University of
South Australia

Summary

of Final Report

Role of Program Directors at UniSA

Research Project

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Note: The full report of the project was submitted for consideration to the Provost Allan Evans in July 2013. He has given permission for this extract to be published on the project website.

Executive Summary

In 2012, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic commissioned this project to investigate the role of Program Director at the University of South Australia. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of the role as currently practiced and to explore ways of improving the outcomes of the role for both the academics undertaking it and their key stakeholders – the students and the university. Since the current position description for Program Directors was developed over a decade ago, there have been very significant changes in both the higher education sector in general and within the University of South Australia in particular. Smaller Schools and programs have been merged and restructured, student enrolments have increased and both the research productivity and teaching quality expectations of academic staff have increased. Hence, a review of the Program Director role was timely.

The project methodology incorporated an external review of practice in other Australian universities and an evaluation of the relevant literature. An extensive internal review was undertaken using surveys, interviews and focus groups of students, Program Directors, Senior Academic Services Officers, Heads of School, and Senior Staff members. The project team was comprised of experienced Program Directors who had only recently stepped down from the role, two of whom are currently Associate Heads of School.

According to the existing position description, the Program Director's core duties comprise:

1. Provision of academic leadership in relation to management of the program and promotion of a culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching and student-centred learning.
2. Oversight of student progress in academic programs.

3. Establishing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, including employers, industry, professional associations and accreditation bodies, graduates and alumni (UniSA, 2003).

A fundamental finding from this project is that carrying out all of these duties at an excellent level in the current environment of the University is basically impossible, with the exception of only a few exemplars. For many Program Directors, the role is undertaken either to the detriment of their research productivity, or by working significantly more than their allocated workload, or both. The reality is that most Program Directors are only able to focus on one, or two, or parts of each of these three core duties, for reasons detailed in this report. Current Program Directors predominantly focus on student progress, which is clearly an essential and critically important role, but they do not generally exercise academic leadership to the extent intended in the position description or ideally required for the University.

The project team therefore recommends that Program Direction should be re-considered in terms of the fundamental roles and duties required and that these can be implemented in different ways to suit the needs of different Schools and programs. These roles are:

1. Student/Program Coordination: responsible for the student experience, progress and program administration roles that fall outside of the scope of professional staff positions. Contrary to the belief of some managers, this work can NOT all be undertaken by professional staff. Academic insight is required and students place significant value on the role of an *Academic* advisor.
2. Discipline/Program Leadership: responsible for the academic leadership of the program team in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning excellence and scholarship, and the external stakeholder relationships. This kind of leadership requires sufficient seniority and respect to be able to lead a program team and to be recognised as having authority and influence by external stakeholders.

The other key finding of the project is that the current level of dedicated administrative support for Program Directors is insufficient and this will continue to be the case unless

changes are made. Rather than providing improved support, it was found that the SIP process had increased the workload for Program Directors in regard to student support and program administration because it removed the previously dedicated Program Support Officer positions without adequately replacing their roles in the new ASO/SASO structures. This has reduced the face to face support available to students. Hence it is recommended that these positions be reinstated in a revised form, as Student/Program Support positions. Other recommendations have also been made based on findings from the research, as summarized here.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Rather than a single position description, it is recommended that a statement about the functional roles be established, modelling the approach used at Curtin University. (See Appendix B - Course/Major Coordination - Role Statement, or http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/local/downloads/professional_development/Course_Major_Coordination_Role_Statement_Dec_08.pdf).

   The role statement provides greater accountability to the role by focusing on functions rather than on positions that perform the functions (See Appendix J – Elements of Program Directions). Further, this approach would give individual schools the flexibility to determine how best to allocate the tasks associated with the functions.

2. Create and staff an adequate number of School-based Student/Program Support positions – similar to the former Program Support Officer position.

3. Create incentives and rewards for the functions of Program Direction. This should not include seconding staff to a higher academic levels but rather incentives that are equally favourable and advantageous to staff (e.g. salary loading, a three month research period at the end of the secondment, T&L research excellence evaluated on par with discipline research).

4. Develop a policy-based schedule of authorities and delegations that outline who is responsible and accountable for approvals. (See QUT – Manual of Policy and Procedures, 2012, Appendix 3 – Schedule of Authorities and Delegations, http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/Appendix/appendix03.jsp).

5. Create a shared understanding of Academic Leadership for the university and formally recognise the academic leadership function of such roles in the university (See QUT - Manual of Policy and Procedures, 2012, B/3.5, http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/B/B_03_05.jsp).

6. Develop a Performance Development & Management Plan specific to the functions of Program Direction, and create performance standards that align these with KPI's and organisational objectives, as well as promotion criteria. An example that has addressed

this to some extent can be seen in the research project on Unit Coordinators by Roberts, Butcher and Brooker, 2010. (See http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/project/ucall/docs/FinalReport_UCaLL_Nov10.pdf).

7. Adapt and refine the existing induction program, and further develop relevant training and development.

8. Create and perpetuate an annual event (i.e. conference) for staff in these roles that provides an opportunity to network, promote and share research and knowledge, training and development opportunities, present awards and acknowledge accomplishments.

9. Develop a broad succession planning system, and a knowledge management strategy for programs that will also support succession planning.

10. Examine and strengthen the relationship between programs and marketing/recruiting in order to better employ the discipline knowledge and stakeholder relationships (i.e. invite consultation and evaluation from discipline experts).

11. Create a data dashboard that provides easy and appropriate access to required data to support each role.

12. Assess enrolment system issues identified in this research in order to determine possible improvements.

13. Consider a strategic approach to retention as one element on the student success continuum (Bontrager, 2009). (See Griffith University for an example of an embedded and strategic approach at http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/419469/Student-Retention-Strategy.pdf).

It may initially appear that some of these recommendations will come at a financial cost, but this is not necessarily the case. A restructuring of academic program roles could be cost neutral or could even lead to cost savings depending on how each School or Division chooses to fulfill functional roles. At the same time, restructuring functional roles would lead to improved outcomes for students, the university and the academic staff who undertake these functions. This is on the proviso that functional roles are managed appropriately and that a commitment is made to sustain realistic workload allocations. The reinstatement of Student/Program Support positions will come at an initial cost however the benefits that could be achieved would be clearly demonstrated over time to be more cost efficient. Further, such costs could be measurably recouped over time by even the most minimal increase in student enrolment, and student retention. Finally, overall

university performance could see a positive impact, particularly if performance management for Program Direction functions were strategically redesigned, monitored, and measured to determine effectiveness in a way these efforts have not been before. More significant to consider though, is the cost to all stakeholders if the matter of effective program direction is not remedied.

The literature and the research support the need for a serious review of the role and an innovative approach to delivering the key functions of program direction more intentionally, strategically, and thereby effectively. The functions of the Program Director position are of critical importance to the success of UniSA. There is therefore a need for new structures that more strongly value the building of quality relationships with students, that value student success and teaching and learning on the same par as research: “maximising the creative interaction between teaching, learning and research” (UniSA, 2010). There is a need to strategically cultivate academic leadership and curriculum development – and to support it by design. In response to *Horizon 2020* and the strategic objectives of this university, values and practices must align with the corporate plan. Almost every aspect of good program direction can be measured and related directly back to the aspirations of *Horizon 2020*. In order for UniSA to continue to work towards these goals successfully, program direction needs to be supported by change as solid evidence of an institutional commitment to this vital function.

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Chapter 1.0 – Introduction

1.1 Context

The role of Program Director at the University of South Australia (UniSA) has for many years been understood and practised in different ways. Academic staff and Heads of Schools know that they need skilled Program Directors in order for programs to run effectively and provide academic leadership. Many believe that the role relates mainly to student advice and program management. Some also recognise that a skilled Program Director can significantly impact on the quality of the curriculum, the student experience, and staff morale. Such outcomes have multiple benefits for the university, both financial and reputational. However, many academics are reluctant to take on the role of Program Director as they view it as undervalued, an interruption to their research growth trajectory, a burdensome workload and an almost certain barrier to promotion. Consequently, the role has come to be characterised as something of a poisoned chalice: accepted out of an obligation to perform a critical service, done so often at a personal cost, and more often than not penalised in the promotion processes for not having maintained research outputs.

Difficulties experienced by individual academics undertaking the role of Program Director are exacerbated by the fact that the current climate of higher education is one of increasing competition for students (particularly with the recent removal of restrictions on over-enrolment) at a time of decreased government funding. Moreover, despite the fact that some of the limited government funding is now tied to teaching quality measures, in which the University of South Australia has not fared particularly well, the importance placed on improving teaching and program quality is still significantly overshadowed by the importance placed on research outcomes. As such, academics seen as research 'stars' are not approached or expected to take on the role and those who are perceived to be underperforming in research are often placed in the Program Director role.

The existing position description of the Program Director was developed after wide consultation by Emeritus Professor Michael Rowan in 2003 but since that time, many changes have occurred. Some of these changes include increased students numbers in

many programs; mergers of small single discipline schools into large, multi-disciplinary schools; introduction of Associate Head of School roles in many schools; the Bradley review and its implications; and, more recently the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) to name a few. Hence it is timely that the role be revisited.

Higher education has faced significant changes over the past decade for a variety of reasons, notwithstanding the monumental influences of internationalisation, the digital age and the knowledge-based economy. More specifically in Australia, the contextual elements may be summarised as the "widening participation for under-represented student groups, increasing student diversity and educational quality assurance and accountability processes…in the current competitive and globalised higher education market" (Crosling, Heagney & Thomas, 2009, p. 9). As institutions seek to compete in today's market, they must improve the products being delivered to the stakeholders of academia - through service and support to the students they seek to recruit, and through the quality of the learning an institution delivers. Teaching and learning are on today's agenda.

UniSA's *Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan 2012-2015* "builds upon earlier commitments and ensures that UniSA can accommodate the changing context of higher education. The plan seeks to enhance the profile of UniSA as dynamic, progressive and responsive to the range of stakeholders who have legitimate interests in higher education and in our graduates" (UniSA, 2013, p. 7). This plan also attempts to contribute to the realisation of the university's corporate plan as stated throughout the *Horizon 2020* document. Three of these stated areas for intentional development are: curriculum design, management and delivery; graduate outcomes; and, the student experience. Distinctly, these three elements figure prominently in the conceptual functions of Program Directors. *Horizon 2020* thus aligns very clearly with the duties of the role of the Program Director and hence provides a meaningful rationale for a closer examination of the role of Program Director.

1.2 Background

The University of South Australia is centred in Adelaide and comprises four campuses and two rural centres, as well as a number of outstanding research-productive facilities. The

university was founded 22 years ago, in 1991, through a merger of the South Australian Institute of Technology with four of the South Australian Colleges of Advanced Education. Approximately 400 degree programs are now offered at UniSA and more than 36,000 students are enrolled - of whom approximately two-thirds are domestic students. There are over 2700 staff members and nearly 1200 of these are academics. It is a university that prides itself on training highly employable graduates in professional occupations, with a relevant track record in world-class research that is committed to sustaining a culture of community engagement.

This rich history of adult learning at UniSA has propelled what has been characterised as a young university to reach significant heights in terms of world-class research, competitive international ratings, and strong commitment to teaching and learning excellence. UniSA supports higher education through four Divisions and within these Divisions there are 17 Schools, in addition to 25 Research Centres and Institutes. In support of the roughly 400 degree programs, approximately 190 academics are currently assigned to the role of Program Director.

1.3 The Role of Program Directors

The Program Director role forms a part of the organisational structure, and it can be said that similar positions exist to some extent at universities in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and in Australia, among others. It is therefore possible that any of these country's universities could have an approach to program direction that could provide valuable insight into performing this role well. There is evidence that universities in the United Kingdom have explored this role and that program directorship is similar in the UK to Australia. Research from North America also supports this. Closer to home, numerous projects funded through the Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC), now called the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), have also examined aspects of this role. Collectively, this literature suggests that the role of Program Directors is problematic in the changing face of tertiary education today, at least within the Commonwealth and/or western universities that share similar traits.

1.4 Program Directors at UniSA

The role of the Program Director at UniSA is broadly responsible for the "provision of academic leadership in the planning, management, and development, quality assurance and improvement, and growth of the academic program. The Program Director will play a leading role in promoting and representing the program within and external to the University and for developing and maintaining strategic relationships with external stakeholders and communities" (UniSA, 2003). This brief explanation summarises the basic expectations of the role, indicating that this position has a significant level of responsibility for the academic program it represents. The core accountabilities consist of the following three duties:

1. Provision of academic leadership in relation to management of the program and promotion of a culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching and student-centred learning.
2. Oversight of student progress in academic programs.
3. Establish and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including employers, industry, professional associations and accreditation bodies, graduates and alumni (UniSA, 2003).

The remainder of the position description document provides a detailed, albeit idealistic and generic, description of the duties and responsibilities of the role, as well as a set of selection criteria that espouse the required competencies. This is a document that is purportedly used across the university to guide those in the position of Program Director (see Appendix A).

The position of Program Director at UniSA is typically gained via a three-year secondment with an individualized workload allocation. The current position description specifies that the role should be held by someone holding an Academic Level-C substantive position and while it can be proffered competitively, it can also be nominated by appointment, as determined by a Head of School. It is common however, for a variety of reasons discussed in Chapter 6, to second academic staff members at a lower substantive level (A or B) to the position, and in such a situation, they are remunerated at Level C pay for the duration. Workload allocation can vary widely according to program size and student enrolments.

The responsibilities of this singular position reflect an extremely broad scope that, if realised effectively, would have the potential to hugely impact on the delivery of programs, and ostensibly, the school, the division and the university at large. Most would agree that academic leadership, student progress, and stakeholder liaison are the ideal and basic elements of the position. The evidence gathered during this project shows however that these core duties are not *clearly* the sole responsibility of Program Directors, nor is there a consistent, systemic understanding that these are the core duties of Program Directors.

1.5 Rationale/Purpose of the Project

The impetus for the research project has thus been the indistinct nature of the function of the Program Director role at UniSA, the lack of consistency in performance of the role of Program Director across schools and divisions, and a general sense of dissatisfaction with the promotion opportunities arising from this role for those who undertake it. The position of Program Director has been a large part of school structures at UniSA for many years and while the problems associated with the position have not been openly identified, there is recognition that there is an underlying layer of dysfunction. In order to examine these suspected issues more thoroughly, this project was conceptually conceived by the research team and commissioned by the then Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Academic, Joanne Wright at the start of 2012. The project was framed around teaching and learning priorities, and aimed to address two priority areas, namely "The role of the Program Director" and "Who is the academic leader in the development of curriculum?"

The leadership function veiled within the role of Program Director is one of the more nebulous aspects of this position. From the literature review, there are at least nine Office of Teaching and Learning (OLT) grant projects that have explored the development of Program Directors (and similar positions) as academic leaders. The implication is that the collegial nature of the Program Directors' informal leadership role is an important one that needs to be acknowledged and supported systemically, and further, one that merits investigation, particularly within the context specific to UniSA. The notion that this level of informal leader is tomorrow's Head of School and Dean is yet another reason to affirm that

this role deserves some attention. Academic leadership – informal or formal – is a significant element in the organizational culture of a university and this is no less true for UniSA. An understanding of these informal leadership roles and related processes is crucial to producing and maintaining the quality of our university programs, and remaining competitive.

Horizon 2020 – UniSA's strategic platform – was built upon broad and extensive consultation with community and staff, and supplied with counsel from the Australian University Quality Agency. This platform is committed to quality and is bolstered by parallel strategies designed to guide Teaching and Learning, and Research productivity respectively. These two Coordinating Portfolios within the organisational structure of the university form the administrative entities responsible for strategic direction of the delivery and quality of teaching and learning, and research at UniSA. Their strategic plans complement *Horizon 2020*'s aspirations as UniSA seeks to be successful in the current climate. As such, *Horizon 2020* has been carefully considered in the determination of this project's outcomes.

1.6 Aims, Objectives, and Outcomes

The original aim of this project was to ensure that the Program Director role was more clearly defined, better supported, resourced and recognised as an academic leadership role of significant value to the university and to the benefit of all stakeholders. This also included a commitment to ensure that appropriate professional development and rewards were provided to academic staff who undertook this role. The achievement of these project objectives would provide substantial impetus to reach the goal articulated in *Horizon 2020* that "UniSA will be in the top quintile nationally for student progression, student satisfaction and teaching and learning outcomes" (UniSA, 2010, p. 10).

Several aims from the original proposal were based on the assumption that recommendations and improvements would be developed in support of the existing Program Director position. However, the research has suggested otherwise. The project was therefore re-framed to examine the role of Program Director as it is currently perceived and implemented at UniSA and to consider what needs to be done to improve the outcomes

from this role for the staff who undertake it, the students who are affected by it and the university as a whole. Ultimately, the objectives were re-focused in order to sufficiently meet the revised aims, as follows:

1. Quantify the benefits to the university of good performance in program direction.
2. Explore the functionality of program direction in terms of appropriate incorporation of academic leadership, curriculum development, and student support.
3. Propose recommendations that support a functional approach to program direction.

Although the objectives and outcomes were adjusted, the thrust of the research, consultation and data collection has remained essentially the same.

1.7 Conclusion

This report provides a detailed account of this research project and provides evidence and support to foster change within the capacity of program direction, particularly at UniSA. The first chapter will serve to introduce the project and Chapter Two will discuss the review of literature relevant to this study. Then, in order to quantify the benefits of this important function, functions of the role of Program Directors will be presented in terms of measures and impacts on performance in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will explain and discuss the approach and methodology used to perform the research undertaken in the project, while Chapters Five and Six will detail the findings of the external and internal reviews respectively. These chapters include an analysis of the data and a discussion of the research findings.

Horizon 2020 and the *Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan* have laid out great expectations and goals for UniSA. These aim to improve UniSA's national standing by investing in strategies that include the student experience, quality curriculum, leveraging capacity from within and fostering excellence in teaching and learning. The performance indicators set out in the university's strategic plan are intended to measure how successfully these attributes can be delivered. And notably, many of these attributes have a fairly significant relationship with effective program direction. In other words, good program direction will be critical in order for the objectives stated in UniSA's plans to be realized.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the existing literature that has helped to inform and position the research conducted for this project. This includes literature regarding the role of Program Directors from an international context, with additional focus on a national perspective within Australian universities, as well as at the local level within the UniSA context.

This project began with a review of literature that specifically described the role of Program Directors, with an eye towards research that might examine the functions of the position, the informal leadership aspect of the position and the challenges of the position. The initial review focused on recent literature – from within the past five to six years – in order to appropriately reflect the current climate of higher education, particularly in Australia. What was found to be particularly useful was a body of work supported by the Australian Government's Office of Teaching and Learning (OLT), commissioned to explore the academic leadership aspect of positions like that of the Program Director. Outside of this scope, however, there was little literature that was fully relevant or that dealt specifically with this role within the desired context.

2.2 International Context

Looking at the role of Program Director at an international level had some challenges, particularly in terms of determining what the equivalent position is at universities outside of Australia, and how comparable such a position would be to the Program Director position. Where the focus of this review was on the specific role of Program Directors, very little literature was found that directly supported the context relevant to this research project. From an initial scan of the literature in the US, the positions highlighted were similar but it was not clear if these were aligned closely enough with the Australian context. Consequently, a more extensive review of the literature at the international level was determined to be outside of the scope of this project at this stage, recognising that this might however be worth revisiting at a later juncture.

A small US study (Berdrow, 2010) explored the role of Department Chairs in terms of induction for new chairs and better support for existing chairs. The report suggested that there are some similarities between the two countries in this context, at a small, private university. What was interesting about this article written in 2010 was the absence of recent references, particularly references that addressed the role of Department Chairs beyond the year 2000. A recent UK study explored a role extremely similar to the Program Director role, affirming that "they often have significant input into aspects of support and pastoral care as well as aspects of pedagogy and curriculum design, placing them in a unique position from which to reflect on the relationships between both sets of imperatives" (Murphy and Curtis, 2013). The study confirmed that there is little research on the subject and that the role serves an important function that is complex yet unclear. It is also stated that "The role is high in workload and stress but low in recognition and reward, high in responsibility but low in authority" (Murphy and Curtis, 2013) and as well, emphasised the need to value and recognise the importance of the role "at an institutional level" (Murphy and Curtis, 2013). This is congruent in many ways to the initial research findings within the national and local context.

