



SYDNEY COLLEGE OF DIVINITY

Excellence in theological education

PROGRESS REPORT RE AUQA RECOMMENDATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS

26 August 2011

Progress in addressing the matters listed under Affirmations and Recommendations in the AUQA Audit Report on SCD is reported under each heading below, following on from our interim report dated 3 May 2010. Details relevant under more than one heading are cross-referenced.

One regulatory matter of note is that SCD has recently received from NSW DEC an extension of its current Registration, originally ending 31 December 2011, to 31 January 2013. DEC associated this extension with recognition of SCD as a 'low-risk' institution. This move incidentally brings SCD's Registration and Accreditation cycles into line with each other. Both will now proceed under TEQSA.

AFFIRMATIONS

A1 Strategic Plan and Agreed Actions

There are now, and have been since 2008, two scheduled Strategic Planning Days at the beginning of the first semester and one in the second semester. Amongst other things, matters addressed have included progress on the Agreed Actions for pursuing our Strategic Plan 2008-2012, which were provided to the AUQA Audit Panel. Participants are senior members of the SCD community: Principals, Council, Academic Board, the Dean and Directors from the Office of the Dean, and for particular purposes other academic faculty. In addition, Strategic Planning matters are a standing item for regular report and discussion at Council Meetings, led by the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee Dr Tim O'Hearn. SCD is currently engaged in the development of a three-year Strategic Plan 2013-2015 to follow on from its 2008-2012 Plan; a draft was adopted by Council 27.04.11 and will be further developed at the Planning Day on 31 August 2011.

The main Agreed Actions for pursuing the Strategic Plan 2008-2012, as they were arranged under the headings used below, are already completed or in place as follows:

- (a) *Strategic Plan Implementation:* The Principals' Fellowship meetings, attended by the Dean, receive verbal updates on Member Institutions' ongoing promotion of the SCD Strategic Plan and the aligning of MI Strategic Plans with the SCD Plan, including induction for new staff through SCD and MI events.
- (b) *Unity and Identity:*
 - (i) A new logo and logo usage protocols have been put in place for stronger SCD branding across SCD and a decision has been made to retain our present name.

- (ii) The SCD Communication Policy has been developed, incorporating information policy, and was adopted by Council 27.04.11. **Ref. A7.**
 - (iii) Categories of membership of the Academic Board have been reviewed and a decision reached to retain the non-representational basis of membership re MIs as a reflection of the unitary academic operation of SCD. To promote communication, however, every Principal receives the agenda, papers, and minutes of all meetings, as well as an executive summary from the Dean, and provision exists for any MI to request observation of meetings by a staff member. Naturally any matter may be followed up with the Dean or a relevant Director. **Ref. A1 (c) (ii), A7.**
- (c) *Communication:*
- (i) After the drafting and near-completion of a first SCD Newsletter in 2009, a decision was eventually reached not to proceed at this stage, since an actual newsletter would probably not prove to be the most effective means of reaching the various constituencies envisaged. The development of further strategies for communication at the staff level is noted below. Communication for coursework students lies predominantly with their MI, which provides students with appropriate lines of communication with the SCD Office. The development of the new SCD website (**Ref. A (c) (iii)**) may be expected to include improved access to current news for students and staff alike, whether they go straight to the SCD website or come to it via their MI website. Nevertheless, additional avenues for direct communication with students to affirm the SCD context of their studies remain an area for ongoing consideration.
 - (ii) The Dean sends an executive summary of Council and Academic Board discussion and decisions to the Principals shortly after each meeting and particular matters may become subjects for discussion by the Principals' Fellowship; Fellowship meetings include reports on processes for disseminating information through the MIs as well as communications with the Office of the Dean; the Academic Deans are informed of relevant matters especially through the monthly Academic Standards meetings they attend. **Ref. A1 (b) (ii), A7.** In a more recent development, wikis facilitate further communication with and amongst faculty.
 - (iii) SCD website contents are regularly updated, and work has begun on a better designed website that will provide, amongst other things, an intranet facility, an improved means of prompt public announcements, and readier access to all material.
 - (iv) For ongoing improvement in internal communications and understanding, as recommended by AUQA, the President, Dean and Director of Finance have been undertaking personal visits to the MIs. **Ref. R4.**
- (d) *Business Plan:*
- (i) It has been decided that a marketing consultant, while potentially useful, is not of the highest priority at this time.
 - (ii) The SCD TAS has become a minor additional income stream, with one client at this stage.
 - (iii) A Risk Management Sub-Committee of the Audit Committee has been established and meets regularly; an extensive Risk Matrix based on the AUQA template was accepted by Council 10.11.10; and implementation began across SCD from the beginning of 2011. **Ref. A6.**

