



COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION ♦ SPSF GROUP NSW BRANCH

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Mark Kelly
Manager Employee Relations
The University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308

email: mark.kelly@newcastle.edu.au

Dear Mr Kelly,

Re: Submission re UoN Consultation Paper - Research and Innovation Division

The PSA (CPSU) does not support the deletion of any positions proposed in this organisational change. Feedback from our members outlines a historical position of chronic understaffing and serious work overload. It appears that the technical and highly specialised roles in this division have been poorly understood. The PSA(CPSU) is seriously concerned that this proposal will impact significantly and negatively upon the researchers in the university and has the potential to impact on the university's reputation.

Consultation and provision of information

The CPSU particularly notes that significant and unnecessary stress was caused to our members by being advised late last year that their positions were affected, only for the provision of detailed information to be delayed for a further 6 months.

Members are unhappy with the manner in which they received information as to their employment status. Some were advised by email that their position was affected just before the consultation paper was released 22 June 2016 and were not provided the support from the organisation with 1:1 advice. Further members previously identified as affected in November 2015 were not contacted at all to confirm that their positions were now not affected due to the changes made in the delayed and revised Consultation paper.

The consultation period includes the end of semester and holiday period. Staff were busy with end of semester commitments which will restrict their time to consider the impact of the restructure.

Access to information has been restricted which will hinder the ability to provide constructive feedback on the proposed organisational structure. Members have requested:

- Copies of the slides presented at the staff forum with the green Strategic Funded positions (we note that further clarification was provided toward the end of the consultation period)
- Copies of the current and proposed duty statements for all positions. Draft duty statements for the new positions are the only ones provided. The overview and

proposed function of each of the units suggests that current unidentified positions may have a different focus to the work currently undertaken.

- Many members from across the Division have advised that their out of date duty statements were being reviewed with consultation of the incumbents over the last year. They request that these be provided to reflect this collaborative work which recognises the change in work over the life of their duty statement.

During the union briefing on 22nd June 2016 there was specific mention that all positions in the new structure were ongoing. Review of the Newcastle Innovation structure on page 20 of the change proposal paper identifies the HEW 5 Industry Program Officer position as fixed term.

The current Organisation Chart provided does not identify all of the current vacant positions. Many of these are retained in the proposed structure. Placement of staff working in these positions must be managed by the clauses in the Enterprise Agreement to ensure transparency and afford staff equal opportunity.

The PSA (CPSU) has been advised by members that recruitment for at least 3 positions with the area of review are undergoing recruitment action. These include 2x HEW 5 positions in the PVC R&I Graduate Studies unit; and the Animal Welfare Officer HEW 9 position in the Research Services unit. This could result in the reduction of available position for staff displaced by the restructure.

The consultation paper makes reference to greater interactions with IT, IFS and UoN Global (International) units. Does this translate as a transfer of work to other units? How will these interactions be implemented?

We suggest the review of Research Infrastructure be excluded from this review until the review of RSU is finalised. We note that the consultation paper on page 10 (b) Research Equipment states “*A strategic review of the current and future requirements for research infrastructure across the institution is currently underway.*” Kevin Hall advised staff in the briefing June 22 that savings may result in the creation of more secure positions currently covered by Strategic Funding.

Specific Comment on Proposed Structure

Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor R&I (page 21)

The slides shown at the staff forum June 22 included at least 8 positions highlighted in green and identified as Strategic Funded positions. The interaction of these and the proposed positions make constructive comment difficult and pose a concern for staff.

Whilst we appreciate the difficulties in providing information about positions for which funding has not yet been obtained, we note the comment made by Kevin Hall that such positions do not represent an option to mitigate any impacts of the change proposal. **Our members have clearly advised that this structure is under-resourced in its current proposed form.**

Additional Graduate Research Officers will be required to meet the workload of the unit. The current structure utilises 7 staff – 2 of which are contract positions established to start 11th July. It is noted that of the 4 substantive positions HEW 5 Graduate Studies Officer positions 2 are on secondment to another unit and another is on maternity leave. Will staff

on secondment or working in developmental roles in other units be expected to return to their substantive positions?

The proposed structure notes that these positions will be cross skilled in all administrative functions to ensure peak periods are managed. Members advise that this will create a work overload issue if additional positions are not created.