2.3 National Context

The current climate of higher education in Australia is one that has increased competition for students among universities, and student demand, with government funding increasingly tied to performance and to quality measures. The Australian literature predominantly has positioned itself within these contextual elements, including: "institutional targets for certain categories of student enrolments, a new research agenda shaped by the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)…and a sharper focus on academic standards and internationalisation" (AUQA, 2009). Combine this with the more obvious and wide-ranging elements such as the information age, globalisation, the digital explosion that is changing culture worldwide and the ensuing "new" generations of students, support the notion that this is indeed a time of "significant academic change" (Nagy, 2011).

The Australian higher education sector has grown exponentially in the past 40 years from approximately 53,000 students enrolled nationally in 1960 to just under 700,000 in 2000 (Yielder & Codling, 2004), and further in 2009 to 1,066,000 (Department Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2010). South Australia has been included in this level of significant growth with approximately 49,000 students enrolled in 2000 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001) and 80,000 in 2009 (DEEWR, 2010). To manage this level of growth, centralized planning, coordination and control have become dominant features of university systems (McInnes, 1995 in Yielder & Codling, 2004). These fundamental changes to university modes of operation have become even more evident as the market has shifted to what could be termed "mass higher education" (Yielder & Codling, 2004).

The "corporate management model" of modern universities challenges academics to perform traditional roles within a corporate structure using workload allocation models that prescribe performance and the nature of the work (Boud, 1999). This is seemingly perceived by academic staff to be at cross purposes with the notion of academic freedom as "a central tenet of the traditional university raison d'être" (Yielder & Codling, 2004, p. 317). This notion emerged in an Australian project that was reviewed wherein a need was identified "to attend to the issues arising from the tension between traditional academic culture and work practices and the emerging 'corporate management' culture" (Jones, Ladyshewsky, Oliver, and Flavell, 2009, p. 11). Higher education has witnessed changes stemming from contextual elements from outside and from within that continue to affect the traditional work culture of academics. This further suggests that institutions consequently need to support such change in order to continue to fulfill their 'raison d'être.'

2.4 Literature on the Role of Program Directors in Australian Universities

The literature available specifically on the role of Program Directors is not widespread. However, over the span of the past five years or so, the Australian context has been significantly augmented by the OLT repository of final reports from their Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program which "aims to strengthen leadership and build capacity to lead change for the future enhancement of learning and teaching in

Australian higher education" (ALTC, 2011, p. ii). These projects have provided useful background information in terms of both the similarities within the role between universities and the scope of challenges and issues that affect how the role is performed.

Nine final reports from this program that examined aspects of the role of Program Directors were reviewed (see Appendix L). The predominant focus of these has been on Academic and Curriculum Leadership and the development of skills relative to this for Program Directors. Within these projects, this process has provided several candid perspectives on how the role is operationalised at other Australian universities. As such, the literature review has served a dual purpose by also serving as part of the research for the external review.

2.4.1 Academic Leadership

Each of these projects has extensively explored relevant literature. Several of them reference influential theoretical work by: Bryman (2007); Marshall, Adams and Cameron (2000); Marshall (2006); Ramsden, Prosser, Trigwell, Martin (2007); Ramsden (1998, 2003); Scott, Coates, and Anderson (2008); and Yielder and Codling (2004), and significantly draw from each other's projects within the repository of OLT projects included in this review. The discussions are similar in that they all conclude that there are fundamental theories that support the relevance, value and development of academic leadership but that these have yet to be developed within the specific context of program direction, curriculum renewal, and building capacity in these types of roles. As one of the project researchers has observed, the form of leadership exhibited by Program Director roles has not been "explicitly or comprehensively theorised within the higher education literature" (D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2009, p. 142). This well-developed range of projects has served to fill that gap somewhat. A fundamental conclusion drawn by reading these reports is that there is growing evidence that building leadership capacity can improve the performance and abilities of positions of informal leadership such as Program Directors. This also underpins many, if not all of the projects.

Jones et al. (2009), extrapolates that roles like the Program Director position "would be better able to manage the quality of the courses for which they are responsible if they had

increased awareness of academic leadership and improved leadership capabilities, thereby ultimately enabling them to improve the student experience of learning and teaching." The relationship that is suggested to exist between leadership and the ability of such leaders to build capacity, and perform these roles better is also suggested to exist between the inherent value of these roles and their ability to impact on the student experience: "A finding that the Federal Government views the higher education system as making a fundamental contribution to the future of Australia in ways that involve Unit Coordinators at the forefront led the project team to assert that this important role needed to be clarified to enhance understanding and recognition and enable targeted development" (Roberts, Butcher and & Brooker, 2010). Another related element that has been addressed directly in at least one project is the recognition that developing staff at this level is important for building capacity: "With an intergenerational shift in the academic workforce looming, it is appropriate to safeguard the academic supply chain by ensuring that professional development opportunities are available at this level in the academic hierarchy" (Nagy, 2011). The projects demonstrate authentic efforts to not only find a way to develop and improve these roles but to link and share the knowledge so that it can be used by other institutions.

2.4.2 Clarification of the role

At least four of the projects worked towards role clarification directly as part of the approach to developing leadership skills, in order to better understand what development was needed for staff in these roles. The role of Program Directors and other related roles have thus been clarified and then documented, in some cases quite extensively. Similar models were used to accomplish this, typically using surveys to gather data, developing formal role descriptions and in one case, an "evidence based" (Roberts et al., 2010) position description that suggested a "common core position description for each role that allows flexibility for local need" (Southwell, 2008). As well, quite a few of the projects sought to formalise the new descriptions in order to embed them into the institutional structure, in order to precipitate change. This role clarification was then used to determine what aspects of program direction could be assisted by leadership development programs and then,

concentrated on the implementation of the associated training, except in the project led by Roberts that looked to making developmental and systemic changes to improve the role.

One aim of this UniSA project – to build recognition and reward structures – was shared by previous projects but in one case was intentionally developed by the design of "Probation, Performance Development and Promotional Criteria" (Roberts et al., 2010) to address changes at an institutional level. This project went on to develop performance criteria guidelines and recognition and reward strategies. There was agreement that there was a need for the development of a solid recognition and reward structure for the role, in this project as well as Nagy's (2011) work, and this need was similarly recognized in D'Agostino and O'Brien's (2009) project.

All of the findings illustrated in projects that completed role clarification were wholly relevant to this project. Two projects in particular, *Clarifying, Developing and Valuing the Role of Unit Coordinators as Informal Leaders of Learning in Higher Education (*Roberts et al., 2010) and *Coalface subject coordinators – the missing link to building leadership capacities in the academic supply chain* (Nagy, 2011) sought to clarify the roles of Unit and Subject Coordinators, which would be termed Course Coordinators at UniSA. While this data served more directly to represent a devolved understanding of Program Directors, the approach to the research and the outcomes were nevertheless entirely relevant to this project. And surprisingly, these roles, though focused more narrowly at the unit or course level, were not dissimilar from the Program Director role in most regards. Both projects examined the role very closely, identified competencies and documented many aspects of the complexity of the role (Nagy, 2011). Findings suggested in one project indicated that "the number of duties encompassed by the role, and the competencies and capabilities required in executing the Unit Coordinator's role effectively, have rendered it both complex and demanding" (Roberts et al, 2010, p. 6). The work done in this project, and others, has also served to highlight the "fundamental learning leadership components" (Roberts et al., 2010) of these very similar roles.

2.4.3 Informal Leadership

Clearly the view that academic leadership is important is shared, particularly in terms of the informal leadership required of Program Directors and those in other similar positions. Several projects looked extensively at "how non-positional leaders (those without assigned power) enact leadership or lead change" (Roberts et al., 2010). The body of literature in the range of OLT projects reviewed show that staff in informal leadership roles tend to perform in both management and leadership capacities, and that "rather than distinct, the two roles appeared in some cases to be enmeshed" (Southwell, 2008).

There is further evidence that the informal leadership role experienced by Program Directors, for example, highlights "a general confusion as to what administrative or management tasks are and what aspects of the subject coordinator role can be considered leadership" (Nagy, 2011). Further "it is important to be aware of, and sensitive to, specific work practices of academia that influence leadership and its development. For example, the "revolving door" aspect of the Course Coordinator role emphasises the need for a collegial approach to academic leadership as distinct from other leadership approaches"(Jones et al., 2009). The function of leading a program effectively involves a strong base in a discipline but also requires skill and ability to lead people in academic teams. These are skills that are broadly recognized in the literature to be necessary for Program Directors to be effective in their role. Some projects have shown evidence that their leadership development programs have been successful in developing leadership skills, and in some cases, the programs have continued to grow and serve their institutions and others.

2.4.4 Benefits of the projects – adaptability and linkages of projects

The wealth of research that has been conducted and presented by virtue of OLT projects has produced an excellent repository of development programs. This includes a great source of tools and products that will clearly continue to support and serve the ability of other institutions to clarify and nurture the development of the Program Director function. These projects have been intentional about "scaling" and creating designs that enable sharing and/or adaptation for other institutions to use. The outcomes of some are ongoing, and continue to produce useful products and/or research. The same research has identified a set

of obstacles that impede the functionality of Program Director positions and it is both interesting and helpful to note that these observations correspond almost identically to those that have emanated from this research project.

2.5 Local Context

At present, the information and tangible evidence available about the role of Program Directors stems primarily from the existing program description, a Program Director Guidelines booklet, and can also be derived from peripheral resources held by UniSA Human Resources. What we know has also been gleaned anecdotally, but nevertheless convincingly, from the prevailing attitudes and dissatisfaction with the position that is exhibited throughout the academic culture at UniSA.

In 2005, a report was produced by the School of Business, prepared by Betty Leask. This report served to inform the work later performed by Vilkinas, Leask and Rogers (2007), which was then developed more significantly by Vilkinas in an OLT project, as well other related publications. This research discussed the notion of giving academic coordinators "the opportunity to develop and display academic leadership" (Vilkinas et al., 2007, p 10). The implication was that "strategic direction and priorities of universities" (Vilkinas et al., 2007) would need to change in order to this to occur. The Leask report and the Vilkinas research mirror many of the issues that were illustrated in the other OLT projects reviewed here, and it is important to note that neither the Leask report nor the Vilkinas research resulted in any significant change to the Program Director role at UniSA.

There has thus been very little progression or improvement in the ongoing performance of the role of Program Directors at UniSA. This is supported by more recent consultation conducted at UniSA in 2012, under the auspices of the Assurance of Learning Framework project. The feedback this project received from Program Directors also highlighted some of the challenges faced by staff in this role. In the bigger picture, this consultation also supports the important role that Program Directors will need to play in improvement of the quality of teaching and learning at UniSA. The current landscape suggests that we need to look beyond academic leadership development of this role, and that we need to look more

fundamentally at the function of this role and determine the viability of it. While professional development of the people who step up to this role is certainly pivotal to their success, it is the role itself that needs to be valued at the same level as academic leadership. This includes at the very least role clarity.

2.6 Areas of Concern

As part of the methodology used in these projects, many areas of concern have been identified that impact on the ability of Program Directors to undertake their role in an appropriate manner. Some of these relate to institutional structures and the related lack of understanding and value placed on the role. A few of the projects even had difficulty getting Program Directors to participate as they didn't have time to fully participate in consultation exercises, or development programs: "Time-poor academics could see the burden of involvement in another initiative as asking too much" (Lefoe, Parrish, Malfroy, McKenzie, and Ryan, 2011).

In the UniSA-based OLT project led by Vilkinas (2009), the research found that many Program Directors focused only on the immediate priorities of people issues and getting the job done rather than balancing their focus across all of the aspects required in the role, including the long term development of the program. Other concerns relate to institutional structures and the related lack of understanding and value placed on the role. Such concerns, listed here, have been pulled from OLT reports and other literature, and have also been paraphrased and referenced from similar observations made by Vilkinas (2009) and Lefoe et al. (2011). These include:

- Starting out and the problems of inadequate handover (Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Establishing and maintaining teaching and assessment standards across large teaching teams (McDonald et al., 2010 in Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Designing and operating communication and working within technology-enabled, flexible learning and teaching environments (Roberts et al., 2011; McDonald et al., 2010 in Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Maintaining subject quality and collaborative and collegiate relationships in a context where team members, including the subject coordinator, often feel undervalued, isolated and unrecognised (Blackmore et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2011; Vilkinas 2009 in Lefoe et al., 2011).

- Working collaboratively to deliver coherent programs of study (Nagy, 2011 in Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Recruiting, inducting and developing sessional teaching staff to form a cohesive teaching team, with limited resourcing (Nagy, 2010; McDonald et al., 2010 in Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Managing the 'unbundled' character of academic work, including the research-versus-teaching agenda, which limits prospects for promotion (Vilkinas, 2009; Yielder & Codling, 2004 in Lefoe et al., 2011).
- Higher value placed on research than teaching and learning (Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, 2006).
- Lack of formal power, recognition, and under valuing (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007; Yielder & Codling, 2004; Leask, 2005; and Vilkinas, 2009).
- The paradoxical nature of their role – that they possessed accountability but not authority (Murphy & Curtis, 2012).
- Time poverty and inequitable workloads (Jones et al. 2009; Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007).
- Appear to be in coping mode as they respond to ever greater demands upon their time (Holt, Cohen, Campbell-Evans, Chang, Macdonald, & McDonald, 2013).
- High administrative workloads (Leask, 2005; Yielder & Codling, 2004).
- The role is largely configured towards student administration rather than discipline leadership (UniSA, 2012a).
- Little support (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007).
- Poor understanding of the role by others (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007; Leask, 2005).
- Uncertainty about the scope of the role (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007).

Other concerns expressed in the literature related to individual capacity and training, and recognise that Program Directors:

- View administration as a type of emotional labour; as a burden that weighs them down and depletes the time and energy that should be going into improving teaching and learning (Roberts, et al., 2010).
- Are frustrated and incapable of performing the role effectively (Leask, 2005).
- Find the role to be demanding, complex, and very stressful (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007; Vilkinas, 2009).
- Learned their role by 'doing' with little support, induction or staff development (Southwell et al., 2008) and are ill-prepared for the role (Ladyshewsky & Jones, 2007).

- Feel unprepared and untrained for the variety and volume of student issues that arise, including the emotional labour involved (Roberts et al. 2011; Blackmore et al. 2007 in Lefoe et al., 2011).

The OLT projects reviewed have extensively explored the leadership role of Program Directors and roles that operate within very similar contexts. Many of these projects have identified roles and responsibilities of the function, developed selection criteria, and have provided opportunities and rich resources for the development of the people in these roles, including institutional embedding and policy change. This literature suggests that many Australian universities share similar challenges in performing this role. This literature also indicates that by investigating these issues and assessing these roles, some progress and improvement has been observed. More research and evaluation is required and there are issues associated with the role that have yet to be addressed in any research. These issues are:

- Time poverty
- Workload issues
- Shared understanding of academic leadership
- Concrete ways to improve the role other than through academic leadership development of staff (i.e. systemic change, recognition and reward)
- Evidence of the impact of Program Directors on teaching and learning quality and student outcomes.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature reveals that leadership development is consistently chosen as a way to enable Program Directors to perform more effectively. As is also evident from the external review, those universities that undertook projects that reviewed this or similar roles have since provided improved support (including UniSA) for Program Directors. This has included improvements to induction, and in some cases extends to looking at ways to embed changes systemically, within policy, that are indications of institutional commitment to academic leadership for Program Directors (Southwell, 2008). And this is certainly a way forward.

What is observed but not addressed in particular is the time poverty issue, and the possibility that the Program Director position is untenable in its current incarnation. It is a position that has not changed for years and years at many universities, and the literature too often assumed that the responsibilities attributed to this position can be performed effectively. The literature does support however the need for a serious review of the role and perhaps an innovative approach to more effective program direction.

Chapter 3 – Quantification of Benefits

3.1 Introduction –The Program as a Commodity

Students are part of the core business of UniSA and the degree program is the product that UniSA supplies to them: "The commodity the student is purchasing from the school is this education" (Bean, 2005, p. 225). The academic program is thus the university's most identifiable "product" related to teaching and learning – the embodiment of the learning that a university provides. So when a student decides to attend UniSA, there are a great many factors that contribute to this decision. Perhaps the most significant of these is the program a student wants to study. The production and delivery of a relevant and high quality program is critical – to both the student and the university.

Within the current institutional structure at UniSA, the position that is held most directly responsible for the effectiveness of a program is that of Program Director. The Program Director plays an important role in the development of curriculum, and in fostering a culture of student success. Approximately 190 of these positions are interspersed throughout the university's schools, and are typically accountable for two main areas of functionality within their assigned programs: Student Progress and Academic/Curriculum Leadership. This chapter will discuss the importance of the functions of Program Directors and how these impact upon the overall success of a program and consequently, the success of UniSA.

3.1.2 How UniSA measures success

The desired outcomes stated in the University of South Australia's Corporate Plan share a number of common objectives that aim to improve performance in key areas. As a primary example, this plan aims to support an "outstanding student experience and exceptional graduates" (UniSA, 2012b). Expounding upon this overarching goal, the UniSA *Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan* refers directly and specifically to 42 strategies that have been designed to positively impact performance in six thematic areas. In mapping the strategies outlined in this plan, 22 key performance indicators (KPIs) are provided to measure the outcomes of these strategies. Other KPIs from the Corporate Plan and Research framework were also mapped in order to better understand how UniSA measures success.

"The rationale behind performance models and indicators in higher education is to ensure the education provided to students equips them for employment and provides the nation with a highly skilled workforce that supports economic growth" (Chalmers, 2008). The performance indicator is a measure of how successful the implementation of a strategy has been: it is therefore critical to understand how these measures relate to Program Directors. Several relevant KPI's and strategies will be discussed here in terms of their correlation with the function of Program Directors.

3.2 The Cost of Low Performance

3.2.1 KPI's that relate to staff

The current study has identified some fairly significant issues that impede the ability of Program Directors to perform and address the broad scope of the functions of their role. These include time poverty, a high volume of administration and time required to adequately address student progress, inequitable and imbalanced workloads, lack of role clarity and understanding of the role, inadequate training and poorly managed succession planning for the role, impact of work on research productivity, lack of authority and lack of institutional commitment to the role. These issues therefore have an impact on the performance of the university. Further, these issues contribute to potentially low performance in four particular KPI that relate to staff and are used by UniSA to assess performance in meeting key objectives. Each of these has a relationship with the role of Program Directors in terms of how this role can impact upon the outcome of the strategy as measured by the KPI.

Table 3.1 – KPI's and strategic directions for staff that relate to Program Directors

KPI	Strategic Direction/Theme
Proportion of research productive staff	Academic Research Leadership (Research)
Publications per academic staff FTE	World-class research and innovation (Corporate)
Female academic staff FTE at Level D and above	An innovative, exciting place to work (Corporate)
UniSA values teaching	Rewarding and Developing Staff (Teaching &Learning)

Publications per academic staff FTE / Proportion of Research productive staff

The evidence from the research conducted in this project has shown that a major concern among Program Directors is the impact that their role has had on their ability to conduct research. This is primarily due to the significant volume of work within the role, the complexity of the role and the added responsibility, for most, of a teaching load. This reality has led to a decreased level or stoppage of productivity in research for many Program Directors.

The impact of reduced research output by Program Directors is significant, given that there are an estimated 190 Program Directors at UniSA. (It is important to note here that a reliable, accurate list of Program Directors from UniSA data has not been found to be available.) This conclusion is based specifically on 34 out of 58 of survey respondents who stated that they have not been able to be research productive while seconded to the role. If this is not representative data, we know for certain that at least 34 (60% of 58) academics are not research productive. However if this survey data is representative, it suggests that 114 academic staff members (60% of 190) are NOT research productive due primarily to the challenges and constraints of their role as Program Director. This also impacts the next two KPI's that have been identified.

