



The University of Western Australia
Academic Staff Association

31 August 2016

Professor Dawn Freshwater
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Registrar
University of Western Australia

Dear Professor Freshwater,

Please find below a set of observations and questions from the Academic Staff Association in response to the proposed Service Delivery Centres. Our membership will also receive a copy.

- 1) *Could the SDVC please explain what measures will be put in place to ensure that the level of service Academic staff receive to aid them in their teaching, research and service functions will not be reduced, and in cases where certain areas of the University enjoy less support than others that this level of service is enhanced, rather than service delivery sinking to the lowest common denominator?*
- 2) *Considerable concern has been expressed that the SDC regroup will take away local knowledge and local culture from support staff and that Academic staff will be forced to fill this loss of corporate knowledge. In particular, in many parts of the University the position of a laboratory technician is particularly specialised. It is not a generic function and specific training and knowledge is necessary to perform that function. This includes the role of technicians who are involved in setting up laboratories for student teaching where specialist knowledge is both an efficiency AND a safety issue. Directing such staff from afar is likely to result in inefficiencies and the transfer of parts of that role onto Academic staff.*
- 3) *Specific disciplines have very specific needs from support staff. OHS needs are very discipline specific and will not be able to be filled by generic staff.*



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- 4) *It is important that Schools have professional staff positions skilled in and devoted to strategy. For efficiency and effectiveness there must be support for the Heads of School to help develop and translate innovative ideas into strategies for the development of the Disciplines and Schools.*
- 5) *In the UWAASA sponsored forum in early 2016, a member of professional staff stated that the variety of tasks she undertook in her school was part of her job satisfaction and that she felt a commitment to her school as well as to the University as a whole. She noted that she'd heard professional staff would be moved from Schools and the VC shook his head and stated that this was not the case. How will the current plan which visualizes faculties as entities off to the side of the bureaucratic network maintain the benefits of both Academic and Professional staff feeling mutual responsibility and accountability at the academic / management nexus?*
- 6) *Every centralisation so far has increased the level of paperwork and emails necessary to accomplish a given task (e.g. GRS, new teaching framework, centralisation of special considerations, risk management); how is this evidence of a more efficient management when applied to the requirement for rapid responses to day to day requirements?*
- 7) *It is well understood that face to face communication among actors who know each other is a cornerstone of effective communication. These social bonds will be minimised in the new centralised system. What mechanisms will be put into place to substitute for the missing "connection" factor?*

We look forward to your response in due course.

Sincerely,

The Governing Committee of the UWA Academic Staff Association

cc: Members of the UWA Academic Staff Association