It is difficult to see how the functions performed by the 3 HEW 8 Executive Officer positions and the HEW 6 International Admissions Officer are to be covered in the new structure. Increases in grading to remaining positions do not address the work overload issue likely to be created.

Current Senior Graduate Studies Officer HEW 7 x 3 positions. It appears that these positions are translated across to the new structure. These positions are currently dedicated to particular work flows which include Candidate Thiers, Admissions & Scholarships and Candidate Management. The proposed structure has created positions that look similar with a change of title to that of Business Partner Graduate Research HEW 7 x 3 positions and appear to have a Faculty responsibility. Without the duty statement for these positions our members cannot advise if this proposal will work.

The proposed Manager Strategic Recruitment HEW 8 appears to pick up work of the deleted 3 positions. The draft duty statement contains reference to Policy work which would be more aligned with the grading and responsibilities of the new HEW 9 Manager Operations positions. Will the Business Partner Graduate Research HEW 7 x 3 positions be expected to perform the duties of the deleted positions? Members ask if this is why the duty statements have not been provided?

Recommendations

THAT:

- 8 HEW 5 Graduate Research Officer positions be created;
- The duty statement for the Graduate Research Business Partner HEW 7 positions x 3 be provided; and
- Transfer the Policy work from the HEW 8 to HEW 9 position.

Research & Innovation Services Strategy& Performance / Research Compliance Integrity & Policy (page 22)

Again it is noted that the slides shown at the staff forum June 22 included at least 2 positions highlighted in green and identified as Strategic Funded positions. The interaction of these and the proposed positions make constructive comment difficult and pose a concern for staff. Further when presenting this slide Kevin Hall advised that some of these would be created into more permanent positions which include fixed term.

- **Research Compliance Integrity & Policy**

The current structure has dedicated Human and Animal Ethics Officer HEW 6 positions and have not been identified as affected. Please clarify if the 2 Ethics Officer HEW 6 positions in the proposed structure seeks to create general positions and lose the specialist focus of the current positions?

Will the Manager Research Compliance Integrity & Policy have supervisory responsibility

for the 2 Animal Welfare positions that will be moved into this unit? There is no synergy between the Colony Coordinator HEW 7 position and the functions of the other positions in this unit. We believe that the Colony Coordinator position has better synergies in the technical team under Research Infrastructure and note that the deletion of the Operations Manager HEW 8 position has created managerial difficulties due to the personal relationship between the incumbents of these positions.

Members have advised that the Animal Welfare Office HEW 9 position is substantively vacant and that recruitment for this position closed during the consultation period for this organisational change. This is not a transparent process – the status should have been notified on the org chart.

- **Strategy & Performance**

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Members seek clarification on what work will go to the IT Division. The consultation paper 11(a) Data and business analytics states “*The new UoN IT structure...will also facilitate a shift in R&I Division from routine systems maintenance and upgrades to value add systems and quality data management*”. Members have advised that the new IT structure does not have the capacity to undertake this function and a shift of work will introduce WHS issues as a result of work overload.

Team Leader & Quality HEW 8. The draft duty statement for this position has no requirement for technical knowledge of systems. How will this position support the 2 other positions it manages? The PSA (CPSU) is concerned that this responsibility will be forced on the HEW 6 Data Systems Coordinator.

Research Infrastructure (page 23)

The PSA (CPSU) understands that both the ABRF and EMX units have been subjected a number of reviews over the last few years. Repeatedly the findings were of being poorly staffed & resourced, lack of governance and management, infrastructure and H&S issues. This change proposal has not only completely ignored those findings but if implemented will significantly worsen the situation. The consensus is that the proposal cannot possibly achieve the Division’s (and UoN’s) strategic plan. **Our members have clearly advised that this structure is seriously under-resourced in its current proposed form.**

The opportunity to obtain maximum utilisation of the highly specialised analytical equipment operated by the ABRF/EMX team has not be realised in this draft structure. The deletion of specialist technical positions will hinder the universities capacity to meet its ambitious target of a 61% increase in research operations and KPIs outlined in New Futures and could potentially damage UoN’s world class status as a research facility.