Female academic staff FTE at Level D and above

According to our data, among the 190 Program Directors, approximately 60% are not research productive. Also, approximately 35% of Program Directors are female, 38% of Program Directors are at Level C, and 48% are at level B. Based on sheer numbers, this KPI is deeply affected by Program Directors' inability to be research productive. To summarise, the following numbers should indicate the impact Program Directors have on this particular KPI:

- Approximately 114 (60%) of Program Directors are not research productive.
- Approximately 72 (38%) of Program Directors are Level C's.
- Approximately 67 (35%) of Program Directors are female.

This means that approximately 15 Program Directors are female Level C's that are not research productive, and are therefore potentially not working towards an Academic D level.

Other concerns exist where promotion criteria do not weigh as favourably on contributions to teaching and learning, and Program Directors feel like their chances of promotion are "destroyed" while acting in this role. Inversely, the university is losing out on opportunity to promote those staff who take on this position with a great deal of commitment, and who may also possess great leadership potential. This same issue – where Program Directors don't feel that the work they do is applicable to promotion criteria, also affects the KPI that UniSA values teaching.

UniSA values teaching

This KPI looks at the UniSA staff survey, gauging importance against performance to determine to what degree staff consider that UniSA values teaching. The indication from the research conducted for this project suggest that Program Directors may not all respond favourably to this statement. Sixty percent of Program Directors surveyed stated that they are unable to maintain research productivity. Further, there is undeniably a culturally embedded, widespread "impression that the current reward structure of the University undervalues teaching with respect to research" (UniSA, 2012b). The implication here is that the Program Directors who feel that they aren't able to perform research may feel penalized

in the promotion process for this lack of research productivity. This amounts to 114 staff members who may possibly give the university a low ranking in performance in this area.

There is a pervasive view that UniSA has been heavily weighted towards research outcomes, as a result of this having been the particular growth trajectory chosen for the university for the past number of years. This has been to some detriment to the overall culture of teaching and learning, particularly because many academics operate on the understanding that research is rewarded and teaching and learning is not, therefore their time and energy is allocated accordingly. For many Program Directors, they have simply given up on research and "resigned" themselves to a program directorship role that is less valued than other academics who are research productive. The fact that three out of four KPI's that relate to staff performance are research-oriented is perhaps evidence of this.

The inability of Program Directors to adequately perform their role due to the institutional challenges that have been described herein has far reaching implications. There are several areas that are perhaps not measured directly through KPI's but that nonetheless have an impact on performance on a broad scale: staff morale, staff quality of life (that could perhaps be measurable in sick days, health, productivity), staff satisfaction, School/Divisional/Program culture, employee recruitment and retention. These dysfunctions then have great potential to loop back and affect both directly and indirectly: program reputation, stakeholder relationships, quality of teaching, quality of the curriculum, and the quality of the student experience. The ability of Program Directors to direct programs effectively has an explicit relationship with student-driven/focused outcomes.

3.2.2 KPIs that relate to students

KPI's attempt to measure levels of performance meaningfully, satisfying both institutional requirements as well as national and international benchmarking. Retention, Student Numbers, EFTSL's, Revenue from Teaching and Learning, and Employing Professionals, are KPI's that are output indicators; they provide quantitative results. Engagement is an outcome indicator with qualitative results. It is important to note that "performance indicators can only be interpreted and understood within the context in which they are

used" (Chalmers, 2008, p. 5). Both types of indicators can provide a scope of understanding that "simplifies the complexity of the higher education experience" (Chalmers, 2008, p. 13) as with retention rates, or through student experience data that can provide yet "a deeper understanding of the variable measured" (Chalmers, 2008, p. 12) and thereby has the potential to inform specific improvements to teaching and learning strategies.

Table 3.2 outlines several functions of the Program Director role, categorized by Academic Leadership and Student Support, and suggests which KPIs are influenced by this function.

Table 3.2 – Program Director functions and relationships with student KPI's

Academic Leadership	**KPI**
Program and course development, design and delivery	Engagement Retention Rate Educating Professionals EFTSL
Student assessment	Engagement Retention Rate EFTSL
Lead the development of key outcomes, such as graduate qualities, graduate employment, online delivery, equity participation and internationalisation.	Engagement Retention Rate Educating Professionals EFTSL
Ensure the program is being delivered in accordance with the curriculum document as approved by the Academic Program Review Committee.	Educating Professionals
Contribute to marketing and recruitment strategies and activities for the program.	EFTSL Retention Rate Engagement
Ensure the program meets the needs and expectations of relevant stakeholders	Engagement Retention Rate Educating Professionals
Support the ongoing development of the program by establishing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders	Educating Professionals
Student Support	
Staff and student interaction	Engagement Retention Rate EFTSL
Provide advice and make judgements in relation to complex student matters.	Retention Rate
Ensure provision of academic counselling to students.	Engagement Retention Rate EFTSL
Ensure effective access to support for students including support for their learning needs.	Engagement Retention Rate EFTSL

Inevitably, these KPI's are a reflection of both program quality and the teaching and learning that occurs within programs. Thus a Program Director's key role in the development, design and delivery of courses ensures that they will have an influence on the relevant KPIs.

Retention Rate

A retention rate refers to the number of students who persist – that is – who remain enrolled in their program and complete an intended credential. Attrition refers to the number of students enrolled at an institution each year who do not return to studies the following academic year. There are many categories of "leavers" and it is important to note that many of those students who leave do not leave the system, they transfer to other programs or other institutions entirely, or "successfully leave" and return later on in their lives. Rates of attrition do tend to consider this in calculations and are adjusted accordingly.

The cost of attrition includes the attrition rate and the annual enrolment cost of the student for each year after that in which enrolment is lost. For the purposes of this report, we will look conservatively at attrition rates for domestic students as well as the EFTSL cost attached to a domestic student. The average rate of attrition in North America and Australia ranges between 12 and 20 per cent. "National figures show that 17.1 per cent of domestic first-year students and 9.9 per cent of international first-year students do not move on to their second year" (DEEWR, 2010 in Richardson, 2011). The attrition rate for domestic students at UniSA, in the most conservative calculation using data from the Australian Government's My University.edu.au website, is approximately 13% (Government of Australia, 2012). In calculating this estimate, the specific rates used were "adjusted attrition rates" (Government of Australia, 2012) which according to MyUniversity refers to a rate of attrition that is calculated to include and make allowance for students who are still engaged in higher learning at another university, as opposed to discontinuing entirely.

It is difficult to set the exact dollar value of each EFTSL because of the complexity of funding formulas and differences between programs and other costs such as recruiting and admissions have not been included. However, using a conservative estimate, based on the 2008 Hobson's Retention Project Report, an approximate dollar value of a full-time domestic student is $8,000 per year (Adams, Banks, Davis & Dickson, 2008). The minimum

attrition cost associated with just one student is thus $24,000 – that is three years of enrolment funds. If the number of domestic students enrolled in their first year of undergraduate studies at UniSA for 2012 is approximately 4800 students, the cost of attrition is no less than astounding.

Table 3.3 – Calculation of Costs of Attrition

Cost of attrition based on 14% attrition rate					
A	*4800 FY students*	*x*	*13%*	=	*624 students*
B	*624 students*	*x*	*$8,000 tuition/funding for one year*	=	*$4, 992,000*
C	*$4, 992,000*	*x*	*3 years*	=	*$14,976,000*

It is worth noting that an internal UniSA report cites attrition losses at a much higher rate than this report's careful estimation. According to Planning and Institutional Performance (PIP) at UniSA, this loss could be as high as $40 million per year. By including international student attrition in the equation - at approximately $20,000 per year (Adams et al., 2008) – the annual cost of attrition would be even more significant.

Student Numbers and EFTSL

The purely quantitative data exhibited by the performance indicator of Student Numbers and/or the number of EFTSL (Equivalent Full-Time Student Load) are a direct reflection of program enrolment. These numbers also characterise the revenue derived from teaching and learning. Revenue from teaching is one of the highest income generating activities for the university and is significantly higher than revenue from research. Attrition rates also impact funding: "The importance of student retention in Australia is underscored by its inclusion via institutional statistics as a key performance indicator in educational quality and in the allocation of the Commonwealth Government's Learning and Teaching Performance Fund" (Crosling, Heagney & Thomas, 2009). Attrition rates and student numbers are relative: one directly affects the other, and consequently, these affect the amount of revenue from teaching, as reflected in the calculations shown in earlier. Clearly, maintaining

revenue from teaching and learning, as well as maintaining EFTSL and Student Numbers, is absolutely critical to furthering the primary objectives of the institution.

Educating Professionals

Educating Professionals involves an important dynamic in terms of industry engagement. It is measured by the number of graduates in full-time employment in professional occupations. In order for an institution to provide the appropriate training for a given profession, a close and high quality relationship between industry, accrediting bodies and other players must be maintained. So within this measure is the implied assumption that students have both completed a program successfully and are employable, and that the institution has the ability to deliver programs and instill an appropriate and acceptable level of skill and professional capability, as required by industry.

Engagement

The qualitative measure of student engagement is determined by the extent to which a student involves themselves – engages – in their studies. Questions asked, for example (from the 2011 University Experience Survey) in regard to learning engagement refer to a student's sense of belonging to the university that is, the degree to which they contribute to discussions, work with other students as part of class and outside of class, and with students who are different from them. The engagement measure is derived from a specific section of this survey that addresses these questions. While this kind of invaluable qualitative data can serve to inform strategies and provides a benchmark for performance, the ultimate impact of low levels of engagement is attrition and shows up in attrition rates. Attrition directly affects revenue from teaching and learning, EFTSLs and Student Numbers.

Tinto, a key North American researcher in student retention, has long purported that academic integration is an important consideration in developing institutional strategies for student success. His concept of academic and social integration has evolved into what is now commonly known as engagement. Tinto's research is fairly consistent over the years in his linkage of the student experience to student persistence (Braxton, 2000). It has also evolved more specifically into a broader, refined, framework that he now refers to as

Conditions for Student Success. These are: expectations, feedback, support and involvement (Tinto, 2010).

3.3 Strategic Directions/Themes

Tinto contends that involvement in learning "leads to great quality of effort, enhanced learning and in turn heightened student success" (Tinto, 2000). He supports the concept of learning communities as a solid strategy for student success, and encourages building "the capacity of institutions to establish supportive social and academic communities, especially in the classroom, that actively involve all students as equal members" (Tinto, 2005). This involves "frequent contact with students, faculty, and staff" (Tinto, 2009) alongside "pedagogies of engagement" that include cooperative learning, problem-based learning and service learning (Tinto, 2010). A significant aspect of his theoretical work emphasizes that the responsibility for persistence lies with both the student and the institution, espousing those *institutional* factors that can contribute to student success. Accordingly, "the academic experience, and in particular the teaching, learning and assessment practices are within the control of teachers" (Crosling, Thomas & Heagney, 2009, p. 10). These are therefore institutional variables that can be strategically controlled by Program Directors. Likewise, on a broader level, the inherent functions of Program Directors are significant factors that are within the scope of the university to control strategically, as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 – Relationship between KPI's, Strategies and Program Directors

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction/Theme	Function of Program Director
Retention	Student experience (T&L)	• Student Support • Academic/Curriculum Leadership
Educating Professionals	Graduate outcomes (T&L)	
Engagement	Curriculum design, management and delivery (T&L)	
Student Numbers (EFTSL)	Student recruitment and profile of student body (T&L)	
Teaching & Learning Revenue	An outstanding student experience and exceptional graduates (Corporate)	

3.3.1 Student experience (T&L)

Institutional variables that affect performance

Retention –the converse of attrition –is an institutional response to attrition that focuses invariably on student success. Retention therefore refers to the strategies – activities and behaviours – initiated by an institution, that support student persistence. A body of work comprising forty years of study on retention has resulted in many theories however, common elements have been solidly identified. One way of looking at retention is in terms of organizational variables that comprise factors that impact on student persistence (Bean, 1990). Table 3.5 provides a synthesis of some of the variables and factors that affect retention. “These variables represent points at which institutional representatives can intervene in the attrition process” (Bean, 1990, p. 148). This synthesis has been pulled from key theories, in particular using Bean’s models, and bolstered by theoretical input from other predominant concepts in this area of study (Parks, 2011). Highlighted text indicates which of these factors can be impacted upon by the work of Program Directors.

Table 3.5 – Synthesis of Variables and Factors that affect student persistence

Variables[1]	**Types of factors**1 **considered to impact on student persistence**
Organizational	Admissions[1] Programs and Courses offered[1] Academic services[1] Student services Recruiting Marketing Assessment Curriculum Teaching & Learning Strategic Enrolment Management
Background	Education Plans, Goals[1] Parents' Income, Education and Support[1] Academic Preparation Social Capital[2] Cultural Capital[2]
Academic	Study Skills, Habits[1] Relationship with Faculty[1] Skills and attitudes appropriate for academic work[1] Major certainty[1]
Social	Students learn by becoming involved[3] Friends on campus[1] Informal contact with faculty[1] Social support system[1]
Environmental	Work Role[1] Family responsibilities[1] Personal responsibilities Money
Attitudinal	Belief in the connection between learning, life and future career goals Aspirations Self-efficacy[4] Normative beliefs[4] Past behaviour[4] Internal locus of control[4] Outcome expectations[5]

[1] (Bean 1990)
[2](Bourdieu in Melguizo, 2011)
[3](Astin, 1985 in Metz, 2004)
[4] (Bean and Eaton, 2001)
[5](Gibbons and Shoffner, 2004)

"Advising is Teaching" (UniSA Program Director Focus Group participant, 2012)

Crosling, Heagney and Thomas observe that "the current interest in student engagement has occurred in a climate where higher education has moved to a massified system with fewer resources" (Crosling, Heagney & Thomas, 2009, p. 11). Similarly, Bean remarks that "caring for individual students is at the opposite end of a continuum that starts with the efficient processing or large groups" (Bean, 2005). Research shows that the quality of relationships that students have with academics is critical to engagement and consequently, to retention. Providing support to students is an inherent challenge in most institutions and although today's students can be tough consumers, students still require individualized, meaningful support and personal interaction. In a large organisation such as UniSA however the faculty within the School, and more specifically the Program Directors, often have the only "open door" available to students. Due to a variety of factors including time constraints, many Schools don't have enough open doors, doors that are open for long enough, to provide that kind of support to students.

"Students who feel supported by teaching staff, and who find them available, helpful and sympathetic, are more engaged with their higher education studies than those who do not" (Richardson, 2011). This same report that summarises the results from the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) and the Staff Student Engagement Surveys (SSES) conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) further establishes the importance of the Program Directors role in the student experience: "Data from the AUSSE and SSES suggests that many teaching staff have only limited contact with the students they teach, and that is particularly the case at the most senior levels of appointment" (Richardson, 2011, p. 15). While that in itself is problematic, what the evidence here suggests is that the student experience and retention can be directly related to the quality of student relationships with academic staff. Further, there is room for improvement. For some, contact with the Program Director is the only contact with academic staff at a senior level or otherwise, outside of more generic dealings with areas such as Campus Central (CC). And in many instances, according the AUSSE, email is "the most common form of interaction with students reported by staff members" (Richardson, 2011, p. 8) and often the only form of interaction.

Academic advising "exerts a significant impact on student retention through its positive association with, and mediation of, variables that are strongly correlated with student persistence, namely: (1) student satisfaction with the college experience, (2) effective educational and career planning and decision making, (3) student utilization of campus support services, (4) student-faculty contact outside the classroom" (Cuseo, 2003). All of these are roles that are currently addressed to some extent (if not fully) by the Program Director role.

For example, the study plan review that most Program Directors perform with students is a fairly good system for identifying students who may need support but it is often too little, too late. As this is a significant function of the Program Director, it can only be emphasised how valuable it is, and could be even more valuable if Program Directors (or someone) had the wherewithal to create an earlier warning system, before the study plan needs to be revised. However, it is only a very small percentage of their role, suggesting that not enough importance is placed on this aspect of the role, nor is support provided to the extent required.

UniSA is clearly committed to supporting student progression, and improving satisfaction and outcomes as a means to building the university's reputation – and is invested financially – to "deliver a rich and rewarding student experience" (UniSA, 2010). Program Directors are positioned to build quality relationships with students and this is worth sustaining and resourcing. It would serve to bridge an existing gap that lies between the less personalised "macro-advising" that is available from centralised student support systems and the "micro-advising" that perhaps needs to occur more personally and intentionally at the program/discipline level.

Program Directors and Mental Health Issues of Students

While the actual evidence of Program Directors and their role in dealing with student mental health issues is anecdotal, Program Directors often do provide this kind of counselling to students, regardless of whether they should or whether it is specifically noted in the position description. Where there are students, there is stress. In a 2011 survey of 1,600 students at the University of Alberta, 51 per cent reported feelings of hopelessness,

and “overwhelming anxiety” over the past year. Seven percent exhibited concerning suicidal tendencies (Lanau, 2012).

In Australia, “Researchers have found mental illness among Australian university students is five times higher than in the general population” (Kerin, 2010). While dealing with mental health issues is not necessarily the most appropriate role for the Program Director, it is a situation that often presents itself. And while UniSA has systems in place to deal with student mental health issues, the reality is that “the proper provision for monitoring, assessment and support for these students needs to be considered by institutions. This is part of the broader and more explicit goals of developing successful learning environments, through viewing students’ ‘functioning as a totality’” (Norton & Brett, 2011) . Viewing students in this way could culminate in strategies that not only support students but that ultimately lead to increased student involvement. Again, here is an institutional variable within the control of UniSA that also relates fundamentally to the role of Program Directors.

3.3.2 Curriculum design, management and delivery (T&L)

Attributes of a high quality Program

A program is more than just the set of courses that leads to a credential: a program is defined by its curriculum. The term curriculum, nearly synonymous with program, more broadly embodies the content, structure and design of the program. The broad function of curriculum ensures that “content is internally consistent and coherent and strikes a balance between breadth and depth. It is apparent to students that each course connects to other courses or the next level of knowledge in a systematic and meaningful manner. Most programs base their designs on a core of courses that all students are required to complete” (UniSA, 2009).

Curriculum is strongly influenced by accreditation bodies, industry, and government regulations. It is guided by research, organisational constructs, cultures and policies. But curriculum is primarily shaped by academic staff who lead, develop, structure, administer and deliver a program. The curriculum “is usually situated within a discipline which

determines the curriculum contents and the disciplinary norms and expectations that shape the academic culture and values and the ways of learning which are expected or assumed" (Crosling, Heagney, & Thomas, 2009, p. 12). If curriculum can shape the culture of a program then Program Directors, in a curriculum leadership role, have the ability to significantly impact program outcomes as well as the culture of the broader organization, in fostering a culture of student success.

Curriculum includes "learning, teaching, assessment, academic support and inductions, as well as programme contents" (Crosling, Heagney & Thomas, 2009). In an ideal setting, curriculum is not only designed with the external influences in mind, it is created with the student learning as a guiding principal. There are therefore qualities that compose a core set of program values. In a theory of program quality, Haworth and Conrad (1997) suggest five program quality attributes that can frame a high-quality program:

> "(1) diverse and engaged participants--faculty, students, and leaders; (2) a participatory culture, which is defined as requiring a shared view of program direction, a community of learners, and a risk-taking environment; (3) interactive teaching and learning, encompassing critical dialogue, integrative learning, mentoring, cooperative peer learning, and out-of-class activities; (4) connected program requirements, which includes breadth and depth of course work, a professional residency requirement…and a culminating program activity; and (5) adequate resources that provide support for students, for faculty, and of the basic institutional infrastructure" (Haworth and Conrad, 1997).

Commitment to a program and an institution play a large role in a student's ability to succeed and can be influenced jointly by the curriculum and relationships with faculty. Curriculum, and the courses that compose the curriculum, are "the most important vector by which a faculty interacts with students to promote their education" (Bean, 2005). Program Directors "are in charge of developing, managing, and evaluating those sequences of study that represent a student's most vivid identification during their period of study" (D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2009). Good curriculum design – and good programs – have the potential to support the engagement of both students *and* staff in the core business of the

university. The role of Program Directors is a critical one for students' learning experiences due to their "direct and indirect impact on the learning outcomes of large numbers of students", and they have a "key role to play in the delivery of high quality teaching" (Vilkinas, 2009, p. 3).