- (e) *Reaccreditation and Review:* SCD has moved ahead in promoting itself publicly. The Dean and the Director of Finance have each served as Government panel members. The Academic Board Chair, Prof. Warwick Wilson, recently reviewed the ACT's Academic Board; the Director of Student Administration serves on the ACT's External Advisory Panel and has just chaired the ACT's self-accreditation panel for coursework awards, of which the SCD Coordinator of Distance and Online Education was also a member; and the Dean has served on an advisory panel for the proposed Moore Theological College PhD. The Director of Coursework plays a key role in the Council of Deans of Theology's current ALTC project on transformative learning. SCD has just hosted the 2011 conference for ANZATS (the main professional theological body for Australia and New Zealand) and the SCD Vice-President Gerard Kelly has just been elected the new President of ANZATS. Some MIs are members of SPAEC (South Pacific Association of Evangelical Colleges). SCD continues to be acknowledged as a co-sponsor *Pacifica* (the highest-ranking ANZ theological journal) and co-sponsors the new annual Australia-wide Postgraduate Research Conference in Theology and Philosophy. The Dean is an executive member of the Council of Deans of Theology and of ANZATS and represents SCD as an associate member of DDoGS. SCD faculty continue to publish both peer-reviewed research and items in professional forums. **Ref. A9.**
- (f) *Induction:*
- (i) The SCD Induction Policy was developed in light both of the existing induction policies of some MIs and of the already-established provision of an annual SCD Induction Professional Development event; it was adopted by Council 16.02.11. A core set of SCD materials for induction purposes has been developed. This is updated from time to time and appropriate further materials are given to people for particular purposes.
 - (ii) The development of an overall Quality Assurance Policy has been replaced by the inclusion of Quality Assurance matters in all new policy documents and ongoing reviews of existing policy documents in line with the SCD Policy on Policies; Quality Assurance remains a specific goal in the new Strategic Plan 2013-2015.
- (g) *Benchmarking:*
- (i) A benchmarking agreement was signed with Moore Theological College 18.05.10 and one with Avondale College is under consideration; we understand that an open benchmarking process is still expected through the Council of Deans of Theology.
 - (ii) Extensive informal benchmarking occurs across the SCD operation, especially through external members of Council, Academic Board, and their Committees, and the External Advisory Panel of Academic Board. **Ref. A9.** The Risk Matrix includes indications of benchmarking sources.

A2 Academic governance

The AUQA Report refers both to a specific issue that arose in 2009 and to the governance structures that facilitated handling of the problem. As notified in the interim report, matters related to the specific issue reached a head early in 2010. The consequences were duly accommodated through our governance structures over the following months: addressing student matters, communicating with

government agencies, and responding with internal strategic provisions. For wider reasons, moreover, in the time since the interim report SCD governance has been extensively reviewed for overall effectiveness. In brief:

- (a) The Constitution has been reviewed and updated, several new policies have been adopted, and the whole Policy and Procedures Manual has been reviewed, with various amounts of updating. **Ref. A9.**
- (b) With regard to governance structure:
 - (i) Standing Committee of Council has been formalized; the constituencies of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Institutional Membership Committee have been revised; and it has been determined that the Principals' Fellowship functions structurally as an advisory panel of Council, with provision for a report from the Fellowship on the agenda of each Council meeting.
 - (ii) The operation of the Academic Board has been improved by the formal addition of a Standing Committee and committees for DMin and Languages Other than English, together with the re-establishment of its External Advisory Panel. As we revise the DMin itself in light of the revised AQF, we will assess whether or not it would be more efficient for the DMin Committee to be subsumed in the Research Committee, in a virtual return to the previous situation.
- (c) Terms of Reference for all governance bodies have been reviewed and updated, actual membership has been surveyed, and most vacancies have been filled (four current vacancies across all bodies: two on Council, two on Academic Board committees). **Ref. A9.**
- (d) Academic Board itself, together with its committees and working parties and the Dean and Directors, has been engaged in substantial developmental and revision work, in the longer term to address changing academic needs within the SCD community and the wider education community, in the shorter term to meet expectations for Reaccreditation. Major developments include the following:
 - Assessment Policy: change from norm-referenced to standards-based assessment.
 - Grading Student Performance: revision and extension of grade descriptors to integrate with new assessment policy.
 - Extension Policy: reviewed and revised.
 - Communication Policy: new.
 - Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy: new.
 - Intellectual Property Policy: new.
 - Induction policy: new.
 - Cross-Streaming Policy: new.
 - Working Party on new SCD awards, especially a proposed new BMin.
 - Reaccreditation timeline: developed and being implemented.

