

# Report on the New Enrolments Trial

## Semester 1 2008

### Summary

It is the opinion of Enrolments and SAS that the move of Melville Hall New Enrolments in First Semester 2008 to O Week was an overwhelming success. Three out of the six Colleges involved in the event were dissatisfied as there was not enough time to react to enrolment numbers. Three Colleges were satisfied with how the event ran and did not find the impact of the move to be problematic.

### Report

In 2008 the New Enrolments sessions located in Melville Hall and InfoPlace Upper were held to coincide with O Week, rather than the week prior as they have been previously. This resulted in Undergraduate Enrolments commencing three working days later than in previous years. The decision to trial this change was made in an attempt to achieve the following improvements for staff and students:

- To avoid international and interstate students having to find additional accommodation for the week prior to O Week
- To encourage more people on campus during O Week
- To reduce the number of sessions held for new enrolments
- To reduce the number of people enrolling late
- To improve the first impressions of ANU for new students as they would arrive during a period of activity as opposed to during a 'dead' period on campus

The change was made with the knowledge that the College of Arts and Social Sciences were not supportive of the trial with their concerns summarised below:

- That there would be reduced time to organise tutors as class numbers would not be known as early.
- That tutorial rooms may need to change if class numbers vary dramatically from predictions
- That brick production would be affected as class numbers would not be known as early

It was felt by CASS that if the concerns outlined above were realised then staff would have additional stress added to their workload at an already busy time and that students may be disadvantaged by the anticipated last minute scramble.

It should be noted that no other College raised concerns prior to the trial.

In deciding to move the Enrolment sessions to O Week, Tim Beckett and I acknowledged these concerns but decided to proceed with the trial and that the outcome would subsequently be reviewed.

The New Enrolments Sessions were held (in the opinion of DRSS) successfully, but in reviewing its success a few observations are worth noting:

- In previous years Halls and Colleges residents were invited to enrol at dedicated sessions. These sessions were removed and residents were integrated into other sessions.

Consequently, residents chose to ignore that instruction and attended in bulk causing a significant influx during the second undergraduate session.

- Undergraduate enrolment numbers were up on previous years meaning that more students had to go through the enrolment process.
- Alternative arrangements will need to be made for language placement tests as these are normally held during O Week and were previously advertised the week prior to O Week during the New Enrolments sessions.

On 17 March a washup meeting was held with New Enrolments stakeholders in the Drawing Room at University House. This was the primary opportunity to review the New Enrolments Sessions and to receive feedback from ANU Colleges. The question was asked whether Colleges supported the move to O Week for future years acknowledging that there will be the opportunity to further tweak the running of the sessions. The following indicates the response:

**For the change:**

CAP\*

CoS

CECS

*\*With the condition that better arrangements can be made for language placement tests*

**Against the change:**

CASS

CoL

CBE<sup>+</sup>

*<sup>+</sup>CBE originally indicated that they were supportive at the washup but have since changed their stance based on feedback from their schools.*

The reasons that CASS do not support the change for the future is for the reasons they predicted prior to the sessions.

CoL have decided to position themselves against the change for similar reasons as they had an unexpected increase in the number of new students to which they had less time to react (with regards to class schedules, tutors etc.)

CBE were originally supportive of the change, but after discussions with their Schools have positioned themselves against it for similar reasons as CoL and CASS`.

It was also observed that the last minute attempt to find tutors and change rooms did not give new students a positive first impression of the University.

The problems identified by CASS, CBE and CoL may be overcome with solutions other than moving New Enrolments back to its previous structure. I have listed the main problems and possible solutions below:

**Brick production – unable to accurately anticipate the number of bricks that are to be produced**

Move to electronic bricks. This is a simple, cost effective mechanism for providing students with reading materials that removes the need to produce a specific number of copies and also fits in with the University's sustainability policy. It may not be practical for all bricks, but many of them could be.

### **Organisation of tutors**

Write up contracts for tutors in advance of the New Enrolments sessions and only amend the details once final class numbers are known. Alternatively, anticipate higher workload in this period and bring in more support staff to deal with the significant workload (if budget allows). This too would not be practical in all scenarios but may ease the burden.

### **Organisation of tutorial times and rooms**

It is clear that some tutorials were arranged in inappropriate rooms (too small), however, this would most likely have been a problem regardless of the change given that the number of enrolling students was substantially up. The University has been aware for some time that applications for Semester 1 2008 were up, as were acceptances, and thus it was anticipated that this would translate into increased enrolments. Strategies need to be conceived to feed this information to Schools and Centres so that they can better anticipate increased numbers in their classes?

### **Alternative arrangements for language placement tests**

Enrolments will include advertisements and contact details regarding placement tests in the How To Accept Your Offer and Enrol brochure and other Enrolment Instruction publications.

It is also worth noting that CoS is a large College, like CASS, with similar flexibility in their degree programs and the College was able to accommodate the new timeframe and is prepared to support the change for the future.

### **Other feedback:**

In a meeting held between Tim Beckett, Nathan Asher, the President and Vice President of ANUSA and the President of PARSA on 6 March 2008, the President and Vice President of ANUSA gave positive feedback regarding the change as they had received no negative feedback and had found that the attendance at their O Week activities were significantly up because more people were on campus. The President of PARSA had no feedback, positive or negative.

Likewise, the ANU events held during O Week showed a significant increase in attendance as evidenced by standing room only at many lectures and talks. This is partly a result of the increase in enrolments, but also of having more people on campus during O Week.

Alternative arrangements need to be made with the Halls and Colleges to avoid the residents attending in bulk.

### **Conclusion:**

Given the above, it is obvious that a significant portion of College staff do not support the trial continuing into the future. The opinions of these Colleges cannot be ignored. As such, in 2009, Semester 1 new enrolments will commence in the week prior to O Week and Enrolments will investigate other ways to achieve the goals that were the impetus for the trial.

Perhaps in the future if processes are improved this model could be revisited.

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