Curriculum "has considerable potential, both conceptually and practically" to "bring together learning and teaching improvement initiatives" (Hicks, 2011). Teaching and learning are clearly inherent features of the curriculum, and are "primarily influenced by factors that occur at the level of the individual student, the individual academic staff member and within the curriculum, excellence is pursued within each of these levels" (UniSA, 2009). The development of curriculum with core program values can serve to guide content and design, define program delivery and the approaches to teaching and learning that occur within the scope of the program. Program Directors "are a key player in the quality process because of their leadership role in managing, developing and running university courses. The decisions and actions they take have a large influence on student performance, feedback, learning outcomes and overall course quality" (Ladyshewskey & Jones, 2007). There is clear evidence that curriculum, quality, and student success have an important relationship. The Program Director function should be well-positioned to strategically and purposefully align these critical elements.

3.3.3 Student recruitment and profile of student body (T&L)

Access and Participation: supporting under-represented populations

As the higher education agenda is set to include more students from under-represented groups, intentional and strategically designed support for such groups is essential. A Canadian report recommends that their tertiary system needs to be able to "not only handle more students but also carry them through to graduation" (Berger, Motte & Parkin, 2007). Australia is not so different. A new theoretical foundation has developed in support of this agenda that discusses low SES students in terms of what has been termed Access and Participation. It explores barriers to access and barriers to persistence, which seem to run parallel with the concept of retention. Primarily, this movement acknowledges that targeted populations require support. It is already well-documented that first-generation university

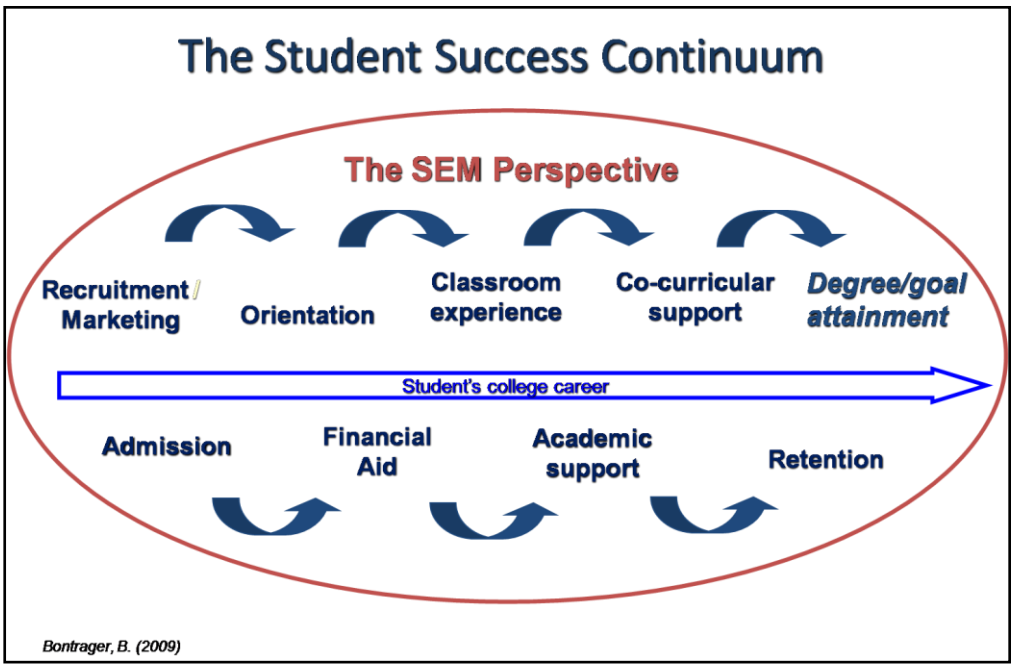
students may have different needs than those with familial support. They encounter barriers that can be categorized into three themes “academics, finances, and interest and motivation” (Berger et al., 2007). Notwithstanding financial barriers, academics, and interest and motivation, are within the scope of the university to impact, by taking a strategic approach towards developing the student experience, that includes effective program direction.

3.3.4 An outstanding student experience and exceptional graduates (Corporate)

Student Learning as a guiding principle

Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a management process that has experienced some popularity in North American postsecondary institutions. SEM also proposes to balance and enable “the fulfillment of *institutional mission* and *students’ educational goals*” (Bontrager, 2004a). This is supported by the promotion of “student success by improving access, transition, persistence, and graduation” (Bontrager, 2004a). The process of SEM identifies a series of key strategies designed to promote student success: a grouping of the elements that compose the student experience. Bontrager’s conceptual framework of the “student success continuum” illustrates the SEM perspective of the student life-cycle. Strategic Enrolment Management responds to attrition through its efforts to manage enrolment systematically. The key point to take away here is that SEM offers a strategic approach to meeting organisational objectives, with student success as an “organizing principle” (Bontrager, 2004b). This framework could support an institutional, strategic approach to improving student engagement and retention, formalising relationships and roles between Divisions, Schools and among Program Directors, Course Coordinators, Academic Support Officers, Campus Central, and the Learning and Teaching Unit.

Figure 3.1 – The Student Success Continuum (Bontrager, 2009)



3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a quantification of the benefits of program direction primarily by looking at KPI's and how the role of Program Directors can influence performance in key strategic areas. This has led to discussion and consideration of variables that influence KPI's and the particular interplay between retention, student support, curriculum and Program Directors. The broader implication is that UniSA has a large degree of control over a number of important variables that impact upon performance. There is undeniably, a much deeper complexity attached to KPI's and performance of the dynamic, organic institution. Nevertheless, KPI's are the measures of success – they reflect the "bottom line." Revenue from teaching and learning is one of the highest income generating activities for the university – it is higher than revenue garnered from research. The role of the program is a constant in the student experience (Crosling, Thomas & Heagney, 2008) and program direction is a key driver. Accordingly, UniSA has the means to better support students, better engage students in their learning, and to enrich academic excellence if program direction can become more effective.

Chapter 4.0 - Approach and Methodology

In order to achieve the project aims, a comprehensive research and development methodology was utilised. In the first section of this chapter, the stages developed to approach the research will be explained, and the foundation for the methodology will be delineated. The next section provides a summary of the external and internal reviews of practice that were undertaken including the extensive consultation among staff at the University of South Australia.

4.1 Research Questions

The current role of the Program Director has not undergone any extensive review or evaluation since the early 2000's and there was little or no organisational data to draw upon. The following research questions were developed to guide the approach and methodology:

1. What are the characteristics of an effective Program Director?
2. What are the benefits to the University of effective Program Directors and how can these be quantified?
3. What are the current perceptions of relevant university stakeholders of the role of the Program Director?
4. What are the most effective and practical strategies (both institutional and individual) that the university could adopt to improve the effectiveness of Program Directors as academic and curriculum development leaders?

The fundamental objectives of this project – to examine the current situation and determine what needs improvement/change, enable self-development and empowerment of Program Directors, provide the necessary resources and institutional structures to enable this, and ensure that both academic staff and their managers value and support the role – are supported by these questions.

4.2 Aims and Objectives

The specific objectives of the project as originally conceived were to:

1. Quantify the benefits to the university of good performance in program direction.
2. Develop a "how to" and resources guide for Program Directors that incorporates successful models of best practice.
3. Pilot a professional development program for Program Directors that incorporates academic leadership in curriculum development and scholarship of teaching and learning.
4. Develop a position description for Program Directors that appropriately incorporates academic leadership and curriculum development.
5. Develop specific promotion criteria that incorporate the role of Program Director and define satisfactory, high and excellent performance in the role.
6. Market the positive aspects of the role of Program Directors to potential future candidates and their Heads of School.
7. Embed these developments into future performance management, staff development and academic staff promotion policies and practices.

, it became apparent that there was a need for a major overhaul of the Program Director role. The objectives were reconceptualised, with a refocusing of the project towards a functional approach to Program Direction.

Consequently, some objectives were not addressed as the alternative approach of reconsidering the fundamental role of Program Directors was pursued. Those objectives that have not been addressed by this project still have relevance in terms of improving the role of program direction in the proposed model. However they will need to be undertaken as part of a later project once the findings of this one have been considered and implemented. Ultimately, the objectives of this project were refocused as follows:

1. Quantify the benefits to the university of good performance in program direction.
2. Seek the views of all relevant stakeholders on the current practice of program direction at UniSA and recommendations for improvement

3. Explore the functionality of program direction in terms of appropriate incorporation of academic leadership, curriculum development, and student support.
4. Propose recommendations that support a functional approach to program direction.

4.3 Approach

While the original questions underpin the fundamental approach to the research, the data that was gathered caused a shift that affected the expected outcomes. The project objectives and deliverables were carefully revised midway through the project and accordingly, so were the stages, as the full development of the six-stage approach was no longer applicable. This condensed approach has supported the project's overarching aims, addressing the broad context of the issue in a way that has best served the needs of UniSA. Thus, the following four-stage approach was utilised, as delineated here:

- Stage 1 – Project establishment (January-June 2012)
- Stage 2 – Review, consultation and documentation of current practice (July-December 2012)
- Stage 3 – Quantify the benefits (July-December 2012)
- Stage 4 – Synthesis of research, recommendations and dissemination (January-March 2013)

4.4 Methodology

Once the project was established in Stage One, the core research element of the project occurred in Stage Two involving the review, consultation and documentation of current practice. Concurrently, Stage Three involved both a review of relevant literature and a quantification of the benefits of effective and functional program direction. Finally, Stage Four, involved analysis of the data, and synthesis of the research to provide recommendations as well as evidence to inform and support these.

4.4.1 External Review

The external review of practice was designed to examine the role of Program Directors and to identify best practice models of support and development for Program Directors at comparable universities around Australia. The review researched this role at six different universities in terms of four specific criteria: organizational structure, position description, promotion criteria, and support. In addition, a review of relevant ALTC/OLT projects and final reports in the areas of program direction and academic leadership was undertaken (see Chapter 2).

The universities selected for review included four institutions from the Australian Technical Network (ATN) and two others. The ATN institutions examined were: Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Curtin University in Perth, RMIT University in Melbourne, and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The literature review and the website audit also identified Griffith University and the University of Tasmania as institutions that would be meaningful to this research.

The tools and approach used to conduct this research and access information included a web audit of each university, mining generally for relevant data and research on the internet and attempts to connect directly with each university through emails and phone conversations.

4.4.2 Internal Review

This aspect of the research was devised to enable a careful examination of the existing practice of Program Directors within UniSA in order to better understand the current situation and determine what needed improvement within the scope of this role. An important aspect of this research looked at how students and university managers understood the role of Program Directors and what expectations these stakeholders have of Program Directors, within the context of their schools. An equally significant aspect of this research involved an in-depth investigation of Program Directors and the ways in which they understood and managed their role. Through consultation with all stakeholders using a

staged and reflexive approach, this review also sought input to possible improvement and change.

More specifically, this review of practice involved consultation through on-line surveys, focus groups, and/or personal interviews with Students, Senior Staff members, Heads of Schools, Academic Support Officers, and Program Directors. The consultation provided an opportunity to gather input around the effectiveness of Program Directors and the functions the role. It further aimed to identify areas of change and desired improvements associated with the role, and how the university could support reform to the position.

Research Subjects

As the largest cohort with the ability to provide the broadest data set, students were chosen as a starting point. It was expected that a survey of this group would provide a general perception of the role of Program Directors that could inform the surveys and interviews with Program Directors. Senior Managers were also included in the early part of the research. This group provided a broad, organisational perspective of the role and also provided insight in terms of how reform might be directed and/or approached. Heads of School were included in this consultation given their overview of multiple programs and ability therefore to use a vantage point to 'see' effective/ineffective performance.

As the primary object of the study, it was expected that Program Directors would have the most investment and highest detail in their responses. Later in the project, it was obvious that professional staff played an important part in the function of Program Directors, and it was decided to individually interview some staff in the role of Senior Academic Support Officers (SASO), in order to provide a more complete perspective. The data provided an opportunity to gain insight into perceptions of the role and of 'effectiveness' i.e. whether there was a disparity/parity between the various groups' and Program Directors' perceptions of the role.

Research Tools

The research tools and methods used to gather data for this aspect of the project were surveys, interviews and focus groups. Students, Heads of School and Program Directors

were initially consulted using an anonymous, online survey. A survey was designed for each group wherein the last page of the survey offered an opportunity to further participate via either an individual interview or focus group. The numbers of volunteers then determined whether focus groups or individual interviews or both were undertaken. Individual interviews were also used as the most effective way to gain a candid and specific point of view from Senior Managers and then SASO's in the later stages of the project.

All surveys used in the project were administered via Survey Monkey using a series of multiple choice questions, free text, and ranking questions. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured technique, and were recorded and transcribed using a professional transcription service, adhering strictly to the ethical contract agreed to in the project development. See Appendix C – Research Method Distribution Summary, Appendix D-F for Interview Questions, and Appendix G-I for Surveys.

4.4.3 Quantification of Benefits

In order to quantify the benefits of program direction, UniSA Corporate, Teaching and Learning, and Research strategies were mapped and analysed in terms of the functions associated with the role of Program Directors. This included correlating measures of success (e.g. KPI's) with this role and examining the cost of low performance in support of the importance of effective program direction (see Chapter 3).

4.4.4 Synthesis of research, recommendations and dissemination.

Quantitative data was analysed from the surveys using tools provided by the Survey Monkey application. Qualitative data was analysed primarily by the research team via text analysis around themes that were developed and refined during the data analysis and using, to a very small degree, the word analysis tool available in Survey Monkey. At the same time, a clearer understanding of the role of Program Directors was obtained by separating the role out according to key functions that have emerged from the themes, see Appendix J – Elements of Program Direction.

The recommendations were laid out in a summary briefing paper that was sent to Professor Joanne Wright, the then Vice-President, Academic, for feedback. This final report considered her comments and has attempted to provide an accurate overview as well as a detailed explication of the research project in its entirety. As a final deliverable, the project web page will provide a repository for the research.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the approach and methodology used to gather data, and an overview of the approach used to conduct and analyse the research in order to gain a better understanding of the role of Program Director. Chapter Five will provide more detail of the findings from the review, consultation and documentation of current practice externally, and Chapter Six will provide a similar expansion of the research as it relates to the role of Program Directors within UniSA.

Chapter 5 – Review of Practice at Comparable Australian Universities

This chapter reviews the information gathered about Program Directors at Australian universities comparable to UniSA. This was done to examine how the role of Program Director is currently being instituted and ideally, how it functions at other institutions.

5.1 Methodology

The primary approach to gathering data for this stage of the project was to perform an extensive website audit of comparable universities, in particular those from within the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN). The ATN is made up of one university from each capital city in Australia that share similar backgrounds as former institutes of technology, with rich industry-affiliations. The ATN universities are similar in structure and size and include the following institutions: Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Curtin University in Perth, RMIT University in Melbourne, the University of South Australia in Adelaide and the University of Technology, Sydney. This review also looked at Griffith University and the University of Tasmania, as they were identified through the literature review, web survey and research, as being relevant to this review.

Appropriate positions within each university were identified and individual emails were sent out to staff in those positions. There were virtually no responses resulting from this communication. The one response received indicated that the position of Program Directors was under review and that a position description was therefore not available. The website audit itself involved a close scrutiny and investigation of any information relevant to the role of Program Directors however, the amount of information available to the public was minimal. Information was primarily obtained by a scrutiny of policy, organisational structure and other mined resources.

Another practical approach- involved a thorough mining of internet resources, for research, literature or other types of reporting that may not have been contained on a specific university website. A series of OLT projects that explored the Program Director position and similar roles within an academic leadership context also served as an important resource.

As outlined in Chapter Two, these projects have been reviewed as part of the literature review but have also contributed to the benchmarking process.

At the beginning of the website audit it became immediately apparent that different universities use different names for Program Directors. This depends upon how award designations are represented by an institution – using Course/Unit or Program/Course or other designators. For the purposes of this research, we will use the term Program Director to refer to the general position designated to oversee a Program (as the award designation), referring to courses as the unit of study classification within the program.

5.2 Descriptors of Program Direction

The review was structured by concentrating on four particular aspects of the role: Organizational Structure, Position description, Promotion Criteria, and Support. By gathering information about how other institutions represent these particular elements, and comparing these to UniSA, the data could be effectively benchmarked alongside the current practice at UniSA. Further, this information was thought to be able to highlight those differences that may be innovative, or it could point to a different approach to effective program direction.

Organisational Structure

Organisational structure can refer to the hierarchical arrangement and framework of the agencies that operate within an organisation, as well as the governance, lines of reporting, authorities, and decision-making functions that relate to its management and administration. Organisational charts were sought out and explored where possible for each of the universities audited. There were no fundamental differences noted in the organisational structures of any of the universities explored. Most Schools seem to have a lateral structure, whereby the academic staff operate at the same level while the Head of School is in a traditionally hierarchical position. The typical structure then places a Head of School as the manager, who takes on the main thrust of responsibility for all programs within the school.

The Program Director position does not typically figure in a formal organizational chart/structure. As suggested in one project that has extensively reviewed this position at Australian universities: "The head of school is responsible for the delivery and quality of units [courses] which make up courses [programs]. The position of course coordinator [program director] is not formally required as part of teaching and learning quality assurance and the way in which this function is performed varies across the institution depending upon the structure of the course in question and other matters such as size of the course and the need for external accreditation" (Trivett, Lines, & Brown, 2011, p. 24).

Position Description

Position Description provides a statement of the duties and responsibilities that have been formally established for a given role by an institution. It suggests that the content of the description has been intentionally formulated, ostensibly with a formal performance management review process, designed with Human Resources expertise and an institutional context. Further, a position description might be developed with a broader strategic aim to align the position with organizational goals. It is extremely important to clearly delineate responsibility and tasks. A lack of clarity could "blur distinctions between responsibilities and tasks and, hence, obscure any messages that an employer might want to communicate to a candidate about their expectations of the role and its accountabilities. This highlights the importance of clearly defining a person's role in a job description and aligning key accountabilities with performance related processes to facilitate mutual understanding by both an employer and a new employee" (Roberts, Butcher and Booker, 2010, p. 33). A position description would also indicate what authority is attributed to the position, as well as what is valued and/or measurable in regard to performance and promotion.

In the website audit of the ATN's and other universities, formal position descriptions were not accessible and therefore were not obtained. However, a variety of resources provided evidence about what is expected from the role Program Directors and what that work entails. This was evidenced by "Role Statements" from two universities, a policy statement from another, a departmental PowerPoint presentation, and descriptions stated in several final OLT project reports, based on fairly rigorous research. It is also evident that "the roles of the Course Coordinator/Unit Coordinator and Program Coordinator are implemented

differently across and within the university faculties" (Southwell, West & Scoufis, 2008, p. 141).

Based on the website audit and other related projects, there is nothing particularly unique about the functions of this role at other universities. Based on a review of those available descriptions of the position, the role of Program Directors appears to be fundamentally comparable among the universities audited in this project.

While the role itself is perhaps analogous, there appear to be nuances insofar as how the role is embedded in some institutions. For example, one university has developed a human resources policy that outlines the broad role of the Program Director and other roles that share a responsibility for academic leadership in the institution. In the document entitled "Academic leadership roles in teaching and learning" (QUT, 2012), the policy statement exhibits a clear commitment - on the university's behalf - to the role of the Program Director. This commitment and clear statement of responsibility attached to academic leadership suggests that the university values this position. The document drills down to the specific responsibilities of the Program Director and provides clarity of purpose and expectation for this role and for everyone else's role within the realm of academic leadership.

Two universities explored here appear to have moved to formalize and support the role through "Role Statements" that outline the range of function and responsibilities. As a publicly declared statement of intent, the role statement is positioned as policy although is not formally so. This approach demonstrates a strong level of commitment from the institution. Another advantage to this approach is that it could provide the middle-management authority –such as Head of School– with flexibility in regard to how the role is distributed as well as where it sits formally, allowing for the role to be fulfilled by more than one person. An example of this can be seen in Appendix B.

Promotion Criteria

Promotion Criteria outline clearly what aspect of a staff member's performance is measured and assessed in support of promotion to a higher level. This is normally represented by a

specific policy document that requires a consistent set of processes and procedures to ensure equitable and fair treatment of staff members when seeking promotion. These documents can provide an indication of whether or not the unique nature of the role of Program Director is incorporated into these criteria and represented equitably to reward excellence or even effectiveness in the role. There is no clear evidence that the institutions reviewed have recognized specifically the role of Program Directors in their promotion criteria. However, two universities have taken an approach that offers to improve the inclusion and valuing of this role in the promotion process.

