

Maintaining a human focus while achieving our industrial objectives

Management issues

Strategic planning

Does the university have a strategic plan? There have been two 'planning conferences' for senior management since early 1997, and the third is planned for next February. Neither of the conferences held to date has been followed by a report, nor for the most part have they led to allocation of resources and staff to priority areas. Project Renaissance is an exception.

Planning appears to be ad hoc and opportunistic. Examples of this are Smart City, the recent 'on again – off again' proposal to amalgamate JGFEPS and Informatics and Communications, and the proposed Gold Coast campus.

Does it matter that there is no strategic plan for the university as a whole? What does it have to do with the NTEU?

Priorities

Priorities are an outcome of strategic planning. In the absence of a strategic plan it is hard to know where the university's priorities lie.

The Vice-Chancellor issued a 'vision statement' that saw the CQ campuses continuing to be the academic and research core of the university, but the details remain vague. Will all the existing disciplines be protected, including those that are not economically viable? Or will some be excised? Will maintaining the CQ campuses, and Rockhampton in particular, as the university's core be a priority? Or is the generation of income on the fee-paying 'international' campuses the main priority? Much has been made of 'flexible learning' but what in real terms has been done to improve the quality of flexible delivery?

We boast that 'Students Come First'. Do they? What measures have been taken to turn the rhetoric into reality?

One obvious consequence for the NTEU is that the planning-priority vacuum creates uncertainty among the staff, particularly when jobs are threatened. This could be exacerbated by a reduced intake of some 500 EFTSU at Rockhampton in 2001. Another consequence is questions about intellectual property, particularly in relation to flexible learning materials. Are there other consequences for the NTEU?

Decision making

Over the last few years the opportunities for staff input into policy directions and the reporting of committee decisions have diminished to a trickle. Consultation, even at a senior level, is minimal. Far-reaching decisions are made by 'senior executive' with the expectation they will be rubber stamped by Council. Decisions regarding Project Renaissance are an example of such a decision-making process.

(Council, to its credit, has begun to resist the assumption that its only role is to approve decisions of senior executive.)

What are the consequences of this 'top down' style of decision-making?

For one thing, it has contributed to the loss of a sense of collegiality within the university, and a loss of loyalty to the organization. (Treating staff like mushrooms doesn't engender a sense of commitment and loyalty.) Another consequence is that it puts the NTEU in the position of having to react to situations as they emerge from Chancellery rather than having pro-active input into the process.

What, if anything, should the NTEU do about this

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What are the issues for Central Queensland University?

Strategic planning

Priorities

Communication 'up the chain' and between staff

Decision-making processes

Allocation of resources

Committee structure

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Are there gaps between what we do and what we say we do (between reality and rhetoric) and if so what can be done to bring about improvement?

Consider the issues above that you have identified as most important. What is the reality with regard to these issues compared with the rhetoric? For example, the Vice-Chancellor's vision statement saw the CQ campuses as the teaching and research heartland of this university. In this case one would expect fostering teaching and research activities at the CQ campuses would be a priority, and resources would be used to ensure this was so. Is there a gap between the 'vision' and the reality in this instance?

Where such gaps exist what can reasonably be done to close them? And how can the NTEU assist?

What role can the NTEU play?

It is not the role of the NTEU to develop policy directions for the university, nor is it its role to manage. Given these constraints, what can the NTEU do to bring about change or to help bring about change?

What can the local branch of the NTEU do to improve its performance?

This two-day conference is all about planning the development of the local branch of the NTEU. What steps can the branch take to improve its performance?