

REPORT BY THE DEAN

The most conspicuous and time-consuming activity of the Faculty is the teaching of undergraduates. The Faculty is the largest of the five in this University, in 1979 enrolling 2383 undergraduates, more than twice the number in the next largest faculty, Science. It is also the most diverse in its range of offerings and in its student population, and thus the most affected by current demographic changes which are affecting all Australian universities.

The Faculty has in addition a large number of postgraduates and intermediate award students: more than half the postgraduate students in this University are enrolled in the faculties, nearly half this number in the Faculty of Arts, which in 1979 had more Ph.D students and more Masters by thesis students than either the Research School of Pacific Studies or the Research School of Social Sciences. A good proportion of postgraduates are part-time Masters students drawn, like most of the undergraduate population, from the Canberra area. But the Faculty's ability to attract full-time research students, most of whom come from other parts of Australia or from overseas, is a clear indication of the calibre of its academic staff.

RECENT RESEARCH

Because the range of interests in the Faculty is considerable, and because most research undertaken in the humanities and social sciences is the work of individuals, it is not possible to identify major thrusts of research activity. It is true also that book-length publications tend to be the result of several and in some cases many years of work, and that one year's report is likely to project a very different picture from the next. The following selection of work completed in 1979 gives, nonetheless, a fair indication of the level of research activity in the Faculty.

Some publications, like the historian J.N. Molony's I am Ned Kelly (in press, Penguin) and a book by Paul Kringas and Frank Lewins of the Department of Sociology on ethnic schools in Australia (in draft), are likely to have an immediate public impact. Others, like the philosopher G.M. Lloyd's The Eternity of the Mind: A Study of Spinoza's Ethics (awaiting publication), an exploration of the ethical ramifications of Spinoza's metaphysics, or the English scholar John Hardy's Samuel Johnson: A Critical Study (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), though they attract more specialised audiences and thus win less public notice, represent no less valuable an achievement. R.F. Brissenden and J.C. Eade's Studies in the Eighteenth Century IV (ANU Press 1979), essays presented at the Fourth David Nicol Smith Memorial Seminar by local scholars and overseas visitors, illustrates well the place some members of this Faculty have in the international scholarly community.

Professor Molony's I am Ned Kelly is a biography of Kelly which pays particular attention to his relations with members of the Victoria Police. Most of our knowledge of Kelly has come from what the police records have said about him. This study looks also at the police, at who they were and how this affected their judgements of him. The work of Mr. Kringas and Dr Lewins focuses on a little known area of Australian society, the thousand or so part-time ethnic schools which cater for over 100,000 migrant children. Migrants' expectations of

ethnic schools and the general performance of the latter form the empirical basis of the study which examines also wider issues in Australian ethnic relations such as multiculturalism and migrant education. The release of preliminary findings has already attracted notice.

There is important work on aspects of Aboriginal culture being undertaken in several departments in the Faculty. Professor Dixon, of the Department of Linguistics, in co-operation with Dr B.J. Blake, of Monash University, has edited the first volume of a Handbook of Australian Languages (ANU Press 1979), making available short grammatical sketches of Aboriginal languages, both living and dying. Professor Dixon has completed also The Languages of Australia (in press, Cambridge), the first full study of the genetic relationships, probable origins and historical development of the more than 200 different Aboriginal languages.

The interest of the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology in Aboriginal Australia, both as a research field and for issues affecting welfare and education, is indicated by 35 publications during the year. In addition to traditional research papers on prehistory and anthropology, these include publications on economic development, land rights, and the role of art in contemporary society. An audiovisual educational kit on Eastern Arnhem Land, consisting of a text, tapes and slides, is the result of collaboration between Dr H. Morphy and Dr Rhys Jones, Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies.

In yet another area Professor B.L.C. Johnson, who retired from the Chair of Geography at the end of the year, completed companion volumes on India and Pakistan (both published by Heinemann), providing systematic introductions to the human and physical resources and environment of those countries. And, from the Department of Slavonic Languages, Dr Robert Dessaix published the first modern translation of selected Mysterious Tales of Ivan Turgenev (Faculty of Arts, ANU, 1979).

RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Despite its more straitened circumstances and heavy commitment to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and despite the reduced availability and duration of outside studies programs, the Faculty has sought to maintain if not improve opportunities for staff research and development. It has sustained a strong visitors program, 28 distinguished scholars being attached to the Faculty for varying periods during 1979. It has continued to support internal and overseas conference travel, 12 members of Faculty getting some assistance to present papers at overseas conferences during 1979. It has assisted 35 members of Faculty to embark on outside studies programs, provided casual research assistance for two departments and eight individuals, and given several individuals assistance towards publication. In doing so it has been conscious of the need to sustain both quality and morale in a time of constraint and of change, both in the student population of the Faculty, and in the nature of the demands being made by students on the teaching staff.

CHANGING STUDENT POPULATION

1979 saw, in Arts more than in any other faculty, an increase in the proportion of part-time students and, more dramatically, an increase in the number of older students enrolling.

The proportion of new enrolments from part-time students rose from 49% in 1978 to 51% (compared with 38% in the Faculty of Economics and 20% in the Faculty of Science). 53% of these new enrolments were over 25 years of age (compared with 12% in the Faculty of Science), and 22% were over 35 years of age. Only 26% of new enrolments were from direct school-leavers (compared with 58% in the Faculty of Science). Some idea of the rapidity of this change can be gained from a comparison with proportions in earlier years: in 1978 40% of new enrolments were over 25 years of age, in 1974 only 21%.

The Faculty has had a high proportion of part-time students for some years and can be said to be familiar with the difficulties they face. But it is clear that older students, who are more mature and in the main have firmer expectations of their acquisition of a liberal rather than a vocational education than do immediate school leavers, make different demands on the academic staff.

This is not to imply a qualitative comparison with immediate school leavers, whose application and quality remain high. It is to suggest rather that, in Arts more than in the other faculties, the 'mix' is changing in a way that requires from teaching staff more understanding, flexibility and adaptation to differing undergraduate needs than a relatively homogeneous student population has done in the past.

BUILDINGS

The Faculty is close to its planned size. It is unfortunately well short of its planned accommodation. One building, the A.D. Hope Building, remains uncompleted and in part temporarily occupied by the Library. Even if there is no further growth the Faculty is severely hampered by a lack of adequate study space for postgraduate students, an inability to provide all departments with departmental centres in which students can mix so profitably with academic staff, and the inadequate housing of at least some of its departments. If the already marked shift in the undergraduate population continues and the number of postgraduate students remains steady, the coming decade will be one of challenge and excitement for the Faculty: both staff and students deserve the facilities which will enable them to make the best of this opportunity.

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