The first example of this approach is through a position paper from Curtin University entitled "Expectations for Academic Performance." In the introduction, the Vice-Chancellor identifies these expectations are one aspect of their strategy "for clarifying how the strategic objectives of the University relate to the specific work that each of us undertakes" (Curtin, 2012). As well, this document is referenced directly in the procedures outlined for addressing promotion criteria. The procedures seem to outline opportunities for aspects of the role of Program Director to be used to address the Teaching and Learning criterion in seeking promotion, and this may be evidence that the Program Director role is directly considered as criteria for promotion. However, there is no evidence available to observe how this plays out in practice.

Support

Support for Program Directors refers to the provision of resources, training or assistance to facilitate the performance of the functions of the role. Support comes in many shapes and could include the provision of administrative support or as professional development for the people assigned to the position. It can also include policy to some degree –as a way of supporting processes and/or demonstrating commitment from the institution to the performance of the functions of the role.

Generally, each university has a business unit devoted to supporting teaching and learning and each of these provides some degree of generic support to the role of Program Directors. This can include curriculum design, planning, teaching guidelines, development and effective teaching practices. This can also include coordination with a human resources

unit to synchronize induction and program management processes for all employees. Six out of the seven universities that were audited for this project had a website dedicating resources for Program Directors specifically. Of these six, all have participated in projects related to supporting the role of Program Directors and the support provided ranges from role statements, guides and skill development opportunities, to intentional leadership development programs. As with other aspects of this review, there is no way to know how this carries over into practice at the university but this level of embedded support suggests that the role is valued.

An example of a policy that supports the position is one university's formal acknowledgment that Program Directors require a unique workload allocation. Recognising this formally through "Academic Workload Guidelines" not only embeds the support within the culture but is a way to demonstrate that the work that is being done is valued. "Staff appointed to specific academic leadership or administrative roles, such as Heads of School/Centre or Associate Deans, Course Coordinators, will require an additional allocation to be able to effectively undertake these duties" (University of Tasmania, 2012). In the table established to dictate how this allocation is to be affected, it states: "Further feedback will be sought from Deans, Head of School and staff to determine appropriate time allowances for these roles" (University of Tasmania, 2012). While this recognition is evident at other universities, it is not acknowledged quite so intentionally.

Another example of a distinctive approach to improving the recognition of the role Program Director is a more subtle one. It exists in the language of the promotion criteria at one university and it speaks to a key issue faced by Program Directors - that is the lack of time available for research productivity while performing the Program Director role. This languages states that "The [promotion] criteria will be applied with due recognition to the…professional, disciplinary, cultural and gender expectations placed on the staff member; and conditions of appointment and particular academic environments encountered by the staff member" (Griffith, 2012). This type of language and recognition of inherent inequities in academic settings has some merit and could potentially be adapted to provide a similar level of support for the role of Program Directors.

5.3 Observations

What has been learned from this review is that the role of Program Director exists similarly at most of the universities and it fits into organisational structures in similar ways – with a lateral relationship with other academics, reporting to a Head of School or equivalent. University websites indicate that Program Directors also appear to share the same functions, as denoted by role statements and similar research projects. Promotion criteria, as evidenced by institutional policies, do not demonstrate any remarkable distinctions between universities. How Program Directors are supported more specifically in terms of administration, training and development, and performance management has been more difficult to determine by merely looking at websites. Most of the universities provide some type of developmental support represented by a website and training designed for Program Directors.

The differences highlighted have revealed interesting ways of valuing and supporting this role. As stated, a few universities have shifted from Position Descriptions to Role Statements positioned on the website. An example of a policy innovation is one that clarifies the role of Program Directors by mapping out the authority and delegation of Program Directors (among others) within a dictated schedule. Another example acknowledges and outlines the academic leadership role attached to that of the Program Director in a formal policy.

It is also noteworthy that five out of the six universities reviewed here have participated in OLT projects that have examined the role of Program Directors in a context relevant to this project. These five universities have websites for Program Directors and in some cases, specifically designed leadership development courses. This strongly suggests that other universities have faced challenges in the face of effective program direction and further, that the issues identified at UniSA through this research project are not unique to this institution.

5.4 Conclusion

Practices were reviewed as extensively as possible through the web audit and OLT projects. The informal consultation attempted was not effective but has not detracted significantly from the review. It has been useful however, to look at specific features that comprise the function of the Program Director at other Australian universities as a basis from which to evaluate the same features at UniSA. This review has therefore provided an ample opportunity to examine similarities and highlight differences between institutions and thereby has enriched our understanding of the role of Program Directors, supporting improvements to this role at UniSA.

Though pivotal to understanding this role, the cultural ethos – or how the work gets done - is naturally more difficult to ascertain. How much administrative support do Program Directors have, what is their workload allocation, how much of their time is devoted to research or to student advising, are they managing their workload and how? As evidenced by this stage of the project, answers to these questions are not available or accessible from most websites. Most probably, this information does not exist specifically anywhere. Even with broad access to the University of South Australia's website and internal documents a true sense of the culture of the role of Program Directors at UniSA is not visible. The next chapter will report on the data from the internal review of practice and will provide a more definitive understanding of how the work gets done specifically at UniSA.

Chapter 6.0 - Review of Current Practice at UniSA

This chapter details the review of the role of Program Director as it is currently practiced within UniSA that was undertaken by the project team. The review attempted primarily to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of the role of Program Directors from a range of key stakeholders. Other main considerations were to understand more about the position as an academic leadership role, and where appropriate, to gather ideas about how the position could be improved. The review involved significant consultation using a variety of methods with several key internal stakeholders connected to the role of Program Director at UniSA.

In this chapter, a description of the research conducted for each of these approaches to stakeholder consultation will be presented, along with a discussion and analysis of the data obtained from it. This has generally been framed around the three most pertinent themes related directly to the research questions: Perspective on the Role, Academic Leadership and Improving the Role.

6.1 Methodology

Full details of the project methodology have been provided in Chapter 4, but this chapter focuses particularly on information gathered through online surveys, interviews and focus groups undertaken within the University of South Australia. Three groups were targeted for the on-line surveys: Undergraduate Students, Heads of Schools, and Program Directors. A survey was designed and adapted for each group in order to maximize the results of the consultation. It was deliberately more extensive for the Heads of Schools than for the undergraduate students, and then again even more comprehensive for the Program Directors. Some questions were derived directly from within elements of the existing position description and others were designed to gather more candid answers that would address key research questions and other relevant project objectives, in terms of the role of Program Directors.

The second approach used to assess the current practice of Program Directors was conducting interviews with staff members. Some members of the Senior Management Group agreed to be interviewed, as well as a range of Heads of Schools. A small number of Academic Services Officers and/or Program Support Officers were also interviewed. Questions were emailed to the participants in advance of each meeting, along with additional information about the project. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted face-to-face, using an open and informal style of conversation in the interviewee's office, at their convenience (see Appendix D-F for Interview Questions for each group). In most cases, each interview was attended by two members of the research team and lasted an average of 30 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then were analysed thematically.

The third approach used in the internal review was focus group discussions with small groups of Program Directors on each campus, to further develop and expand the complexity of the data gathered from the survey completed by this group. Those Program Directors who were not able to attend the focus groups but wanted an opportunity to participate beyond the survey were interviewed individually. The questions that structured the discussions in the focus groups were refined from the survey questions and were designed to meaningfully enrich the scope of the data.

6.2 Student views

An Undergraduate survey was emailed out to approximately 5800 undergraduate students within the Health Science Division, from their Pro Vice Chancellor. Distribution to students was restricted to those of one Division as a compromise position, after permission was not given during the ethics process to survey all students at the university. The survey consisted of 13 questions, primarily multiple-choice, with numerous opportunities to provide open-ended comments (refer to Appendix G for a copy of the survey). The response rate was approximately 8% as 454 students began the survey, and 414 students completed the survey.

Although sent out to undergraduates throughout the entire Health Science Division, the responses to the survey were predominantly from the Schools of Health Science, and Nursing and Midwifery. As a possible result of this, 85% of respondents were female. Only a small percentage of participants were fourth-year students, with most of the participants equally divided between either first, second or third year of their programs, and nearly 70% of participants were internal and fulltime, suggesting that the respondents had adequate experience in the university setting to provide a useful range of perspectives. While the opportunity to participate in a focus group was offered, there were not enough volunteers to make it viable. Further, the data was quite rich as a result of the range and volume of comments provided by participants and it was determined that the results of the survey were adequately representative of the student perception of the Program Director role for the purposes of this project.

6.2.1 Results and Observations

Perspective of the role

A key finding of the student survey was that 85% of students were aware that there was a Program Director for their program. Given that 33% of respondents were in first year and the survey was distributed at the start of second semester before any Academic Reviews may have occurred, this indicates a high awareness of the role by students. The text response question on the role of the Program Director with respect to students indicated that the Program Director is expected to answer questions, resolve issues, respond to concerns, and be available to provide program information, to guide and direct their plans, and to provide advice and assistance to them. Students also indicated that they have a sense of a broader role for the Program Director in terms of responsibility for developing curriculum and overseeing the program. In their comments, students refer to the integrity of the program in connection with coordination, standards, teaching, and to some degree, relationships with other teaching staff.

Students' responses suggest that they are mostly aware of the Program Director as a position of some significance - a point of contact - for the students' learning and support, through to successful program completion. Responses of 45% of survey participants refer to the role of Program Director in terms of support to students, using "support" language such

as informing, resolving issues/concerns, guiding, advising, directing, being available, and "being there" for students. This emphasis on support throughout the survey responses suggests that for students, support is indeed an important role of the Program Director and that this support is clearly important to students.

Academic Leadership

A slightly unexpected finding was that 63% of students believe that "leadership of the program with respect to teaching staff and curriculum within it" is the most important role of the Program Director, with only 17% nominating "management and administration of the program" and just under 10% nominating "provision of academic advice to students in the program" as the most important role. This demonstrated that students perceived the role as an academic leadership position.

Similarly, students point to the Program Director in a variety of ways as the person who is the most likely to possess information and knowledge about the program and university policies/procedures that pertain to students. Students also indicated a belief that the Program Director is the primary university representative that looks after the quality of the program. The common theme in 36% of responses about the role of the Program Director relate to coordination, management, "overseeing," and organising the program. There are indirect references to curriculum design, learning assurance, as well as quality, integrity, and efficiency. Students' comments about the Program Director suggest, by consistent use of words such as ensure and "make sure" within context, that there is a basic trust that the Program Director is providing stability and quality assurance to the program.

In summary, 80% of the students' responses point to either the support or to the leadership function of the role of the Program Director, suggesting that these roles are both important to students. Fundamentally the student perceptions of the role closely align with the current position description of the Program Director. However, it should be noted that no questions within the survey related to the perceived effectiveness of the Program Director in any aspect of their role, as it was not felt to be appropriate in such a survey since students do not have access to sufficient program level evidence to make such judgements.

6.3 Senior Management views

A total of six Senior Managers were interviewed in the first part of the research project. (Note that Senior Managers have been defined here as both members of the official Senior Management group as well as Deans of Teaching and Learning). Each interview was attended by two members of the research team and was generally restricted to a 30-minute time frame. Refer to Appendix D for a list of interview questions.

6.3.1 Results and Observations

Perception of the role

There was significant recognition among senior managers of the important role that Program Directors undertake in terms of student guidance and program administration and in terms of stakeholder liaison. The Program Director was aptly described as a position that leads the students' experience. Discussions about the role of Program Directors leaned heavily towards what the role should be doing, particularly in terms of academic leadership and a strategic approach to program cohesiveness and quality. While it was acknowledged that there were excellent examples of Program Directors in each Division who were fulfilling all of the expectations of the role, it was also the view of most senior managers interviewed that many Program Directors were very committed to the student support aspect of the role but were unable for a variety of reasons to undertake other aspects of the role as successfully.

Academic Leadership

It was generally agreed that this position should be a leadership role. A comment was made that suggested that the university needs to be able prescribe clearly what kind of leadership is expected, and how. An interesting point was also made that, because the position is not currently filled by higher-level academics (i.e. there are almost no Program Directors who are Level D or E, but many at Level B who are acting in the role as Level C), it has created a shift as to what degree the role is perceived as a leadership role. Additionally, it was acknowledged that other functions take up so much time that it impedes the Program Directors ability to perform a leadership function. The interviews conveyed strong

agreement that academic leadership for programs needs to be further developed and supported, possibly by changes to the role.

Improving the role

Discussions about improving the role suggested strongly that changes to this position would need to be institutional in nature, with broad endorsement from upper management. For some, there was a belief that the position may benefit from a re-design. A range of opinions varied from a new model of program direction involving a team approach, to a more direct division of administrative and leadership functions. Discussions included acknowledgement of the conflict between the role and the ability to be research productive, as well as a consideration that the position should be re-designed so that Program Directors are not disadvantaged by undertaking the position. It was also suggested that the broad scale of functions for which Program Directors are currently held responsible does not necessarily have to be the sole remit of one particular role or person. Further suggested improvements included that the perception and understanding of the role should be strengthened, and that incentives and rewards should be aligned with strategy, in order to better support effective program direction.

The interviews generally detailed a solid perception of what Program Directors currently do and recognised the quality and breadth of the work being done, as well as the work not currently being done that would be desirable. These discussions also demonstrated an understanding of the issues that are perceived to hinder that work. A variety of opinions about what Program Directors should be doing was shared, with some degree of a divide exhibited about the importance of the functionalities of student advising, administration versus academic leadership. Perhaps the most apparent observation from the interviews was that there was a shared certainty about the importance and necessity for this role to function in an academic leadership capacity, along with a concern that this was not necessarily happening.

6.4 Heads of School views

The Heads of School survey was emailed out to 22 Heads of School at UniSA in August 2012. It consisted of 27 questions, primarily multiple-choice, with some that required ranking, and several that provided opportunities for open-ended responses (refer to Appendix H for a copy of the survey). Of the 18 respondents (representing an 82% response rate), 14 had been a Head of School for four years or less. The number of FTE academics in the Schools of the respondents ranged from less than 25, to 75 or more. All but one school reported that they ran fewer than 10 undergraduate programs: twelve schools had 1-4 Program Directors, and six schools had 5-9 Program Directors. At the end of the survey, an opportunity was provided for respondents to participate further and nine Heads of School volunteered to be interviewed. The research team selected five of these in order to represent a suitable range of schools, and to meet availability and time constraints. Five questions were asked (see Appendix E for a list of questions) and each of the interviews was conducted within a 30-minute time frame.

6.4.1 Results and Observations

Perspective of the role

When asked in the survey to describe what they believed an effective Program Director should do, 45% of responses explicitly stated that Program Directors should provide academic leadership in relation to their program. Comments made by Heads of Schools in the survey suggest that they look to the Program Director for academic leadership, strategic vision, the management of professional competencies and accreditation, meeting the needs of external stakeholders, ensuring program coherence and course alignment, curriculum quality, ensuring the standard of teaching and learning, and providing support to students and staff. Interviews with Heads of School indicated a shared view that Program Directors hold the discipline knowledge and have a strong sense of the delivery and structure of individual programs, and that they have important relationships with external stakeholders (e.g. industry, professional associations) as well as with students. In some cases, there was also an indication of reliance on the Program Director to drive compliance and accreditation with external stakeholders.

The Head of School is responsible for performance management and development of the Program Director. In the survey, it was indicated that performance standards are sometimes gauged against the outcome measures stated in both the Program Director position description and MSALs (minimum standards for academic levels). Heads of Schools have also identified a range of tools and observations to measure the effectiveness of Program Directors. The survey shows that these tools can include: School Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); Program Demand KPIs and other program metrics; Graduate satisfaction; Course/Program outcome metrics; Program Reports; staff and student feedback; stakeholder/industry feedback via External Advisory Groups, industry project course results, graduate quality surveys; program review administration; quality of written material for program; SET/CEIs; student enrolment; team cohesiveness; general administrative performance, also in accordance with position description. Ostensibly then, the tools, data and information used by Heads of School reflect that Program Directors are held responsible, at least to some degree, for student enrolment, student satisfaction, student completion, efficacy of course coordinators, program review, graduate quality, and industry satisfaction with graduates. This is a very extensive list to be considered as the responsibility of one academic at nominally a Level C grade. In addition, the fact that such a wide variety of performance management assessment measures for Program Directors are used provides strong evidence of the lack of clarity and consistent practice of the role of Program Directors, as understood by Heads of School.

Academic Leadership

When asked to rank the level of importance of a provided set of roles, most Heads of Schools tended to agree that the academic leadership role was more important than the role of student progress and managing stakeholder relationships. However, most respondents also indicated very strongly in the comments that they believed all of the roles to be very important, and equally important. It is important to note that at least five Heads of School felt that Program Directors were NOT fulfilling these roles within their School: six felt that the role was *not well defined* in their School and eight that it was *not consistently practiced*. Yet 75% rated the Program Directors in their School overall as effective or very effective.

Interview responses showed that there was some recognition of the Program Director role as an important developmental step for academic staff in gaining leadership skills, particularly for potential progression into formal management roles. However, there was some disjunction between this view and the feeling that many Program Directors in reality perform more of a program management function rather than a strategic leadership role, supporting a general belief that not all aspects of the role required academic leadership, particularly when referring to student support. Informal leadership was acknowledged along with the role Program Directors play in managing the teaching team for their programs. Discussions about academic leadership in these interviews support other evidence that a shared view of academic leadership at UniSA has yet to be explored more extensively.

There were conflicting views in response to questions about what was *desirable* and what was *actual* in terms of Program Director practice. The wide variation between Schools provided evidence that could be interpreted as uncertainty among some Heads of School about what Program Directors were actually doing compared with what they hoped they were doing. In other cases, this was more about the large variation between different Program Directors within the same School – some were doing what the Head of School hoped that all would do, whilst others were not meeting these expectations.

Improving the role

Comments from within the survey indicate a belief that the role is a critical one within the Schools and the University. Strong support for and a desire for academic leadership within the Program Director role was evident from the survey data. There was recognition in both the surveys and interviews however that, in practice, the student support role is a predominant function for Program Directors and that this can be time-consuming.

Virtually all Heads of School (94%) rated "the ability to provide academic leadership and lead the program team to achieve strategic outcomes" as the highest when asked to select candidates for the position of Program Director. With regard to selecting candidates for the position of Program Director, the ability of Program Directors to provide academic leadership is a more highly valued quality than academic level. Survey results indicate that all but three Heads of Schools have seconded staff from Academic Level A or B to the

position of Program Director. However, the survey indicates that is not necessarily because they believe the role is best suited to Level A or B, but for a variety of other reasons including lack of Level C staff willing to do the role. This can cause problems when Program Directors are required to manage program staff teams, particularly in terms of casual and sessional staff since this has to be accomplished without the formal power of a line manager and when they may not be seen as senior enough to have authority. Hence, the fact that Heads of School are appointing people at relatively junior academic levels to undertake what they assert are academic leadership roles seems problematic.

There were comments in both surveys and interviews suggesting that there needs to be better recognition of the valuable work that Program Directors do and that the role deserves to be better supported in terms of administration, and better aligned with career aspirations for those in the role. For example, it was noted that there is a conflict between performing in the Program Director role and research productivity that has an impact upon promotion. It was felt that the role needs to be more clearly articulated and there were suggestions that change was needed, although solutions were not significantly expounded. Overall, both the survey and interview data indicate some conflict between perception, expectations, and practice of the Program Director particularly in an academic leadership role, for many schools.

Excellence in the role

There was clear agreement that some of those who take on the role of Program Directors demonstrate excellence through their commitment to the position, and examples of this were provided and discussed. In particular, this aspect of the interviews demonstrated that Heads of School value all the members of their teams, and asserted fundamental and authentic support for the important role of Program Directors.