- Curriculum review: revision of names of disciplines, structure of majors including discipline majors as well as sub-discipline majors, threshold concepts, types of units, response to changes in the revised AQF.
- Research Committee: planning for 2013 academic conference.
- Board and committee terms of reference reviewed and revised, membership refreshed.
- Ongoing faculty accreditation.
- Revision of and extensions to the Register of Teachers, SCD Committee Members and Other Academic Leaders: in addition to the names of academic leaders, committee members, and teachers, their contact details, and units taught each semester, this report now includes details of professional development undertaken in the previous semester (**Ref. A8**) and records improvements undertaken to further develop resources and facilities in each MI.
- Student surveys: feedback on teaching and units and library users' survey.
- Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan (2007-2012): progress reviewed and future initiatives considered to achieve the outcomes.
- Approval for EBC to deliver the full range of SCD postgraduate coursework awards in Epping and Miranda and at Perth Bible College. **Ref. R2 (d)**.
- Approval for SAGOTC to add distance education.
- Review of generic Course Units.
- Course Unit matters currently under consideration: Course Unit Booklet Policy, Course Unit Outline Policy, Course Unit Coordinator Policy.
- An Academic Plan is under development by the Academic Board, which will bring together a number of existing and in-process components, together with additional academic plans and strategies.

A3 Discipline and Course Unit Coordinators

(a) Discipline Coordinators

The role of the four Discipline Coordinators has been developing steadily in the past two years. They meet regularly and their deliberations have addressed a wide range of issues, including discipline moderation, cross-assignment of units between disciplines, discipline majors, procedural matters stemming from the reduction in scope of multi-streaming, monitoring of student results, and the structure and design of SCD degrees in relation to changes in the AQF.

Their major task, however, has been to guide the curriculum consolidation process: **Ref. A4**. Discipline Coordinators have met with teaching staff in all sub-disciplines to effect a very significant reduction in the number of units in the SCD curriculum. They have worked with other committees to lay the foundations for the new curriculum that will be introduced as part of the reaccreditation of the SCD degrees during 2012. They have also been instrumental in the planning of a new BMin degree to complement the existing BTh and in developing new policies and procedures that will move the SCD assessment and grading processes from norm-referenced assessment to standards-based assessment.

(b) Course Unit Coordinators

Each semester all teachers within the SCD submit a copy of the Course Unit Outlines given to students. Whenever a course unit is being taught in more than one MI, Course Unit Coordinators are provided with a copy of the unit outline as given to students. The Course Unit Coordinators review the documents, comparing them with each other and with the approved SCD course unit outline. Where marked variations are found to exist, the Course Unit Coordinator advises the teachers concerned and modifications are made so that the next time the unit is taught there will be greater consistency.

Under the new curriculum to be introduced in 2013, the consolidated number of units being offered across the SCD will result in a higher percentage of units being offered across most MIs. SCD policies and procedures concerning the role of Course Unit Coordinators are being reviewed and refined in order to make the role as efficient and effective as possible.

A4 Curriculum consolidation

The Discipline Coordinators have met regularly and reducing curriculum overlap has been a significant element in their discussions. As a result of this process, the following stages have been achieved or planned:

June 2011: Academic Board approved a progress report on new initiatives in the SCD curriculum that included revised discipline structure, new assessment and grading procedures, new drafts of rationales and outcomes for each of the disciplines and sub-disciplines, and a draft list of units to form the consolidated curriculum.

July 2011: All MIs reviewed the progress report and advised the Discipline Coordinators of their approval of the document or their recommendations for revision.

August 2011: Working groups in all disciplines and sub-disciplines have reviewed the consolidated curriculum in light of the reports from the MIs. They have revised the rationales, outcomes, and list of consolidated units in regard to unit code, title, credit point loading, curriculum objectives, and threshold concepts (a key factor introduced and implemented from early 2011). Working groups began or continued work on drafting new course unit outlines.

September 2011: Academic Board will review the list of consolidated units in regard to unit code, title, credit point loading, curriculum objectives, and threshold concepts.

October 2011: The re-constituted External Advisory Panel will be asked to consider the approaches and results to date through sample materials provided by the Discipline Coordinators.

November 2011: Academic Board will consider all draft Course Unit Outlines and other draft re-accreditation documents and forward these to all MIs seeking their endorsement. Discipline Coordinators will advise the Director of Coursework of names of suitable consultants to review draft units.

December 2011: Academic Board will receive endorsements from the MIs and consider their comments and recommendations.

January 2012: All draft units will be sent to consultants.

February 2012: Consultants will submit their reports.

March 2012: The draft Accreditation document will be completed for consideration at April Academic Board.

The consolidation process has been highly cooperative, with all MIs anxious to work together to develop a quality curriculum that ensures that both academic standards and denominational distinctives are maintained. The process has involved the development of curriculum objectives and outcomes for each unit. These remain unchanging from MI to MI, but they are written in a way that points to particular learning outcomes without specifying the precise denominational interpretation that will be placed on the terms used. Suggested content items, assessment standards, and reading lists are generated in a manner that allows flexibility and local variation while ensuring that overall standards are upheld. Faculty have found the process invigorating and engaging. Although the Course Unit Outlines contain broad descriptions, faculty are confident that these can be applied and extended in the individual MIs. Furthermore, new policies and procedures are being developed to ensure careful scrutiny by appropriate representative bodies within the SCD of the individual Course Unit Booklets produced by each teacher each semester. This Course Unit Coordination process will ensure that the Course Unit Outlines are appropriately interpreted and translated into pedagogical processes of the highest academic standards.

