Summary Recommendations of Review of Statistical Research Methods Training and Research Support (including the Statistical Consulting Unit)

Training in statistics for postgraduates

R1: The senior management of the University, including the Deans of the Colleges, should establish whether they wish to have a co-ordinated approach to the statistical training of postgraduate students.

R2: If the senior management wishes to consider a co-ordinated approach, as a first step, a realistic catalogue of postgraduate subjects at ANU that contain statistical training should be assembled. This task must be done with the practical involvement of a senior academic statistician.

R3: Consideration should be given to the provision of a general postgraduate statistics subject that could be taken for credit in many different degrees, and which is designed to capture postgraduates in programs where statistics training is not routinely provided now. This training could be provided by a suitably qualified educator from the SCU. There should be a mechanism by which EFTSL funding obtained from the provision of this training could be channelled to the SCU.

Staffing of the SCU

R4: Staff in the SCU should have academic appointments, if academic and professional are the only alternatives.

Business model of the SCU

R6: The SCU should not undertake external consulting directly, unless a marked change in direction and personnel is made. Such a change would need to be initiated by the senior level of management of the university, after a study of competitors, the statistical consulting environment generally, and the benefits and risks.

R7: Opportunities that exist for some indirect funding for the SCU from external sources, through research or consulting projects of ANU staff, should be pursued by the SCU.

R8: Some partial College funding of the SCU should be considered.

R9: There should be a limit to the number of hours of SCU support that a postgraduate can obtain at no cost to the student or his/her department. Beyond that limit, help should be on a fee-paying basis, with the expectation that the student’s department should pay.

SCU activities and responsibilities

R10: The SCU should produce an annual report with some reasonable statistical summaries of its activities, and highlighting a small number of research projects that have depended on it for support.

R12: The SCU... should establish what unmet demand there is, and initiate policies and practices to deal with it.