Program Directors and the Associate Head of School role

An additional question that was posed to Heads of Schools in interviews was in recognition that many schools have implemented new Associate Head of School positions in recent years, and that these positions did not exist when the current position description of Program Directors was developed. Since in many cases these positions have a clear

relationship with Program Directors, it was determined to be timely to ask about the role of the Associate Head of School during the interview process in order to ascertain the significance of this relationship. The information gathered in this regard indicates that, because these positions are still relatively new and their role varies significantly between different schools, in many cases the full scope of the relationship between Associate Heads and Program Directors has yet to be clarified.

The Heads of School survey and interviews both provided evidence that there was no true agreement or consistent view of the Program Director role. Many Heads of School seem somewhat disconnected from the specifics of what Program Directors do – they are not necessarily clear about the how the functions of the role are fulfilled on a daily basis. It suggests that a lack of role clarity and uniform understanding of the role has led to disparate approaches to program direction among schools, possibly resulting in a much less effective functionality. The interviews also revealed an important limitation to consider in terms of the data derived from the Heads of Schools interviews. That is that, as the formal line manager for Program Directors, Heads of School are accountable for the Program Directors performance. Consequently, this group is perhaps not well-positioned to provide a candid or frank assessment of the effectiveness of the role as it is a direct reflection of their management of the position. As such, it is challenging to determine how effectively the role is being performed.

6.5 Program Director views

There was some difficulty obtaining accurate data about Program Director staffing during the project. The UniSA email directory lists 159 Program Directors; a list has also been obtained during the course of the research from a UniSA Business Intelligence Hub request indexing 190 Program Directors. The UniSA email directory list however was the vehicle available for distributing the survey to Program Directors thus the survey was sent out to 159 people in an attempt to reach as many Program Directors as possible. Responses to the email have indicated that some staff on the list were no longer Program Directors, nevertheless a meaningful sample was obtained. The survey was started by 81 participants

(51%) who completed the first half of the survey questions, but the full survey was completed by a total of 60 participants (38%).

The survey consisted of 50 questions and feedback indicated that it was too long, reflected perhaps in the number of Program Directors who began the survey but did not complete it. Many questions were multiple choice-based but there were a significant number of open-ended text questions, giving Program Directors many opportunities to share meaningful responses. Refer to Appendix I for a copy of the survey.

The majority of participants – 65% – have been employed at UniSA for more than 10 years, while 14% have been employed for fewer than four years. Approximately 50% of Program Directors who completed the survey have been in the position for four years or less. 90% of survey respondents are responsible for 4 or less programs, whether undergraduate or graduate programs. Half of the Program Directors surveyed are responsible for between 100-500 students, the rest of the answers show that 25% are responsible for 100 or fewer, 15% and 6 % respectively deal with 500-1000, or more than 1000 students. The majority of Program Directors surveyed were either Academic Level B or C: 48% of those who responded to the survey hold an Academic Level B substantive position, and 38% are substantively Level C.

At the end of the survey, an opportunity to participate in a focus group was offered. A total of 31 people volunteered to participate in one of four sessions. Any Program Directors who could not make the focus group sessions were interviewed individually. In total, 21 Program Directors participated in this process, approximately 15% of the Program Directors at UniSA.

One focus group session was held at each of the four metropolitan campuses. The sessions involved a casual discussion for approximately one hour that was structured around three themes: academic leadership, student advising, and the possibility of changes to the position. While the survey covered many aspects of the Program Director role, more discussion and greater understanding of these areas was necessary to more specifically identify key issues facing Program Directors and to identify what changes would be supported. It is worth noting that as a general observation, the Program Directors were

energized by the ability to meet as a group and discuss issues with others outside their School and/or Division to gain understanding about how other Program Directors manage and perform the role.

6.5.1 Results and Observations

Perspective of the Role

The survey results indicated that Curriculum Design, Discipline Knowledge, and Student Advice and Support are the three key areas generally agreed to be important functions of Program Directors. Many indicated that they also perform, to a slightly lesser degree, quality assurance, resource management, and external liaison but this is not an exhaustive list. While these and other areas that were expanded upon in the survey were certainly agreed to be important functions, the survey results truly reflect how diversely understood, and how complex and expansive the role is.

Workload allocation was discussed in the survey and it can be determined from this that approximately 40% of the Program Directors have a standard workload allocation of 40% Teaching, 40% Research and 20% Administration. However, the respondents also indicated that this allocation is not particularly representative of the actual workload, as just over 50% of the respondents performed less research and more administration than their official allocation. Only 30% or fewer felt that they had manageable workloads in all three areas. To make a point, some respondents indicated a workload percentage of well over 100. Perhaps most significant however, is the fact that over 50% of respondents stated that they were unable to maintain research productivity as a Program Director and approximately 38% have indicated that undertaking the position has had a negative effect on their career. Within this realm, teaching and administration roles appear to be more easily managed than research.

As mentioned earlier, data gathered from the survey shows that 48% of those who responded to the survey hold an Academic Level B substantive position, and 38% are at Level C. As a representative sample of what substantive positions are operating in this role, it suggests that there are very few Academic Level D's or E's in Program Director positions. One survey question asked respondents to nominate the staffing classification that they felt

was necessary to undertake various functions and the responses predominantly nominated Academic Level C. Very few functions were linked to Level D, and even fewer to E, or to Professional Staff. It should be acknowledged that staff may have been reluctant to nominate classifications lower than the current classification, as this could be seen to imply that the current classification is not justified for some functions.

Academic Leadership

The survey suggests that Program Directors are quite clear about their stake in their own program – 84% indicated that theirs is an academic leadership role. However, the next question asked, "Who is the academic leader for your program?" and only 40% believed they were, while 29% suggested that leadership came from others, and 27% indicated that this was the Head of School, Associate Head of School, or Discipline Leader.

Focus group discussions enabled Program Directors to expand further on the importance of their role as academic leaders. "[You] *need someone to champion a program*" and particularly to "*keep pace with what's going on in the profession*." Discussions about their liaison role with external stakeholders mainly focused on the needs and requirements of professional accreditation bodies and continuing the already established discipline networks they have acquired either during this role or prior to commencing the role. They also acknowledge this is a critical part of the Program Director role: "Program Directors here represent their degree not only within the university but outside the university."

Some participants were uncertain about how they were responsible for academic leadership specifically, and there was not a uniform understanding of what was meant by academic leadership in the role. It was apparent from the focus groups that there was confusion between management and leadership. When asked to explain their academic leadership role they frequently referred to managing staff, particularly sessional staff: "*my understanding of academic leadership in my particular role would be the management of a number of external experts that we get to run our courses."*

A clear message from the data was that whilst they had the role of appointing sessional staff to teach their program most Program Directors had no control over the quality of staff

appointed, and they do not undertake performance management of these staff. The opinion was that there is no authority to "*hire/fire or to perform any kind of performance or quality management functions.*" The challenges discussed in the focus groups included the lack of authority to lead the program in terms of the ability to evidence and/or correct poor performance in teaching staff, and in the hiring process itself. Similar comments were made about the role of Program Director in leading course teams and the difficulties encountered when you ask staff to do certain things. They commented that they are "*expected to be responsible for these programs but…have no authority*" and it was further suggested that "*the power should match the responsibility*." They acknowledged the importance of engaging staff to develop a vision for the program but they would like to see more authority to go with the responsibility they have as Program Directors and "*would love to have a budget and be able to make decisions about sessional staff and the quality of the people that are in it*."

Additionally, there was some uncertainty as to whether junior academics were adequately experienced to be held responsible for academic leadership, and that there should be "*some requirement for experience and capability to take on the role*." They commented on their lack of experience, level of appointment and that having more senior staff in the program impacted on undertaking a 'real' leadership role: "*I'm the most junior in terms of experience…yet I'm supposed to be in charge of…assuming…leadership, in charge of senior lecturers."*

Yet another important aspect of these discussions considered the lack of time available to design curriculum development systemically and intentionally, and deal with the other aspects that require academic leadership, "*but I don't find that I have the time for adequate academic leadership that I'd like to do*." Program Directors are often focused–by sheer necessity –on matters of more immediate importance: "*I find I'm crisis managing most of the time*." Student Advising is often one such aspect of the role.

For at least 30% of survey respondents, the position is perceived as an opportunity, and many comments throughout the survey indicate that Program Directors' have gained leadership and other valuable skills. One of the motivational and rewarding factors often

mentioned for undertaking the role was the connection with the professions: "*I like being involved and I like being able to contribute something to it."* Unfortunately, an equal number are torn between the personal satisfaction they experience versus the negative impact that acting in the Program Director role can have in terms of career progression and workload. This apparent conflict becomes fairly evident when questions are asked about the feasibility of the role.

Student Advising

Participants in each of the focus group sessions spent considerable time debating the student advising (although some preferred the term guidance) function of their role. It was evident in each session that this is certainly a key function of the role and something that many Program Directors feel is really important and they are committed to doing well. It was recognised by some that many students come in with simple enquiries that can unfold into a myriad of much larger problems – for example serious mental health issues – that may not come to light if a student is sent to Campus Central. There was also some concern that professional staff may not be equipped for the scope of some of the student problems.

Program Directors commented on the good relationships they have with Campus Central and the Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU), in particular the LTU Counsellors. Another facet to this involves a lack of trust around Campus Central's ability to provide local knowledge with accuracy. All Program Directors applauded the work performed by professional staff and Campus Central Staff amid suggestions that the problem was more the system and approach rather than the people in positions. They mentioned that Campus Central does not have enough staff and they often refer students to the Program Director, and in certain scenarios: "*Sometimes Campus Central say the wrong thing, and then you just get back and you have to clean up a mess*." They also mentioned the two-way relationship between Program Directors and Campus Central and recognised that they needed to work more closely with CC and make more use of the service they provide: "*Students should be going to Campus Central and not asking me*."

Those who have had the SIP (Service Improvement Plan) implemented in their school agreed strongly that the improvements have thus far served to dilute the local knowledge

by replacing dedicated program support positions with a more distributed team approach. It was obvious in the discussions that those Program Directors who have dedicated administrative support – someone assigned to the Program Director who vets enquiries and makes appointments – seem better able to manage the role and seem to be having a better experience as Program Director than those who don't.

Additionally, there were many remarks about the high turnover of staff in professional staff positions, which creates a significantly more work to re-train and develop new staff when the Program Directors are already overwhelmed. Further to this concept, there was a great deal of feedback about how many processes are driven such that professional staff tend to "manage" the academic staff – and academic staff feel they are supporting professional staff – instead of the other way around.

Some Program Directors see each student individually to review study plans and some see every student that has failed a course. One participant viewed the student advising role as one that keeps them in touch with student body, gives them perspective, and provides an assessment of the climate of a cohort. Most agreed however that the volume of student enquiries is time-consuming. There was discussion that if enquiries were screened before the student was referred to the Program Director, a great number would be deflected, although it was not agreed whether Campus Central was the most suitable solution to that issue. One participant asked, "*If you were a student, who would you want to talk to?*" Another participant astutely suggested that the academic advising function is actually a teaching function that is equally pivotal to student success.

Improving the role

The survey posed four questions in terms of possible changes to the role that provided particularly useful data. The first question asked "Do you think that the Program Director position, as it currently exists, is do-able (feasible, possible)?" This was followed by a second question, "Do you think the position needs to be re-designed?" with a requirement to state why or why not. In the first question, approximately 70% agreed that it was do-able. However, 40% of the 70% who said that it was do-able, also said that the position needs to be redesigned. In answer to the second question, 63% of respondents indicated the position

needs to be re-designed. Finally, the third question in this section asked specifically "If any, what changes do you think need to me made to the position of Program Director?" to which 80% responded "Yes, I suggest the following changes…" followed by a relevant comment. Collectively, this strongly supports the idea that the position is perhaps not feasible as it currently exists, particularly when so many changes have been suggested. The common themes shared in the 49 comments point to the following areas for change and improvement:

- Role clarity, expectations
- More highly valued
- Recognition, acknowledgement and respect
- Workload: more time, shared
- Greater support: time and administration
- Performance management reflective of the role, and aligned with career progression
- Responsibility and authority
- Time for research

In all focus groups, the participants talked about the obstacles to being a more effective Program Director. There were thus many examples and opinions provided about how the position could be changed or improved. Table 6.1 provides a list of statements and suggestions that are representative of the types of change/improvement sought by Program Directors:

Table 6.1 – Suggestions for Improvement to the Role of Program Directors

1. Acknowledgement of: a. Mentoring and support provided to staff and teaching teams b. The time it takes to be a Program Director c. The true impact on the ability to be research productive
2. Research and Promotion: a. Give Program Director points on par with a research publication. b. A three month period either at the end or during the term of the Program Director role to do research

c. Research about education, and teaching & learning needs to be rewarded.
3. Marketing: a. Being invited to participate in marketing plans is a way of showing respect and value for the Program Director position. b. If I'm the expert, why am I not being at least consulted on how to best market the program? c. Relationship between marketing and Program Director/School should be client-based as the school pays for this service. d. Marketing should thus be evaluated and endorsed by School. e. Reflection on applicants' first preferences for certain programs.
4. Make data accessible by providing it for Program Directors instead of training them to mine for it.
5. Framework and organisational structure: systematization, succession planning, backup, coordination of requests, improve awareness of the Program Director annual cycle.
6. Enrolment issues: a. IT support for student records. b. Improve the enrolment system by implementing/building improvements such as a prerequisite module, allow for comments (students enrol themselves in wrong courses).
7. Reward, Motivation and Support ("Why would a C, D, or E do this when there is no incentive beyond personal motivation?") a. Performance Management that is attached directly to Program Director role. b. Need for parity between Program Director roles. For example: big programs, small programs, same financial incentive. c. Provide research assistant support for Program Directors d. An experienced program support officer for the Program Director role
8. How the role itself might be shifted: a. "Splitting" the Program Director role was raised in context of succession planning and having an "understudy" to do the role when a Program

Director goes on leave. It was also suggested that the person undertake the student support role before taking on the leadership role.

b. The creation of a Discipline/Program Leader role was suggested by some Program Directors. This role would recognise the experience and networks they acquired during their time as a Program Director and could then act as a resource for Program Directors new to the role.

For the most part, these were suggestions for adjustment, consolidation, addition, fine tuning, or better tools for the role rather than a desire for a major transformation of the role. A related observation is that some resistance to change may be motivated perhaps by a sense of self-preservation in terms of both the position and personal commitment to the role.

In summary, the Program Director survey and focus group discussions indicated that the vast majority of Program Directors believe that they are responsible for academic leadership of their program. However, much of the survey data and many comments indicate that the understanding of what constitutes academic leadership is variable and the ability to exercise such leadership is also variable due to factors such as lack of time, lack of seniority, lack of authority and more. In fact, many Program Directors actually believe that the responsibility for academic leadership lies with someone else – such as the Head of School or Associate Head of School. What is also clear from the data is that Program Directors are spending a greater portion of their time supporting students than undertaking academic leadership. Recognizing that both are critical services, it is clearly necessary to explore how both functions can best be delivered and supported within each School. The data also indicated that while there are many positive aspects to the role Program Directors, more than 80% of those currently in the role would like to see some improvements to the position of the Program Director. Feedback received so far suggests that there is far more involved in operationalizing the functions of the Program Director - as the position is currently defined - than is feasible or realistic.

6.6 Senior Academic Service Officers (SASOs) views

Three interviews were conducted with SASO's from three different schools to add a professional staff perspective to the research. The interviews used similar questions as those used with the Heads of School.

6.6.1 Results and Observations

Perspective on the role

Comments from the SASO's recognized that the Program Director role is enormous with a large volume of work, most particularly administration and student enquiries but that it also involved curriculum design and support. There was recognition of the Program Director as the discipline expert and therefore often the best person to help students sort out their enquiries. At a minimum, SASO's see the Program Directors as responsible for handling complicated international student applications, bulky transfer credit applications and a high volume of student enquiries, while also managing a teaching load.

Support for the role

The SASO's provided invaluable insight into the ways that Program Directors are supported. There were two key differences in the interviewees, one SASO provides dedicated support to a Program Director that includes fielding student enquiries, assisting with reports, information gathering, study plans for students, and helping Program Directors to manage appointments. The other two indicated that Program Directors' work is supported by SASO's but in a much less direct way. The Program Director is supposed to submit a request to a SASO "help desk" and the task gets parcelled out to the SASO available who is best suited to the task.

In the post SIP model, the SASO's have indicated that they have very little contact with students and there is a sense that the ability to support Program Directors (and students) is constrained by the ensuing shifts in responsibility. The impression from professional staff was that they are providing support anyway, even though they often feel they aren't "supposed to." This feedback supports data from Program Directors that, in Schools that followed the Service Improvement Plan, the Program Directors have experienced a

significant increase in student enquiries and a decrease in administrative and general support. In some cases the senior academic support officer position can be quite far removed from the day to day operations of the Program Director.

The interviews with SASO's did not provide specific insight into the Academic Leadership function, or how the role might be improved but there was very useful information provided in terms of their perspective of the role, and how they support Program Directors. What was most pointed in the discussions was firstly, that SASOs and Program Directors have an important relationship and secondly, this relationship has been somewhat constrained by the post-Service Improvement Plan re-configuration of SASO positions. Future research, or implementation plans in the improvement of the role of Program Director would be better operationalized and could be enriched by further exploration and greater discussion with Professional Staff.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the consultation and review of current practice undertaken at UniSA for the purpose of this research project. It has also incorporated discussion and analysis throughout the chapter to synthesise the data.

The consultation and research conducted was invaluable in extracting the thoughts and ideas that exist about program direction - and what is expected of Program Directors - according to a broad range of stakeholders. The research has demonstrated how unique each school is in terms of school culture and structure and the variation of the Program Director role within schools. This consultation process confirms that there is a fairly distinct gap between what Program Directors do, and what the current position description says they need to be doing and hence provides evidence that the current role is not entirely functional or effective. This rich base of data has served to inform the suite of recommendations that are outlined in this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – UniSA Program Director – Position Description

University of South Australia

POSITION DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Remunerated at Academic Level C
3 year term renewable for a second term

School of X
Division of X
Fraction:

[INSERT RELEVANT GENERIC INFORMATION ON UNISA CONTEXT, OH&S, EQUITY REQUIREMENTS ETC.]

BROAD OBJECTIVE

Under the direction of the Head of School, the Program Director is responsible for the provision of academic leadership in the planning, management, development, quality assurance and improvement, and growth of the academic program. The Program Director will play a leading role in promoting and representing the program within and external to the University and for developing and maintaining strategic relationships with external stakeholders and communities.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Program Director will report to the Head of School of _____.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The Program Director has a range of responsibilities involving interactions with key individuals and groups within and external to the University including:

- Head of School
- Program Team
- Strand Co-ordinators (& other relevant roles, to be defined)
- Students
- Divisional Office
- Divisional Dean, Teaching and Learning
- Relevant Divisional Committees, including Teaching and Learning Committee
- Flexible Learning Centre
- External Stakeholders (Professional Associations, Industry Groups, employers etc)
- Campus Central

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Last saved by University of South Australia 5/13/2013 10:55:00 PM *Page 1 of 3*

CORE DUTIES

1. **Provision of academic leadership in relation to management of the program and promotion of a culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching and student-centred learning.**

    - Provide academic leadership to the program team and facilitate a team-based approach to program management.
    - Contribute to academic leadership of the School through participation in School activities (such as planning & review, School Board etc).
    - Lead the review and evaluation of the quality and viability of the program in accordance with the University's policy, *Quality Assurance and Improvement: Programs, Courses and Teaching Arrangements.*
    - Oversee administrative tasks and functions associated with program management.
    - Provide leadership and promote high quality teaching through good practices in the following areas:
        - Program and course development, design and delivery
        - Staff and student interaction
        - Student assessment
        - Evaluation of teaching
        - Provide leadership, in collaboration with other key school staff members, on the development of key outcomes, such as graduate qualities, graduate employment, online delivery, equity participation and internationalisation.
        - Ensure the program is being delivered in accordance with the curriculum document as approved by the Academic Program Review Committee.

2. **Oversight of student progress in academic programs.**

    - Ensure implementation of academic recommendations about matters routinely undertaken by administrative staff (eg recognition of prior learning, credit, entry criteria and transitional arrangements)
    - Provide advice and make judgements in relation to complex student matters.
    - Ensure provision of academic counselling to students.
    - Ensure effective access to support for students including support for their learning needs.
    - Contribute to marketing and recruitment strategies and activities for the program.