A5 Distance Education

Since the interim report distance and online education has continued to expand and develop. In a rapidly changing environment the MIs are individually and collectively taking advantage of learning technologies to develop or expand flexible education offerings. An increasing variety of distance and online programs is being offered, employing a range of approaches and technologies including virtual learning experiences using live-streaming and web-conferencing (used also for the annual international Patristic Symposium hosted by SAGOTC), fully online courses employing web-based learning management systems such as Moodle, and a variety of video and audio technologies. All MIs except NSWCCPE and NTC are now offering some form of distance education; NSWCCPE is considering the possibilities of distance and online learning and NTC, while not offering distance programs, employs web- and video-based technologies extensively in its teaching. CIS has offered distance education only through GSC but is now moving to develop a distance education BTh program based in Sydney to begin in 2013. A distance capacity for the SCD Korean program is currently under development.

The Distance Education Committee is the focus for ongoing developments in distance and online learning. Members represent each MI offering distance education, plus each MI planning to do; they have worked collaboratively on establishing standards for distance and online learning in the SCD and revision of the current Distance Education Handbook and Flexible Learning Policy. The Committee has become a hub for sharing of expertise and experience between MIs. A recent initiative has been to design and coordinate SCD-wide professional development seminars and materials for faculty who teach online. Such initiatives utilize the experience of faculty within the SCD as well as input from

external experts and have been developed in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee.

The Distance and Online Education Coordinator (previously the Distance Education Officer) provides support, advice, and targeted professional development for MIs through a bi-monthly electronic newsletter, online resources made available to faculty via a wiki, and consultations on request. Tailored support and advice has been provided for faculty based in ACOM, EBC, NSWCCPE, SAGOTC, and the SCD Korean program, to assist the development of distance and online offerings and ensure that their development meets the benchmarked standards for distance and online education for the SCD. The Distance and Online Education Coordinator is completing the MHed (e-learning) at Macquarie University, which ensures an up-to-date awareness of developments in pedagogy, technology, and research in distance and online education. Membership of professional bodies such as ACODE and ODLAA, as well as extended connections with the broader Australian theological education community, add further depth to the knowledge and experience base available to the SCD.

A6 Risk Management

As noted in the interim report, a Risk Management Sub-Committee of the Audit Committee has been established and meets regularly to review the ongoing implementation and operation of our Risk Management protocols. **Ref. A1 (d) (iii).**

An extensive Risk Management Matrix based on the AUQA template was developed through the Planning Days and follow-up discussions and was accepted by the Council 10.11.10. At that time Council noted that Risk Management would be an evolutionary process and that, over time, there would be changes in approach as events dictated.

Implementation at an MI level has taken place during the first half of 2011, involving work with MI leaders and in particular with Principals, to ensure that the intentions of the Council have properly filtered through to the Member Institutions. An audit of MI comments to provide feedback on MI proposals is currently being handled by the Directors of Coursework and Finance, using a timeline approved by the Risk Management Sub-Committee to ensure completion of the first round of implementation and audit by the end of 2011. This involves the Director of Coursework working with the MIs' Academic Deans on Section 1 and the Director of Finance working with the Principals or other nominated officers on Section 5. The Director of Finance is working on Sections 2, 3, and 4 in consultation with the Dean. At the same time, the existing Risk Management Policy and Matrix as provided to AUQA in 2009, focused on legal and financial matters, will be used to extend Section 5 of the new Matrix to include key factors that are crucial to SCD's Risk Management.

The most appropriate cycle for ongoing checks of and against the Matrix will be decided on the basis of our experience in this initial implementation and audit. Based on such checks, appropriate reports will be presented to Council each time it meets. Application of the Matrix is a two-sided matter. On the one hand, the education of the SCD community in matters raised through appreciation of the Matrix is expected to alert the community to recognize particular risks as they occur. On the other hand, the

advent of specific risks is expected to involve not only addressing them in an appropriate timeframe but also ensuring that the kind of risk concerned appears in the Matrix with appropriate rankings, as part of its evolution.

Finally, developing the Matrix has the obvious potential to draw attention to gaps in our policies and procedures, and we expect to identify and address these as we move along, particularly through the Risk Management Sub-Committee. For example: (i) we are about to establish a pattern whereby those listed as responsible are regularly contacted by the Risk Management Sub-Committee for current information and encouraged to exercise vigilance; (ii) we have identified the need to develop readily applicable protocols for replacing Office staff in emergencies efficiently; (iii) the Dean and Directors have become aware of the need to provide the MI leaders with regular updates on the present audit and other relevant information as time goes by.

