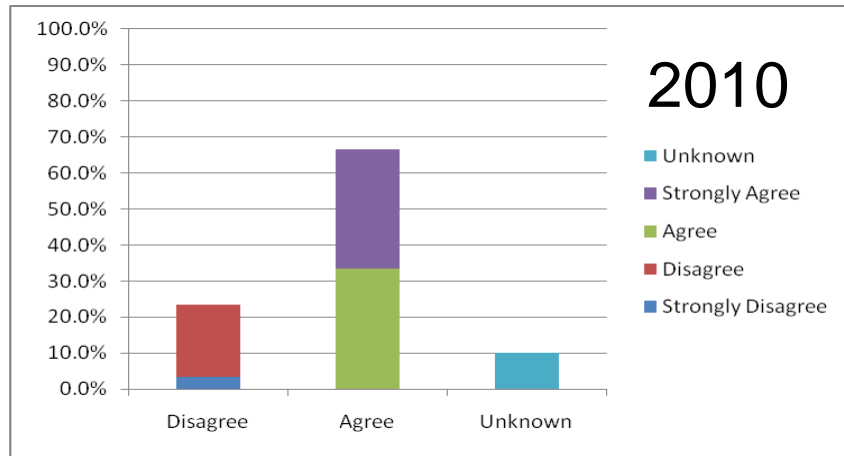
School Executive Officer (2012):

I have minimal interaction or communication with our AAR or the Program Officers and the reason could be that they are 'out of sight'. Realistically, we should be working very closely together to be kept informed and to work through any issues.

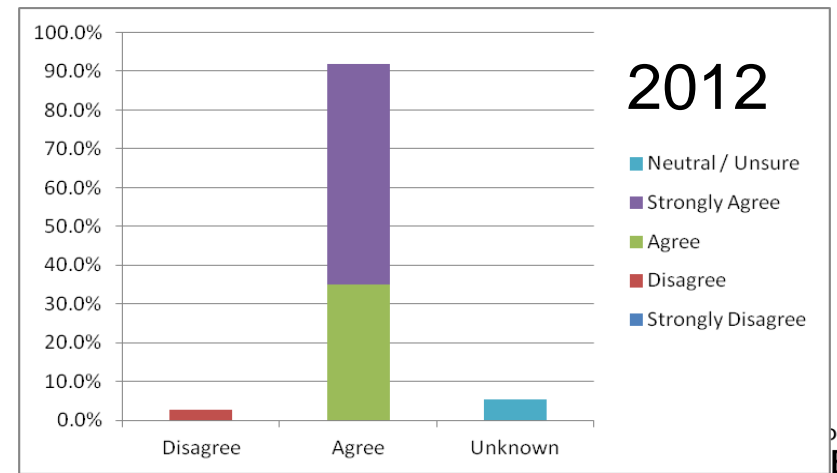
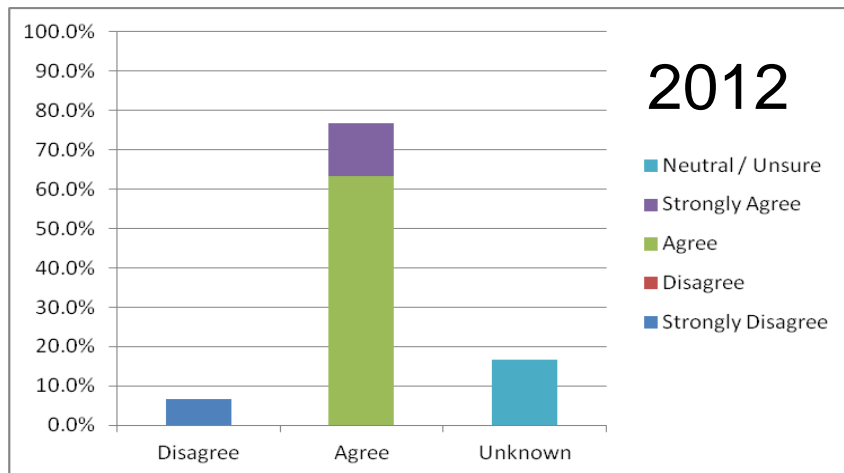
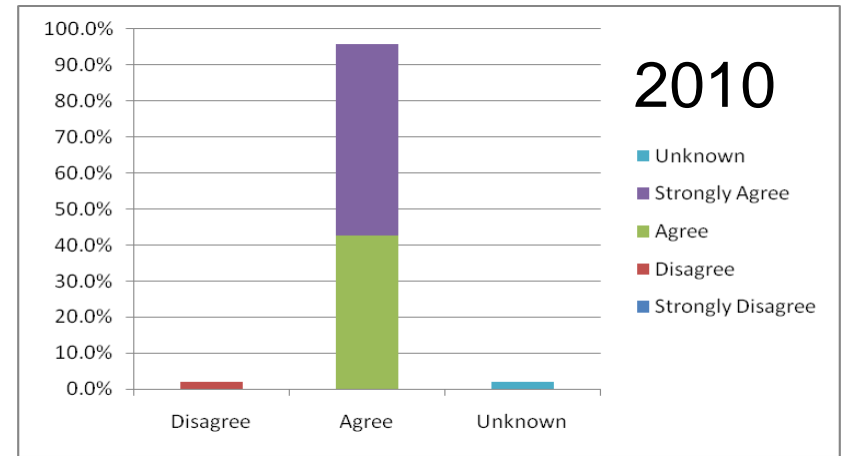
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Faculty Staff