3. **Establish and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including employers, industry, professional associations and accreditation bodies, graduates and alumni.**

    - Develop and implement strategies to ensure the program meets the needs and expectations of relevant stakeholders (including students, employers, industry, professional associations, accreditation bodies, and community).
    - Develop and implement strategies that will establish and maintain partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders and communities, (including employers, industry, professional associations and accreditation bodies, graduates and alumni), that support the ongoing development of the program.

4. **Act in accord with requirements of all UniSA staff in the areas of Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.**

- Act in accord with any direction or instruction aimed at protecting the occupational health, safety and welfare of University staff.
- Cooperate and consult with colleagues in the promotion of occupational health, safety and welfare matters.
- Use safe operating procedures to maintain healthy and safe working conditions and to avoid adverse effects on the health and safety of other staff.
- Take responsibility for own safety as well as that of other staff, students and visitors to the University.
- Act in accord with University equal opportunity, affirmative action and diversity principles and policies.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Advanced qualifications and/or recognised significant experience to a minimum of a Level C academic staff classification.
- Ability to provide academic leadership and the capacity to lead the program team to achieve strategic outcomes.
- Demonstrated expertise in contemporary teaching and learning methodologies.
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills and ability to communicate effectively with people from various educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain strategic relationships both internal and external to the University.
- Understanding and demonstrated commitment to the University's policy framework, systems, procedures and structural arrangements.
- Demonstrated understanding of equity issues in a higher education context and commitment to providing an inclusive educational environment.
- Empathy and understanding of the needs of students.

Desirable

- A doctoral qualification or equivalent accreditation and standing.

Appendix B – Curtin University Role Statement

Curtin
University of Technology

COURSE/MAJOR COORDINATION – ROLE STATEMENT

Course/Major Coordination requires leadership to build a course/major team to develop, implement and review an award course to ensure its quality and financial viability for the School/Faculty. A named coordinator for each course and major is required for administrative purposes.

Responsibilities
Course/major Coordination may be carried out by a single person, or through the efforts of several people depending upon School and Faculty structures. The Head of School will determine how the tasks of course coordination is best allocated. A course/major coordinator, in consultation with the Head of School and other relevant stakeholders will generally be expected to ensure the following:

Course/Major Leadership

1. Provide leadership in course/major development, curriculum design, development, implementation, and evaluation
2. Provide leadership at a course level for implementation of Curtin's teaching and learning priorities, such as first year experience, work-integrated learning, improving graduate employability, international/intercultural/Indigenous perspectives, and interdisciplinary experiences
3. Support the implementation of the University, the Faculty, and the School's plan in relation to teaching and learning
4. Promote and support innovative and effective teaching and learning practices in delivery of the course
5. Ensure there is a current curriculum map
6. Create a teaching and learning environment which supports student progress and achievement
7. Liaise with other Schools and relevant faculties on course development and review in conjunction with the Dean Teaching and Learning
8. Contribute to School and Faculty meetings as required

Quality Enhancement

1. Manage course quality and continuous improvement processes (through Annual and Comprehensive Course Review), and professional accreditation
2. Maintain records of changes made to course/major structure in accordance with the course approvals process
3. Recommend to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, through the School representative, study areas/units to be offered in the course/major
4. Determine appropriate course/major study plans and recognition of prior learning and register these with Faculty Student Services Office
5. Ensure processes are implemented, reviewed and maintained to:
   i) Provide appropriate information on the course/major
   ii) Monitor assessment standards across the course/major to ensure theses align with the unit and course/major learning outcomes
   iii) Make recommendations regarding student status at Board of Examiners
   iv) Provide students with notification of supplementary and deferred assessments where applicable
   v) Provide Board of Examiners with a summary of student status and outcomes of assessments
   vi) Identify award winners
   vii) Record approved course/major changes for reference in the course development and approval process

1

viii) Provide timely and effective feedback to students in relation to student evaluation of units and teaching in the course/major

ix) Monitor and analyse commencing student retention rates***

x) Monitor and analyse unit performance including pass rates, supplementary and deferred assessment rates, and failure rates

xi) Identify and analyse reasons for student withdrawal

Marketing

1. Promote the course/major through presentations, promotional material and events
2. Ensure staff advising prospective students are provided with accurate information
3. Ensure Handbook entries are current

Student Management

1. Work with relevant professional staff in the day-to-day management of course/major matters such as advanced standing, enrolment, leave of absence, withdrawal, graduation and timetabling issues
2. Provide academic advice on course/major related issues
3. Counsel students whose status is conditional or terminated
4. Provide course/major information which outlines course/major map, learning outcomes, assessment methods and marking criteria and course/major procedures
5. Ensure equity and diversity requirements and requests are implemented
6. Assist in the management of plagiarism where appropriate
7. Contribute to the student Orientation program for the course/major
8. Provide advice to the Head of School on student appeals against assessment

Course/Major Teaching Team Management

1. Advise the Head of School regarding staff requirements for the course/major
2. Engage and coordinate sessional staff
3. Assist with the induction and support of academic and sessional staff in the teaching team
4. Manage and where appropriate, approve other relevant academic matters including alternate arrangements for assessment, variations to enrolments and provision of support for students with special needs
5. Provide advice and support to staff in the prevention, detection and management of plagiarism
6. Consult with the Dean Teaching and Learning in negotiating with relevant Heads of Schools, centre directors and other faculties regarding teaching, cross faculty teaching, service teaching and other relevant course/major issues
7. Develop a collaborative course/major team environment within the School

External Relationship Management

1. Liaise with relevant professional, industry and community bodies to promote the work of the School, Faculty and University
2. Represent the course/major at meetings of the Faculty/School Advisory Board and provide relevant documentation as required

Appendix C – Research Method Distribution Summary

Research Subject	Method/Tool	Method/Tool detail	Date	Delivery	Distribution	Response Rate
Undergraduate Students from Division of Health Science	Survey	On-line, Survey Monkey	Jul 30 2012	email from Prof. Julie Mills, endorsed by Prof. Allan Evans, PVC	5800	7% (454 started/414 completed)
Senior Management Group member – volunteers	Interview	Semi-structured, individual, audio-recorded	Jun 13-Sep 6 2012	In-person with at least one member of research team	6	100%
Heads of School	Survey	On-line, Survey Monkey	Aug 21, 2012	Email from Prof. Joanne Wright, DVC, VP-A	19	63\5 (22 started/14 completed)
Heads of School volunteers	Interview	Semi-structured, individual, audio-recorded	Sep 6-19, 2012	In-person with at least one member of research team	5	100%
Program Director		On-line, Survey Monkey	Oct 22, 2012	email from Prof. Julie Mills,	160	45% (81 started/55 completed)
Program Director volunteers	Focus Group & Interviews	Focus Groups: Semi-structured, group setting, , audio-recorded. Interviews: Semi-structured, individual, audio-recorded	Nov 19-29, 2012	In groups, with RA and one member of research team. Interview, with RA.	32	63% (32 volunteered 20 participated)
Academic Support Officers – nominated by Program Directors	Interview	Semi-structured, individual, audio-recorded	Jan 15-24, 2013	In person by RA	5	60% (3/5)

Appendix D – Interview Questions for Senior Managers

Questions:

1. Could you begin with a brief summary of your perception of the Program Director role here at UniSA and what changes, if any, you would like to see implemented?
2. How do you see these being carried through?
3. Where have you seen excellence in Program Directorship either here at UniSA or at other institutions?
4. Do you see the Program Director role as a leadership role?

Appendix E – Interview Questions for Heads of School

Questions:

1. Could you begin with a brief summary of your perception of the Program Director role here at UniSA and what changes, if any, you would like to see implemented?
2. How do you see these being carried through?
3. Where have you seen excellence in Program Directorship either here at UniSA or at other institutions?
4. Do you see the Program Director role as a leadership role and if so, how is this being supported/promoted in the School?
5. Based on the fact that the Program Director position was developed before the implementation of the newer position of Associate Head of School, can you tell us about the function of these two roles?

Appendix F – Interview Questions for SASOs

Questions:

1. Could you begin with a brief summary of your perception of the Program Director role here at UniSA.
2. What roles/duties do you have in terms of providing supporting at the program level, or to Program Directors?
3. Student Advising/Academic Counselling is an important function of the Program Director role. Recognizing that this is a critical service, how does the Academic Support Officer role also support this function?
4. What changes, if any, you would like to see implemented?

Appendix G – Student Survey

Program Director Research Project - Undergraduate Student Survey

The Role of Program Directors at UniSA

Program Directors at the University of South Australia provide an important and valuable service to students.

We would like you to participate in a research project that will particularly focus on the ways that you interact or have interacted with your Program Director.

We invite you to respond to this electronic survey, it will take no more than 5 minutes of your time. To protect your confidentiality and privacy, this survey is anonymous.

Some questions will require you to select one button, or a number of buttons, to provide an answer.

Some questions are open-ended so that you may have an opportunity to, or may be required to, provide a comment.

About You

1. Please select your age group.

- ◯ 15-19
- ◯ 20-24
- ◯ 25-29
- ◯ 30-34
- ◯ 35 and over

2. In which year of your undergraduate degree are you currently studying?

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4
- ◯ 5

3. What is your gender?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

4. What is your mode of study?

- ◯ On-Campus (Internal)
- ◯ Off-Campus (External)

5. What is your enrolment load?

- ◯ Full-time
- ◯ Part-time

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Program Director Research Project - Undergraduate Student Survey

9. What forms of contact have you had with your Program Director during your time at UniSA? Please tick any that apply.

- ☐ No contact
- ☐ Group Email
- ☐ Personal email
- ☐ One-on-one meeting
- ☐ Presentation at orientation
- ☐ Advice on administrative issues
- ☐ Advice on personal issues
- ☐ General advice
- ☐ Career advice
- ☐ Academic counselling session
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Study planning
- ☐ Credit applications
- ☐ Eligibility for graduation
- ☐ International exchange reference
- ☐ Written reference
- ☐ Referee on my CV
- ☐ Scholarship reference
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Role of Program Director

10. From the list below, what do you think is the main role of the Program Director in the program in which you are studying? Please tick one.

- ◯ Leadership of the program with respect to teaching staff and curriculum within it
- ◯ Provision of academic advice to students in the program
- ◯ Management of the administration of the program
- ◯ Marketing of the program to future students
- ◯ Unsure

Role of Program Director

11. From your perspective, what do you think is the role of the Program Director with regard to students?

Additional Comments

Page 3

Program Director Research Project - Undergraduate Student Survey

12. Is there any other comment you would like to make about the role of the Program Director in relation to your own program, or the university as a whole?

◯ No

◯ Yes (please specify)

Opportunity to Further Participate?

13. Would you like to be part of a focus group that will explore this topic further?

This would involve your participation in a focus group discussion session at your campus. The focus group will meet once for approximately 30 minutes, during the Friday common period, later this semester.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Continued Participation

Thank you for completing this survey and agreeing to participate further.

Please click the "Email Us" link below to send us an email so that we are able to contact you. Your email will not connect you with the survey you have just completed, this survey remains confidential.

Email Us

We will contact you within the next three weeks to give you the opportunity to take part in a focus group discussion. The organisation of the meeting time and date will be done by a member of the research team.

Thank you.

End of Survey

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Appendix H – Heads of School Survey

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

Developing Program Directors as Academic Leaders: A Win-Win-Win for Academi...

This survey is part of a project commissioned by the DVC Academic, Professor Joanne Wright, to examine issues and challenges associated with the Program Director role at UniSA. Ultimately the project will attempt to ensure that this role is clearly defined and recognised as one of significance and value to the university.

In this phase of the project, we are interested in finding out how students and university staff understand the role of Program Directors. This survey will specifically focus on Heads of Schools and the ways in which you understand and manage the role of Program Directors, as well as seeking your input to possible improvements and changes.

We invite you to take 10 minutes to respond to this anonymous electronic survey.

About You

1. How long have you been an academic staff member at UniSA?

- ◯ 0 - 4 years
- ◯ 5 - 9 years
- ◯ 10 years or more

2. How long have you been in your current position as Head of School at UniSA?

- ◯ 0 - 4 years
- ◯ 5 - 9 years
- ◯ 10 years or more

About Your School

3. How many permanent academic staff (excluding research only) do you have within your School?

- ◯ 0 - 24 FTE
- ◯ 25 - 49 FTE
- ◯ 50 - 74 FTE
- ◯ 75 FTE or more

4. Approximately how many undergraduate programs do you have within your School?

- ◯ 0 - 4 programs
- ◯ 5 - 9 programs
- ◯ 10 - 14 programs
- ◯ 15 or more programs

Page 1

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

5. Approximately how many undergraduate students are in your School?

- ◯ 0 - 1999 FTE
- ◯ 2000 - 3999 FTE
- ◯ 4000 - 5999 FTE
- ◯ 6000 FTE or more

6. How many undergraduate Program Directors are in your School?

- ◯ 1 - 4
- ◯ 5 - 9
- ◯ 10 - 14
- ◯ 15 or more

Role of Program Director within your School

The following questions relate to the general role of the Program Director and the effectiveness of this role as it relates to your School.

We understand that answers can be variable but ask here for an average assessment. This in no way refers to or requires an assessment of the performance of specific staff in those positions.

7. What do you think is the <u>most important</u> role of a Program Director within your School?

- ◯ Oversight of student progress in academic programs
- ◯ Provision of academic leadership in relation to promotion of a culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching
- ◯ Establish and maintain relationships with key stakeholders
- ◯ Provision of academic leadership in relation to management of the program
- ◯ Other (please specify)

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

8. Is this role being fulfilled by the Program Director(s) in your School?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comments:

9. Do you think the role of Program Director is well-defined within your School?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comments:

10. Do you think the role of Program Director is consistently practiced within your School?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comments:

11. Could you describe in a sentence or two what you believe an effective Program Director should do, within the context of your School?

Page 3

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

12. Please rate the overall effectiveness of the role of Program Director(s) within your School on a scale of 1-5.

Not effective				Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

13. How do you measure the effectiveness of a Program Director?

Selection, Appointment and Motivation for Program Directors

The following questions relate to what considerations are made when seconding staff to the Program Director position.

14. When selecting a staff member for the position of Program Director, what qualities/skills do you believe contribute to the effectiveness of a Program Director? Please rate from 1-4.

Click and drag to re-position your choices in the order you want.

- ☐ Qualifications and/or significant experience to a minimum of a Level C academic staff classification
- ☐ Demonstrated expertise in contemporary teaching and learning methodologies
- ☐ The ability to provide academic leadership and the capacity to lead the program team to achieve strategic outcomes
- ☐ Highly developed communication skills and ability to communicate effectively with people from various educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

15. The Program Director position requires *advanced qualifications and experience to a minimum of a Level C academic staff classification* as essential criteria for selection.

If you have ever seconded a Level A or B staff to the position of Program Director, please indicate why. Tick any that apply.

- ◯ I have not appointed Level A or B staff to the position of Program Director
- ◯ No suitable candidates were available at Level C or above
- ◯ I believe this role is best suited to Level A or B
- ◯ To provide a career and leadership development opportunity for staff member with a view to future promotion
- ◯ To provide recognition with remuneration for Level A or B staff who are unlikely to gain promotion in the current climate
- ◯ Other (please specify)

16. How do you think the academic staff within your School recognize/regard undertaking the role of Program Director? Tick any that apply.

- ☐ As an opportunity
- ☐ As a career risk
- ☐ As a required service
- ☐ As a professional obligation
- ☐ As a dead-end
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

17. What incentives/rewards do you use to encourage staff to accept a secondment to the Program Director position in your School? Tick any that apply.

- [ ] Opportunity for classification increase (eg Level B acting as Level C)
- [ ] Opportunity for level increase (eg C1-C6)
- [ ] Customized workload allocation adjusted to support professional goals and personal strengths
- [ ] Dedicated administrative support to offset extra administrative tasks
- [ ] A Performance Development and Management Plan that supports promotion
- [ ] Opportunity to develop Teaching and Learning scholarship/leadership that supports career goals and promotion
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Performance Development and Management (PDM) and Support for Program Direct...

The following questions relate to the nature of the PDM and support that is or could be provided to Program Directors at UniSA.

18. In Performance Conversations with your Program Directors, what data do you use to review the performance that is specific to a staff member's Program Director role.

19. Do you provide any additional reward/incentives for highly effective Program Directors?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes (please specify)

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

20. What training and development support would you like to see implemented to help make Program Directors more effective in their role? Tick any that apply.

- [ ] Interpersonal Communication
- [ ] OHS & W
- [ ] Curriculum Design, Development and Evaluation
- [ ] Leadership
- [ ] People Management
- [ ] Time Management
- [ ] Counselling/Advising
- [ ] Coaching/Mentoring Skills
- [ ] Mentoring for Program Directors
- [ ] Project Management
- [ ] Analysis of Business Information
- [ ] Diversity
- [ ] Quality Assurance
- [ ] Finance & Budgeting
- [ ] Academic Development in Teaching Effectiveness
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Additional Comments

21. Is there any other comment you would like to make with respect to the Program Director role in relation to your own School or UniSA as a whole?

Opportunity to Further Participate

We invite you to participate in a 20-minute interview, at your convenience, at your campus.

As with the survey, your participation and your responses would remain anonymous.

Program Director Research - Head of School Survey

22. Would you be interested in being interviewed?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

Continued Participation

Thank you for completing this survey and agreeing to participate further.

In order for us to connect with you, without linking your email address to your survey data, please click below and then press Send.

Email Us

Your email will not connect you with the survey that you have just completed. This survey will remain confidential.

We will contact you within the next week to schedule an interview. The organisation of the meeting time and date will be done by Andrea Parks, Research Assistant on the project.

Thank you.

End of Survey

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Appendix I – Program Director Survey

Program Director Survey

Developing the Role of Program Directors

This survey is part of a project commissioned by the DVC Academic, Professor Joanne Wright, to examine issues and challenges associated with the Program Director role at UniSA. Ultimately the project will attempt to ensure that this role is clearly defined and recognised as one of significance and value to the university, and that people who undertake the role are provided with appropriate support and training.

This phase of the project is one of the most critical aspects of the project as it is focused on how Program Directors understand and manage the role, as well as seeking input on possible improvements and changes. The opinions and information you express here will be used, to a large extent, to effect positive change.

We invite you to take 20 minutes to respond intentionally and meaningfully to this anonymous electronic survey.

Please note that you will have an opportunity towards the end of the survey to comment freely about the role of Program Directors at UniSA. You can also participate in focus groups discussions or interviews, if you wish.

About You

1. How long have you been an academic staff member at UniSA?

- ◯ 0 - 4 years
- ◯ 5 - 9 years
- ◯ 10 years or more

2. Are you currently a Program Director?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No (if no, and you have recently been a Program Director, we welcome your input in this survey based on your recent experience, otherwise you may exit at this point.)

3. How long have you been a Program Director?

- ◯ 0 - 4 years
- ◯ 5 - 9 years
- ◯ 10 years or more

4. What is your substantive academic appointment level (your level prior to secondment to Program Director)?

- ◯ Lecturer - Level A
- ◯ Lecturer - Level B
- ◯ Senior Lecturer - Level C
- ◯ Associate Professor - Level D
- ◯ Professor - Level E

About Your Programs

Page 1

Program Director Survey

9. How many of your programs require professional accreditation?

- ◯ 0 programs
- ◯ 1 program
- ◯ 2 programs
- ◯ 3 programs
- ◯ 4 or more programs

Comment:

10. How many of your programs have a clinical/practice/placement component?

- ◯ 0 programs
- ◯ 1 program
- ◯ 2 programs
- ◯ 3 programs
- ◯ 4 or more programs

Comment:

11. How many Program Directors are in your School?

- ◯ 1 - 4
- ◯ 5 - 9
- ◯ 10 or more

About the Program Director Position

The following questions will explore the general role and established structure of the Program Director position.

Program Director Survey

12. Do you think the Program Director role is well-defined at your School?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know

Comment:

13. Recognising that each of the following is important, which of these do you think is the <u>most important</u> role of a Program Director? Please choose one.