A7 Communication

The Communication Policy adopted 27.04.11 sets out the essential communications system we have developed, especially as it relates to our governance structure. We believe this addresses the key matters raised by AUQA: see **Attachment 1. Ref. A1 (b) (ii) and (c).**

A8 Professional development and accreditation of academic staff

The accreditation of academic staff as teachers or associate (supervised) teachers continues to be conducted through a rigorous procedure that involves substantiation of qualifications. The Accreditation Sub-Committee makes the first check on applications from MIs and the SCD Korean program for new staff or new allocation of staff and makes recommendations to the Academic Standards Committee, which considers each case and makes appropriate recommendations to Academic Board. Baseline expectations have been established for accreditation to teach at different academic levels.

As indicated in our interim report, four SCD professional development events are offered annually in Sydney, with equivalent occasions offered in Brisbane and now Perth; the Dean conducts general SCD Professional Development in Auckland on her annual visit. Video-conferencing has been trialled and its effectiveness is under consideration by the Professional Development Committee. Each long-afternoon session in Sydney is now preceded by a morning session specifically addressing distance and online education matters. We have begun to record sessions so that they may be either issued on a DVD or uploaded on to the website or wiki for wider access at personally convenient times. We expect to have further systematized avenues for the participation of all MIs in these professional development events by the end of this year.

Apart from these common SCD events, professional development for both permanent and sessional staff is undertaken by the MIs as best suits their individual needs and plans. We note that sessional staff are often experienced people of some seniority in the academic or professional community who make themselves available in busy lives to teach because of their convictions, or academic visitors from other

institutions in Australia or abroad that normally provide the professional development opportunities relevant to their careers (as distinct from necessary induction into SCD processes when they function as SCD sessionals).

Monitoring of professional development in the MIs is now undertaken through the reporting mechanism of the Register of Teachers each semester, which Academic Deans are required to complete and submit to the Director of Coursework. The system is in place, and we now expect to consider the ways in which we can best use the results for ongoing quality improvement in this area. This is likely to involve a process of analysis to be developed by the beginning of 2012. **Ref. A2 (d).**

Professional development is also a regular subject for reporting at the Principals' Fellowship meetings, and all MIs are keen to share with each other and the Dean their recent experiences and contributions in this area, especially in relation to specific achievements and specific staff. Of course, it is understood that a certain amount of professional development also occurs in other ways in the course of conducting normal academic business. In general, we believe that suitable professional development is now the norm in the MIs. Demonstrating 'equivalence' in professional development opportunities across the MIs, has proven to be something of a challenge, though the reporting through the Register of Teachers is expected to bring enough details to light to enable the Director of Coursework and the Academic Board to see that a reasonable minimum level occurs across the MIs. In addition, the Principals' Fellowship is currently in the process of drafting an explicit document to set out their shared acceptance of particular funding and practical guidelines; this should come to the October 2011 meeting of the Fellowship for endorsement.

MI registrars receive professional development in the course of Student Administration Committee meetings led by the Director of Student Administration. For MI librarians **Ref. R6** below.

With regard to the Korean program (**Ref. R2**), some Korean staff attend the SCD Professional Development events, as they are able to, and the Korean Dean of Studies conducts regular professional development sessions in Korean every two months for all staff, sometimes with other presenters. Research degree supervisors typically receive most of their professional development under the aegis of their own base institution (whether in SCD or beyond), though they are inducted into SCD expectations, and SCD faculty interested in becoming supervisors have the opportunity of special information sessions provided by the Director of Research. Staff based in the Office of the Dean participate in conferences and other activities relevant to their position, and a specific budget is allocated to this.

A9 Cyclical reviews and benchmarking

In line with the SCD Policy on Policies, our policies and procedures are under ongoing review for quality assurance and relevance, and the majority of the PPM was reviewed in the course of 2010-2011, when all Council, Academic Board, and committee TORs were also reviewed and all memberships brought up to date. Resignations occur, but we currently have very low vacancy rates. In addition, significant new policies and procedures have recently been developed and adopted, including the

Communication Policy (27.04.11), Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy (27.04.11), Induction Policy (16.02.11), Intellectual Property Policy (08.09.10), and Cross-Streaming Policy (08.09.10). **Ref. A2 (a), (c).**

A benchmarking agreement with Moore Theological College was signed 10.05.10 and another with Avondale College is under consideration; we understand that an open benchmarking process is still expected through the Council of Deans of Theology. **Ref. A1 (g).** Information emanating from such organizations as AUQA and state education authorities (henceforth TEQSA), DDoGS, ESOS, COPHE and ANZATS constitutes the main source of higher-level benchmarking with which we engage, and occasional external experts address professional development and strategic planning meetings. In more detailed operational terms, however, the main benchmarking in SCD occurs through our extensive committees, with the contribution of university and other HEP members, together with constant checking of sector developments through website information and personal knowledge on the part of the Dean and Directors, for communication to relevant persons or meetings. At this time there are fifteen university persons (from the Australian Catholic University, Macquarie, Sydney, and Western Sydney) and five HEP persons who are external members of the Academic Board and its committees. Three university persons and eight other independent professionals are current members of Council and its committees other than Academic Board, along with the Board's Human Research Ethics Committee.