Services Staff



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Pro Vice-Chancellor (2010):

Any argument based on efficiency or economy is misplaced. Students generally feel they belong to disciplines and faculties first. Removing student services from Faculties has confused and reduced the feeling of belonging. I'd go so far as to hypothesise that the current arrangement is a significant factor in the poor levels of student satisfaction at UoN in recent times. This is not to say they are getting poor service currently at the hubs. But rather they would get equally good or even better service if the hubs were located within the Faculties, where the students would have a greater opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, and an academic "home".



Q10. Overall, I think the Student Hubs contribute positively to the student experience at the University.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2010):

Students are alienated from academic and admin staff. Hubs do not provide services expected by students in a Faculty context. Faculties are 'studentless' places, without staff-student interaction.

Q10. Overall, I think the Student Hubs contribute positively to the student experience at the University.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2012):

The One-stop shop concept has led to student-less faculties and a disconnect between students and academics outside the class room.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2012)

The Hubs have led to a disconnect between academics and student, dampening the student experience.

Q10. Overall, I think the Student Hubs contribute positively to the student experience at the University.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (2012):

Student experience relates to in-class experience and outside-classroom experience. I strongly believe that continuation of hubs (when students are becoming less engaged due to advances in information technology) has led to further disengagement of our students.

Q10. Overall, I think the Student Hubs contribute positively to the student experience at the University.

Associate Director Faculty Services (2012):

I think many students would disagree with this statement because they are 'cut off' from Faculty staff including academics as they don't visit Faculties/Schools.

Q10. Overall, I think the Student Hubs contribute positively to the student experience at the University.

Enquiry Centre (2012)

In my university, which was devolved, a student never had the slightest clue where to go. Invariably you ended up in a tiny office in some corner of a building dealing with some scowling middle-aged secretary who then did their very best to make you feel like you were an inconvenience and not to help you. The hubs are infinitely better than that experience.

Key Issues Identified

Key themes arising from the responses to questions

- Roles and responsibilities – less clear than previously?
- Physical location – some suggesting it is important, some suggesting it isn't
- Does a Faculty precinct really exist anyway?
- Some suggestions that SAS staff think they would be better off in the Faculties – better resourcing, less turnover.
- Consistency across University – policy and procedure.

Key Issues Identified

- Disconnect between the AAR and PO positions with their School and Faculty counterparts.
- Disconnect between Faculties and academic staff – surely the Hubs can't be blamed for this? Surely there are other factors at play here?

THANK YOU

Discussion