- ◯ Oversight of student progress in academic programs
- ◯ Provision of academic leadership in relation to promotion of a culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching and learning
- ◯ Establishment and maintenance of relationships with key stakeholders
- ◯ Provision of academic leadership in relation to management of the program
- ◯ None of the above

14. If not represented in the previous question, please describe in a sentence or two what you believe is the most important role of a Program Director.

15. Could you describe in a sentence or two what you believe an effective Program Director should do, within the context of your Programs.

16. What workload allocation do you receive for undertaking the Program Director role? Please describe.

Program Director Survey

17. The Head of School is typically the line manager for all academic staff. As a Program Director, to which additional person/structure do you report? (eg Associate Head of School, Discipline Leader, Program Management Group, School Executive.)

Key Functions of Program Directors

In consultation with Students, Senior Managers, Heads of Schools, experienced Program Directors, and a review of current literature and practice at similar institutions, we have identified six key functions currently expected of Program Directors.

- *Curriculum Design* - leading strategic planning and development of courses and structure of your program.
- *Discipline Knowledge* - functioning as an expert in the program/discipline you represent.
- *External liaison* - being the industry/professional representative for your discipline/program.
- *Student Advice & Support* - Academic planning, responding to enquiries, problem-solving, etc., including orientation and transition support for students.
- *Resource Management* - leading/guiding a teaching team, managing teaching schedules & program delivery, and can include budget coordination.
- *Quality Assurance/Accreditation* - measuring effectiveness and quality of your program, and participation in accreditation processes.

This section will ask questions about the Program Director's role based on these key functions.

Program Director Survey

18. Which of the following do you think is the <u>most important</u> function of a Program Director?

- ◯ Curriculum Design
- ◯ Discipline Knowledge
- ◯ External liaison
- ◯ Student Advice & Support
- ◯ Resource Management
- ◯ Quality Assurance/Accreditation
- ◯ None of the above

Comment:

19. This is an important function of the Program Director.

	Not at all	Moderately	Extremely
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯

Comment:

Program Director Survey

20. I am currently performing this function...

	Not at all	Occasionally	Frequently
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯

Comment:

21. Considering these functions, should Program Directors do more, about the same, or less?

	More	About the same	Less	Not applicable
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯	◯

Comment:

22. Please note any key functions that are not included above but that you think should be.

Program Director Survey

23. What functions (including any not listed above) do you think the Program Director should *NOT* do? Please explain.

Workload Allocation and Managing the Role of Program Director

The following questions will explore the distribution of workload allocations as well as how Program Directors manage the various aspects of their role.

24. In the Enterprise Agreement, the Program Director role is identified as an administrative workload. According to your most recent workload allocation, please indicate the percentage of your workload that is allocated under the following three headings:

Teaching %

Research %

Administration %

25. In the past 12 months, please indicate what percentage of your workload that you believe you actually allocated to these areas.

Teaching %

Research %

Administration %

26. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is *not at all* and 5 is *very easily*, how manageable is your workload in each of the following?

	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Research	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Administration, including Program Director role	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Program Director Survey

27. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is *not at all* and 5 is *very easily*, how manageable do you feel each of the following functions of the Program Director role is?

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Career Planning and Performance Management

This section will cover the impact of the Program Director on career progression and will also explore how performance is measured in the role.

28. How did you come to be a Program Director? (eg negotiated, sought out the position, was asked, felt compelled)

29. What incentives/rewards have influenced or would influence your acceptance of a secondment to the Program Director position? Tick any that apply.

- ☐ Opportunity for classification increase (eg Level B acting as Level C)
- ☐ Opportunity for level increase (eg C1-C6)
- ☐ Dedicated administrative support to offset extra administrative tasks
- ☐ A Performance Development and Management Plan that supports promotion
- ☐ Opportunity to develop leadership skills
- ☐ Other: (please specify)

Program Director Survey

30. Do you think that your performance as a Program Director is valued by your colleagues?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know

Comment:

31. How is your performance as a Program Director measured?

32. Do you regard this as valid?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Comment:

33. How do you regard undertaking the role of Program Director? Please choose one.

- ◯ As an opportunity
- ◯ As a professional obligation
- ◯ As a career risk
- ◯ As a dead-end
- ◯ Other: (please specify)

Program Director Survey

34. Have you been able to maintain research productivity while in the Program Director role?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comment:

35. Do you have any comments on how being a Program Director has impacted on your career?

36. How do you intend to use the experience of this role in career progression?

Professional Development and Support for Program Directors

This section will ask questions about what kinds of support Program Directors have received and what they need in order to be effective.

37. Do you think the administrative support available to you is sufficient for you to fulfil your role effectively?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comment:

Program Director Survey

38. Where 1 is *none* and 5 is *a great deal*, what opportunity have you had for professional development/training in each of the following key functions as a Program Director?

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Program Director Survey

39. In which of the following areas would you like additional, specific training and development to help make you more effective in your role as Program Director? Tick any that apply.

- [ ] People Management
- [ ] Time Management
- [ ] Interpersonal Communication
- [ ] Counselling/Advising
- [ ] Coaching/Mentoring Skills
- [ ] Leadership
- [ ] Diversity
- [ ] Marketing/Recruitment
- [ ] Developing Industry Contacts/Relationships
- [ ] Mentoring for Program Directors
- [ ] Project Management
- [ ] Curriculum Design, Development and Evaluation
- [ ] Program/Course Evaluation
- [ ] Quality Assurance
- [ ] Analysis of Business Information (eg BI Hub)
- [ ] Finance & Budgeting
- [ ] Academic Development in Teaching Effectiveness
- [ ] OHS & W
- [ ] Other: (please specify)

Program Director Survey

40. For each of the following skills, please indicate how important you think it is in terms of how it contributes to the effectiveness of a Program Director.

	Not at all	Moderately	Extremely
Qualifications and/or significant experience to a minimum of a level C academic staff classification.	◯	◯	◯
Demonstrated expertise in contemporary teaching and learning methodologies.	◯	◯	◯
Ability to provide academic leadership and the capacity to lead the program to achieve strategic outcomes.	◯	◯	◯
Highly developed communication skills and ability to communicate effectively with people from various backgrounds.	◯	◯	◯

Future Focus for the Role of Program Director

This section will explore any steps, if necessary, that could be taken to further develop and improve the role of Program Directors.

41. What are the positive aspects of the role of Program Director?

42. What are the negative aspects of the role of Program Director?

Program Director Survey

43. Do you think that the Program Director position, as it currently exists, is do-able (feasible, possible)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comment:

44. Do you think the position needs to be re-designed? Please indicate why, or why not.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Why or why not?

45. If any, what changes do you think need to be made, or would you like to see made, to the position of Program Director?

◯ No changes are necessary.

◯ Yes, I suggest the following changes:

46. Do you think the Program Director position is an academic leadership role?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Comment:

Program Director Survey

47. Who is the academic leader in the development of curriculum for your Program?

- ◯ Head of School
- ◯ Associate Head of School
- ◯ Discipline Leader
- ◯ Program Director
- ◯ Don't know
- ◯ Other: (please specify)

48. Which staffing classification do you think should be tasked with each of the following functions of the Program Director?

	A	B	C	D	E	Professional Staff	Other*
Curriculum Design	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discipline Knowledge	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
External liaison	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Student Advice & Support	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Resource Management	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Quality Assurance/Accreditation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

*Other or additional comments:

49. Is there any other comment you would like to make with respect to the Program Director role in relation to your own program(s), your School or UniSA as a whole?

Opportunity to Participate Further

Thank you for completing this survey. We invite you to participate in a focus group, for approximately an hour, during one of the following sessions:

Program Director Survey

Group A = *Magill*, Monday, Nov 19, 10 am, H1-03

Group B = *Mawson Lakes*, Tuesday, Nov 20, 10 am, P1-49

Group C = *City East*, Wednesday, Nov 21, 10 am, C4-41

Group D = *City West*, Thursday, Nov 29, 10 am, Hawke 4-21

Alternately, you may opt to participate in an individual interview, at your convenience, at your campus.

As with the survey, your participation and your responses would remain anonymous.

50. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group, or in an interview?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Continued Participation

Thank you for completing this survey and agreeing to participate further. It is important that you follow the steps below in order for us to connect with you without linking you to your survey data.

1. Please click on the "Email Us" link below.
2. Indicate in the email which Focus Group you would like to attend.
OR
Indicate in the email that you would like to participate in an interview.
3. Press Send.

Group A = *Magill*, Monday, Nov 19, 10 am, H1-03

Group B = *Mawson Lakes*, Tuesday, Nov 20, 10 am, P1-49

Group C = *City East*, Wednesday, Nov 21, 10 am, C4-41

Group D = *City West*, Thursday, Nov 29, 10 am, Hawke 4-21

Email Us

This email links us to you without linking you to your survey data. This survey will remain confidential.

We will contact you within the next week to confirm dates and times, or arrange an interview, as necessary. The focus groups and interviews will be organised by Andrea Parks, Research Assistant on the project.

Thank you.

End of Survey

Appendix J – The Elements of Program Direction

Appendix J – The Elements of Program Direction

Student/Program Coordination	*Discipline/Curriculum Leadership*
1. Student support	1. Curriculum Design
2. Program management	2. People Leadership
3. Marketing/Recruiting	3. Program Delivery
4. Internal Liaison	4. External Liaison

Student /Program Coordination	**Curriculum Leadership**
Student Support • Academic Advising/Counselling • Orientation/Transition • Retention • Experience • Engagement	**Curriculum Leadership** • Pedagogy : engaging experiences informed by research; student-centred; online learning; work-integrated learning. • Academic Standards : Accreditation requirements and AQF, benchmarking • Assessment of Student Learning • Relevance: industry & market alignment; employability • Discipline Knowledge: Research Informed • Program cohesiveness • Innovation
Program Management • Student Enrolment • Reporting/Administration • Sessional staff • RPL assessment • Transfer Credit • International Admission	**Program Delivery** • Staffing and resources • Quality assurance • Monitoring: program KPI's • Developing improvement plans
Marketing/Recruiting • Strategies • Developing materials • Organising events • Staffing events	**People Leadership** • Culture of scholarship and excellence in teaching • Induction, Training & Staff Development
Internal Liaison • School | Campus | Division | SMG • Academic Staff • Professional Staff (SASO's, HR) • TLU and CC • Marketing/Recruiting • Admissions	**External Liaison** • Industry • Professional/Accreditation Bodies • National and International benchmarking/ comparison

Appendix K – UniSA Academic Advisor Position Description

University of South Australia

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Academic Advisor

Indigenous Student Services – David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER)
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences
City West Campus
Academic Level B
Fixed term contract

Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.

PURPOSE OF POSITION

The position has a vital role in ensuring that Indigenous people:

- gain access to University of South Australia (UniSA) Programs,
- are provided academic and social support that contributes to the improvement of Indigenous Peoples participation and success rates.

The position contributes to the teaching responsibilities of the area and supports the community, research and academic profile of David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research as well as developing close links with the Indigenous community.

POSITION ENVIRONMENT

The University of South Australia is the State's largest university with approximately 37,000 students, 2,400 staff, five campuses and four academic divisions. The University is a national leader in collaborative industry research, has been recognised nationally for the quality of its teaching and community service and has the State's largest intake of international students.

The Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences is the University's largest Division and comprises five Schools, the Hawke Research Institute, and a number of Research Centres. The Division employs in excess of 700 academic and professional staff to service over 11,000 enrolled students. Staff and students are currently spread over the four metropolitan campuses of the University – Magill, Mawson Lakes, City West and City East, as well as at regional campuses in Mt Gambier and Whyalla.

The David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education & Research

The University of South Australia has strong commitments to advancing reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, to building social cohesion, and to environmentally, economically, socially and culturally sustainable development. These values inform the scholarly and community activities of David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER), which provides the longest running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education program in Australia.

The College comprises the Dean's Office, which leads the University's support of Indigenous Australians across the University, and the Unaipon School, one of the five Schools in the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences.

The Unaipon School offers an exciting range of undergraduate & postgraduate programs in Aboriginal Studies and Australian Studies, teaching more than 2,900 students, It is also host to a growing and important Indigenous Research hub of Indigenous academics with a proven track record in undertaking

local and national Indigenous research projects in areas including health & wellbeing, education, employment & training, language and resource development.

DUCIER is committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning and research outcomes and has developed strong relationships with key stakeholders including community and professional organisations, government agencies and industry partners.

DUCIER offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Indigenous studies, Australian studies and Australian history, and postgraduate awards in Aboriginal Studies, Masters by Research and PhD in Australian Studies or Indigenous Studies. These provide the basis for a vibrant cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural teaching and research environment.

Indigenous Student Services (ISS), under the management of the Head of School DUCIER provides University wide services to facilitate participation, retention and success of Indigenous students. Within DUCIER these services are determined by the Head of School. Services are managed by Academic Advisors and DUCIER staff in areas with the appropriate Division, University and Community links. ISS operates centres at all metropolitan campuses and off-campus study centres located at Port Augusta, Whyalla, Murray Bridge and Pt Lincoln. Academic Advisors are responsible for managing the day to day business of these centres.

DUCIER recognises that Schools, Divisions and Units such as the Learning & Teaching Unit, the marketing and development Unit (MDU) and the Planning and Assurance Unit (PAS) play an important role in providing services for Indigenous students and in policy and planning. DUCIER Indigenous Student Services play a key role in advising on the development of these services and co-ordinate activities across the University to enable Schools, Divisions and Units to meet their commitments. ISS in collaboration with the Units, also provides the statistical, reporting and trend data required for University committees to set appropriate equity KPI's and targets.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The position reports to the DUCIER Head of School through the Coordinator: Indigenous Student Services.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide for the learning and developmental needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, through the provision of services and advice.

2. Undertake related student support and be responsible for day-to-day administration including the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS).

3. Liaise with University staff, in order to identify, contribute to and support the provision of the most appropriate teaching and learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

4. Engage in comprehensive reporting to Schools and Divisions on factors impacting on the recruitment, retention and success of UniSA Indigenous students.

5. Prepare and deliver lectures and seminars.

6. Act as an advocate and mediator within the University on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with respect to administrative, academic, social and cultural issues, and on behalf of new graduates with respect to career and employment.

7. Facilitate student access to the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS);
    a. to assist students to complete the necessary forms;
    b. to assist in recruiting suitable tutors; and
    c. to match students and tutors and to monitor progress and relations between student and tutor.

8. Collaborate with the Learning & Teaching Unit to contribute to the regular monitoring, evaluation and development of flexible services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Co-operate in the collection of relevant data which will assist in contributing to the development of a high-quality, best practice, support service.

9. Maintain and develop appropriate professional skills through attendance at staff meetings, seminars, workshops and other staff development activities, in accordance with the DUCIER Strategic Plan.

10. Contribute to the effectiveness of Indigenous Student Services across the University through teamwork and mutual learning, to policy development and planning through participation in working parties as necessary; and by responding through University consultative processes.

11. Promote University of South Australia programs across all Divisions amongst the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community including schools, TAFE institutes and local organisations, and to assist applicants to lodge SATAC forms and participate in appropriate selection programs.

12. Co-ordinate Tertiary Preparation programs, Special Entry applications and recommendation procedures.

13. Initiate and/or support research activities pertinent to the needs of the University community and the core functions of Indigenous Student Services

The duties as specified above may be altered in accordance with the changing requirements of the position.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Willingness and ability to travel within the State.

Staff must also follow and apply the following:

- Provide leadership to the workgroup in successfully implementing relevant aspects of the University OHSW&IM system.
- Implement OHSW&IM consultative arrangements and ensure staff participation.
- Implement University OHSW&IM procedures for identifying hazards, assessing risk and implementing appropriate control measures.
- Implement University procedures for providing OHSW&IM related training.
- Implement University OHSW&IM procedures for rehabilitation management.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. A demonstrated understanding of the issues affecting the learning of Indigenous tertiary students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and a detailed knowledge of and familiarity with Indigenous communities.

2. A PhD and/or equivalent accreditation, knowledge and experience.

3. Demonstrated high level skills and broad experience in the provision of academic support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

4. Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, including presentation skills.

5. Ability to teach in a tertiary education environment.

6. Demonstrated administrative skills in office management, the maintenance of relevant records and knowledge and experience with Microsoft office computer software.

7. Demonstrated capacity to contribute to research and publications related to the areas of Indigenous higher education, Indigenous professional employment and related issues.

8. Demonstrated capacity to work effectively within an unsupervised workplace environment.

Desirable

1. Extensive experience in adult and/or senior secondary education.

2. An ability to contribute to the development and presentation of staff development programs related to both equity issues and teaching and learning.

3. Expertise in the publicity and promotion of University courses across all Divisions, to schools and TAFE Institutes, and in career counselling with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in particular (or a willingness to develop these skills).

4. Knowledge of employment environments and placement practices in various professional fields and ability to actively liaise with potential employers; proactively monitor graduating students in order to provide relevant information and guidance concerning their range of employment paths.

Minimum standards for academic levels (MSAL's) also apply (see overleaf).

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC LEVELS (MSAL)

Introduction

Minimum standards for levels of academic staff, other than a casual, are set out in this schedule – Minimum standards for academic levels (MSAL). The levels are differentiated by level of complexity, degree of autonomy, leadership requirements of the position and level of achievement of the academic. The responsibilities of academic staff may vary according to the specific requirements of the institution to meet its objectives, to different discipline requirements and/or to individual staff development.

An academic appointed to a particular level may be assigned and may be expected to undertake, responsibilities and functions of any level up to and including the level to which the academic is appointed or promoted. In addition, an academic may undertake elements of the work of a higher level in order to gain experience and expertise consistent with the requirements of an institution's promotion processes.

MSAL will not be used as a basis for claims for reclassification.

MSAL may be supplemented by more detailed descriptors in each Division of the University to facilitate performance management.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH ACADEMIC STAFF

Level B

A Level B academic will undertake independent teaching and research in his or her discipline or related area. In research and/or scholarship and/or teaching a Level B academic will make an independent contribution through professional practice and expertise and coordinate and/or lead the activities of other staff, as appropriate to the discipline.

A Level B academic will normally contribute to teaching at undergraduate, honours and postgraduate level; engage in independent scholarship and/or research and/or professional activities appropriate to his or her profession or discipline. He or she will normally undertake administration primarily relating to his or her activities at the institution and may be required to perform the full academic responsibilities of and related administration for the coordination of an award program of the institution.

Appendix L – OLT projects list

	Reference	University	Relevant position at UniSA
1.	D'Agostino, F. and O'Brien, M. (2009). *Closing the gap in curriculum development leadership*.	UniQ	"sequence-of-study leader"
2.	Jones, S., Ladyshewsky, R., Oliver, B., and Flavell, H. (2009). *Leading courses: academic leadership for course coordinators.*	Curtin	Program Director
3.	Krause, K., Lizzio, A., Bath, D. and Clark, J. (forthcoming 2012). *Program Leadership in Multicampus Universities.*	Griffith	Program Directors
4.	Lefoe, G., Parrish, D., Malfroy, J, McKenzie, J., and Ryan, Y. (2011) *Subject Coordinators: Leading Professional Development for Sessional Staff.*	Wollongong, UTS, WSU, ACU	Course Coordinator
5.	Nagy, J. (2011). *Coalface subject coordinators – the missing link to building leadership capacities in the academic supply chain*	Deakin	Course Coordinator
6.	Roberts, S., Butcher, L., and Brooker, M. (2010). *Clarifying, Developing and Valuing the Role of Unit Coordinators as Informal Leaders of Learning in Higher Education*.	Murdoch, Curtin	Course Coordinator
7.	Southwell, D., West, D., and Scoufis, M. . (2008). *Caught between a rock and several hard places: Cultivating the Roles of the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and the Course Coordinator*	QUT, UNSW, Charles Darwin	Program Director
8.	Trivett, N., Lines, R., and Brown, N. (2011). *Embedding and Sustaining Leadership Development for Curriculum Leaders Through Tailored Support During Curriculum Review and Renewal.*	UTAS	Program Directors (in the Curriculum Review process)
9.	Vilkinas, T. (2009). *Improving the leadership capability of academic coordinators in postgraduate and undergraduate*	UniSA	Program Director

Reference	University	Relevant position at UniSA
programs in business.		