Alertness to sector thinking is also one effect of the SCD's particular relations with ACT. As noted at **A1 (e)**, the SCD's Academic Board Chair recently reviewed the ACT's Academic Board; and the Director of Student Administration serves on the ACT's External Advisory Panel and has just chaired the ACT's self-accreditation panel for coursework awards, of which the SCD Coordinator of Distance and Online Education was also a member; and the Dean recently served on a PhD panel for Moore Theological College. The Dean and Directors typically have occasional conversations on particular matters with ACT colleagues and exchange procedural information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 Key Performance Indicators and Academic Performance Indicators

As noted in the interim report, the September 2009 Planning Day included sessions in which a group from Council drafted a set of Key Performance Indicators and a group from Academic Board drafted a parallel set of Academic Performance Indicators. These initial lists were subsequently refined by working parties and both were then adopted by Council 08.09.10. In both cases there is provision for an annual review of the body's performance against the KPIs/APIs at its September meeting. In 2011 these reviews are set to take place at the Academic Board meeting on 5 September and the Council meeting on 14 September. In the case of Council, a first round of assessment of Council's performance against the new KPIs was run immediately. Council was then alerted to the results and discussed them

at its November 2010 meeting. We expect to gain significant insights from both 2011 review processes with regard both to performance in the respective areas identified and to the process itself.

The last year or so has brought tough challenges to various aspects of the SCD's operation, but it has been our unquestioned policy to move ahead with a steady focus on our basic Vision and Mission, an underlying sense of who we are, and a determination to achieve high quality outcomes. We believe we are making good progress with specific areas for quality improvement, for example, as indicated under **A1-5** and **A7-9** above, with reasonable progress re **A6**, allowing that Risk Management policy and procedures inevitably entail particular time and effort; we believe we have also addressed **R1-9** as required.

R2 (Urgent) Membership profile

The SCD Institutional Profile was developed during 2010 and adopted by Council 16.02.11: **see Attachment 2**. It addresses issues of Institutional Identity, Institutional Structure, Institutional Membership, Challenges in the Higher Education Context, and Survival as a 'Viable Ecumenical Theological Institution'.

Significant updates on the situation pertaining at 16.02.11 are as follows:

- (a) The SCD's Korean program has been a major development through the last months of 2010 and 2011, and it already constitutes a substantial growth factor. In brief:

The SCD Korean BTh previously offered by Alphacrucis ceased to be offered when the membership of Alphacrucis ceased in March 2010. Following receipt of the requisite NSW DET approvals, the new SCD Korean program opened on 25 October 2010, offering a semi-intensive semester of the BTh for the remainder of 2010. In 2011 normal semesters have proceeded plus intensives. For second semester 2011 there are seventy-two students, of whom sixty-seven are full-time. Enrolments are set to grow somewhat further in the BTh, and we are working towards the imminent submission of an application to NSW DEC for Variation of Accreditation to permit distance delivery and launch an MDiv (Korean Medium), which is a key degree for ministry training in the Korean churches. At this stage we are hoping to introduce both new factors from first semester 2012. The program is, unusually, run not by an MI but centrally, like the Research Degree program, currently using classrooms and offices leased from EBC in Epping. The operation is tightly integrated into normal SCD academic governance.

The Korean teaching team is led by the Dean of Studies (Korean Program), Dr Ho Nam Kim, whose doctorate in Old Testament is from the University of Sydney (and who has just completed a three-year term as Moderator of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Oceania). Locally recruited teachers are supplemented by Visiting Professors from Korean universities, usually taking intensives; we currently have our first Visiting Professor in residence for his sabbatical leave; and we have begun discussions towards agreements with three or four Korean universities of note in relation to student and possible staff exchange, mutual recognition of studies, and probable interlibrary loan. Initial agreements are expected to be in place before the end of 2011.

- (b) A new Sydney-based Bible College that approached SCD in 2010 has followed through its initial indication of interest to the point where the SCD Institutional Membership Committee is engaged in specific discussions with the college to bring it to a suitable point for membership to proceed. The college would begin with distance and online education only, and operate with significant assistance from a small private USA university, with whose representative we have met. Without absolute certainty that this membership will eventuate, it appears likely that it will do so in the course of 2012. The college would start on a small scale, with prospects of more substantial student enrolments in the next few years.
- (c) In respect of distance and online education, SCD's operation is demonstrably growing through developments other than the possible membership of the Bible College mentioned above, and such growth is highly likely to translate into some expansion in student enrolments. **Ref. A5.** SAGOTC began its distance program in first semester 2011 and has had more enrolments and indications of interest than it had expected (albeit still modest numbers at this stage). As there is no other provision for Greek Orthodox Higher Education theological training in Australia, including Melbourne, it would seem likely that this program will grow substantially in time. The Catholic Institute of Sydney has recently obtained permission from its authority to deliver distance and online education, and an in-depth process of development has begun there, with a view to beginning in first semester 2013. This development will coincide with the final departure of SCD's other Catholic distance and online provider, BBI, into a secular university (Newcastle) at the end of 2012. Finally, as noted above, the SCD is preparing to apply for permission to offer distance and online education in its Korean program.