The current ABRF team is understaffed at 3 HEW 7 technical positions. The area is comprised of three distinct and specialised units to operate, maintain complex instrumentation and conduct sample preparation protocols specific to diverse matrixes that research and educational programs present. The increase in instrumentation numbers across two geographically distinct locations, these being HMRI and Callaghan, present additional workloads that should see the growth in technical support.

The deletion of the EMX Mangers HEW 8 and a HEW 6 contract technical officer position, not identified on the current organisation chart, has impacted on the availability of instrumentation due to a significant loss of expertise.

A result of this loss of expertise the high resolution TEM which cost the university almost one million dollars is not currently being fully utilised due to a lack in multidisciplinary expertise. Without dedicated operators to maintain and operate these specialist instruments researchers will face lengthy delays in obtaining access to the instruments and could be forced to go to Wollongong and UNSW.

- **ABRF and TEM/SEM/XRD team**

The deletion of the current EXM Manager position and creation of a more administrative based position will significantly impact on the technical capability of the EMX and ABRF teams.

The proposed change has not taken into consideration the feedback from academics and staff and the history of understaffing in the EMX unit. This proposal to merge the operations of EMX/SEM and TEM into one position has resulted in the loss of significant expertise over the last 10 years when mergers of EXM and ABRF discussions began.

The rationale that the new Team Leader Research Infrastructure TEM/SEM HEW 8 position must manage the SEM/TEM/XRD and ABRF team to retain a grading of HEW8 fails to recognise the highly specialised functions required to operate the instrumentation. The draft duty statement for this position with the educational requirement of a PhD combined with instrumentation expertise in techniques that are not complimentary, coupled with managerial expertise is unrealistic.

The SEM/TEM/XRD team currently gains income from its contract work, subscriptions however does not have access to this income. This could be used to fund dedicated positions for each instrument which would increase the utilisation of the instrument and reduce the access time for researchers.

Recommendations

THAT:

- The commercial income generated by the unit be used to fund dedicated HEW 8 positions created for each specialist instrumentation ie 1x TEM, 1xSTEM and 1x XRD'
- A Manager position be created to oversee the unit;
- Administrative support be provided to manage the subscriptions, bills, invoices etc created by the commercial operations of the unit;
- 3 ABRF technical officer HEW 7 positions be retained;
- The ABRF duty statements be provided to staff; and
- The reviewed duty statement of the EMX professional officer HEW 7 be released for comment.

The PSA (CPSU) does not support the deletion of the Animal Services HEW 8 Operational Manager as this removes a promotional position for the technical officers working in the Research Infrastructure unit. The deletion of this position creates a significant gap from the HREW 10+ Director and the Technical Officers who operate as line managers and are graded HEW 6 and HEW 5.

- **Animal Services RSU (JHH)**

We support the creation of a permanent HEW 3 position to reflect the long standing

utilisation of casual positions to support the breeding facility at the John Hunter Hospital. This will support the HEW 5 Technical Officer position and provide a stable staff profile which will benefit the health of the animals in this facility.

However, the Animal Attendant and Driver HEW 3 position has not been correctly identified on the proposed organisation chart as a new position and shaded purple.

Recommendation:

That Animal Attendant and Driver HEW 3 position be correctly identified and that a draft duty statement be provided so that the position be recruited internally.

- **Animal Services MSB/BSB (Callaghan)**

The Medical Services Building has continued to grow with the addition of the ABL wing in 2014 and the North wing due for completion in September 2016 without an increase in staffing numbers. The combined staffing numbers to cover the requirements of the Medical Sciences and Biological Sciences buildings were insufficient and we welcome the creation of a new Animal Technician HEW 4 position.

However, the Animal Technician HEW 4 position has not been correctly identified on the proposed organisation chart as a new position and shaded purple.

Recommendation

- **That** Animal Technician HEW 4 position be correctly identified and that a draft duty statement be provided so that the position be recruited internally in a transparent way.
- **Animal Services CAH (Callaghan)**

The management of the breeding population and good record keeping is essential to the integrity of the animal stock. The clerical work associated with this work and the day to day operations of the animal orders, interactions with the finance team and ensuring accuracy of information on the webserver are functions that will continue in the new structure. The deletion of the units Administration Assistant HEW 4 is a loss that the unit cannot support.

Recommendation

- **That** a clerical support function be added back into the structure.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Jann Jeffries
Industrial Advocate