In a contrary development, the new management of ACOM has indicated that it intends to reintroduce some face-to-face teaching, aimed at providing a desirable flexibility for its target market.

- (d) In a fresh approach to its mission, ACOM intends to include the BTh (Hons) and MTh in its offerings from semester 1 2012. NSW DEC approval for EBC to offer the full range of postgraduate coursework awards in Epping and Miranda, was received 21.06.11, and EBC has just initiated the process for offering the last coursework award, the BTh (Hons).
- (e) Two awards nested in the BTh, the Diploma of Christian Studies and Associate Degree of Christian Thought and Practice, were approved by NSW DET 12.05.10 and by QLD DET 22.10.10, increasing the flexibility of our undergraduate offerings. The development of a BMin to address distinctive needs of certain students in several MIs is well advanced, based on a pool of units to be shared with the BTh, with different requirements for majors and sub-majors and a generally more practical orientation. It is expected to be included in the application for Reaccreditation in 2012, using the same nested awards as the BTh. While it may be expected that the BMin will draw to itself some students who would otherwise have enrolled in the BTh, we expect that the overall effect will be an increase in enrolments through the sharper definition of the BTh as well as the clear vocational relevance of the BMin. In addition, as noted above, a Korean-medium MDiv, a key

degree for ministry training in the Korean churches, is being developed for the SCD Korean program in the expectation of delivering it from first semester 2012.

- (f) Research Degree enrolments are holding and appear to be growing slightly. We intend to address ways of providing a higher profile for our program and increasing the enrolment in the near future.
- (g) The loss of about half the coursework student enrolments through MIs in 2010, the full picture of which became evident only around the end of the year, necessitated the application of Risk Management strategies to reduce cost even as we were moving to promote re-growth. In recognition of the smaller scale of the operation, administrative staffing has been reduced together with a few other savings related to the Office of the Dean. An external review of the Office has just been completed and the recommendations contained in the report just received will be considered in the next few weeks, in the light of budgetary possibilities for 2012 and beyond. In a logical reallocation of duties, the new Director of Research was appointed at 0.5 EFT. The former Director had had 0.2 EFT for personal research, which no longer pertains; for the rest, some other Research duties have been assumed by the Dean, who has also resumed certain non-Research duties (undertaken by the previous Director) that properly belong in the Dean portfolio. The Director of Research duties are all in hand.

We do not anticipate any change that would be problematic for the good quality of the executive operation.

R3 Memoranda of Understanding

The process of revising the Memorandum of Understanding extended across some two and a half years, from mid 2008 to the beginning of 2011, as SCD engaged with the challenges posed by a series of regulatory requirements and a series of events and developments amongst its members: **Ref. R5**. The final version was adopted by Council 16.02.11. All MIs were then invited to sign it, and all did so within the first half of 2011. In the case of BBI the MoU is to last to the end of 2012, when BBI will complete its transition out of SCD. In all other cases the validity of the MoU is indefinite, subject to continuing observation of its provisions on the part of both SCD itself and the MI. The principal-agent relationship is articulated explicitly at the outset, and the practical implications of this for both parties are set out in detail in the following pages. In the latter days of the drafting close attention was paid to the NSW DEC 'Framework for Principal and Agent Agreements'. See **Attachment 3**.

R4 Meetings with Member Institutions

The first round of visits by the President, Dean, and Director of Finance to the various MIs is almost complete. BBI has been excluded as in transition out of SCD; arrangements have not yet been made for the three persons concerned to travel together to NTC in Brisbane, though the President is willing to make such a visit when it can be fitted in; the Director of Finance missed a couple of the visits due to health problems, but the Dean was able to address key matters.

In the event, the visits have been friendly occasions for celebrating each MI's achievements in the SCD context rather than exchanges of new information. It is normal for both the Dean and the Director of Finance to speak with the Principals and other key MI staff on numerous occasions through the year, often at the MIs; the President generally meets them in Council and at Planning Days. Since the time of the AUQA Audit, and further since the time of the interim report, communications between the executive and the individual MIs have become more frequent and they are typically marked by frank exchange and the desire to be mutually constructive. That both the MI Principals and their staff have increasingly familiar relations with their colleagues in other MIs is evident in meetings and conversations. The situation no longer pertains when a Principal might claim to have been kept uninformed of significant matters related to the principal-agent relationship. The recommended formal visits have been an occasion for bringing that relationship into focus, but it has been a recurrent discourse in numerous gatherings such as Council meetings and Planning Days, as well as the Principals' Fellowship, and it was central to the revision of the MoU: **Ref. R3**.

R5 Expectations re Member Institution contributions

The substantially revised, unanimously accepted MoU spells out the mutual obligations of SCD and the MIs in considerable detail: **Ref. R3**. It was notable that the process of revision extended for two and a half years (from mid 2008 to the beginning of 2011); robust, careful discussions along the way meant that all concerned now have a genuine sense of ownership of the final product. In the end, the challenges faced have led to a strong resolve on the part of those who have dealt with them to work with each other and with the Office of the Dean cooperatively and purposefully to make the principal-agent relationship a useful framework for consolidation and growth.

Matters of participation of MI staff in the various SCD committees are already understood and in place, though open to further consideration if questions arise. Five Academic Board committees meeting regularly specify a member from each MI. Four meeting less often are populated according to qualifications and availability of individual faculty. Individuals may be approached or volunteer, but a Principal is always welcome to make the final decision regarding the availability of the MI's staff. The remaining three committees meet only as need arises and are largely populated by non-MI persons.

The burden of external reporting is inevitably mirrored in the internal reporting by MIs to ensure transparency, compliance, and cohesion within the organization. To relieve something of the pressure on the MIs, internal reporting has been considerably streamlined (for example, in summative approach of the Register of Teachers) and, where suitable, oral reporting is being used (for example, through the Principals' Fellowship).

R6 Reciprocal borrowing rights and electronic journals

The information brochure foreseen in our interim report was finalized at the Libraries Committee meeting on 17 August last; printed copies will be produced immediately and provided in the libraries, and the electronic version will be placed on all websites. The libraries now include the additional ones at the new campuses of Perth Bible College and Tabor College NSW, and both the library and the users at Good Shepherd College in Auckland have been brought fully into the SCD library community. The brochure draws attention to the reciprocal borrowing facility on the front page and gives summary information about holdings and contacts for all SCD libraries on the remaining three pages. The process for reciprocal borrowing has been clarified and agreed across the SCD libraries and an appropriate form developed and made available electronically.

A common portal has now been established by OCLC, and the individual library catalogues are being brought into the portal as technical issues in each MI are resolved. We expect the system to become fully functional in the course of the current semester, and this will significantly facilitate shared access to the SCD library community.

All SCD libraries have access to relevant electronic collections, many through a consortia arrangement with the professional body ANZTLA. Whether through their home library or via reciprocal access, all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, have access to a growing number of electronic texts. The 17 August Committee meeting also received and discussed the results of a user-satisfaction survey carried out in May, and the availability of electronic journals did not appear as a prominent issue. At the all-day annual Libraries Committee Workshop on 27.04.11 a visiting specialist from the University of Sydney Library, together with the external member, who is a retired Deputy Librarian and Copyright Officer from that library, gave presentations on library services for NetGens and managing e-books and e-journals, specifically at the request of the SCD librarians.

Through the last year the librarians have been gaining a higher profile as a resource for strategic planning for the MIs and for SCD itself, and their advice is increasingly influential. The new Principal Librarian is the new CIS Librarian, Lynn Regan; the Chair of the Libraries Committee is the SCD Dean. The librarians in Perth, Brisbane and Auckland join Committee meetings by teleconference and in 2011 for the first time came in person to the Workshop; the Dean also meets with them when visiting those campuses.

R7 Aligning of SCD and Member Institution Mission and Vision statements

This matter has been addressed through open discussions at Planning Days and Principals' Fellowship meetings. Five of the current MIs are involved in other kinds of education, such as VET and non-accredited courses; also, an MI may undergo review and re-development from time to time. MI Mission and Vision statements may be designed to address not only the association with SCD but also the larger context of the MI and its sponsoring body. Not all MIs choose to make explicit Mission or Vision Statements, though indicative information may be found in accounts of their activities, for example, on their websites. That said, we believe the Mission and Vision Statements or equivalent implicit positions of all MIs are appropriately aligned with the SCD Statements to which all MIs explicitly subscribe. **Ref.**

A1.

R8 (Urgent) Embedding recent changes rather than seeking self-accreditation

This Recommendation confirmed the view of many within the SCD in the period 2008-2010 who were only too aware of the need to embed recent changes especially in academic procedure, and we expect to apply for Reaccreditation in 2012 as a non-self-accrediting institution. Nevertheless, there is a concern that, unless SCD becomes self-accrediting in the next little while, it will run the risk of being considered less significant than those in the sector that have already achieved self-accrediting or specialist university status or are currently in the process of doing so. Ironically, in certain cases SCD has provided substantial academic guidance to such institutions on the basis of its own good practices. This general situation, together with SCD's progress regarding the necessary embedding of changes, its keener self-awareness, a more orderly constituency, the current degree of respect for SCD in the community, and its demonstrated ability to establish and run a challenging new program (the Korean) from the Office of the Dean, encourages us to prepare to apply for self-accrediting status within the next couple of years. The timing will depend on unfolding stages of achievement.

Diane Speed
26 August 2011