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1. How long have you been in the field of research management/administration and how did you start your professional career in it?

I have held a number of roles within the higher education sector for over 15 years, with the last 12 dedicated to research management. My first position in higher education was as a Graduate Clerk working on enrollments and admissions.

2. Describe the Office of Research at QUT and the level of extramural funded sponsored project activity?

The Office of Research sits within the broader Division of Research and Commercialisation. The remainder of the Division consists of the Office of Commercial Services (commercial research, continuing professional education, international projects, etc.) and the Research Students Centre (higher degree student administration). My office consists of 5 business units: 1) Research Development, which is responsible for sponsored research; 2) Research Ethics (human, animal and Institute biosafety); 3) Research Finance; 4) Research Data and Systems; and 5) Research Quality Framework. QUT earns approximately \$50M in research income per year, 20% of which comes from international sources (NIH, Gates Foundation etc).

3. What are the key qualities required for your post?

Common sense, strong communication and interpersonal skills, the ability to remain calm in difficult situations and the ability to take a strategic view of the world are key qualities required in my position as Director of the Office of Research.

4. Do you have any recommendations for research managers/administrators starting out in their careers?

I can make a few recommendations: 1) take the time to learn as much as you can about the key business units in your office; 2) develop a good and productive working relationship with the research community – you never know when you might need them; and 3) network with other managers/administrators in your field.

5. What are the key challenges in administering research?

The key challenges in administering and managing research are: 1) trying to improve performance in a competitive sector with limited resources and time; 2) trying to motivate and encourage people for whom you do not have direct supervisory responsibility; and 3) remembering the important balance between teaching and research.

6. What are the serious issues facing Australian research managers/administrators at the present time?

Probably one of the most serious concerns is the serious shortfall in funding to the sector by the government. A secondary issue is the impending introduction of the Federal Government's Research Quality Framework (RQF, similar to the United Kingdom's RAE—Research Assessment Exercise). This will have a significant impact on research funding and may translate into a tiering of the sector. The Research Quality Framework was first announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, in May 2004 and is part of the \$8.3 billion *Backing Australia's Ability* package. The RQF seeks to ensure taxpayers' money is being invested in research of the highest quality which delivers real benefits not only to the higher education sector, but also to the wider community.

7. Is it advantageous for institutions to recruit academics into senior managerial roles?

I am fortunate enough to work with a number of highly skilled/highly professional academic managers who bring academic and managerial skills to their roles. I think it is advantageous in certain roles, e.g., Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dean, Postgraduate Studies, etc.

8. Are there different problems associated with the administration of humanities versus science research activities?

Yes. I think the real challenge is demonstrating to the broader university community that humanities/social sciences research is just as key and critical to advancing knowledge as the hard sciences. QUT has established 4 research institutes based on cross disciplinary/multi-faculty research programmes (Institute for Health and Biomedical Innovation, Information Security Institute, Institute for Creative Industries and Innovation, and the Institute for Sustainable Resources). It is particularly pleasing to note the increased interaction of researchers from the humanities and science/engineering coming together to solve global problems.

In terms of specific problems, I would have to say ethics, where we are trying to assess the ethical considerations of projects from our creative industries faculty using policy that is more aligned with education, science disciplines, etc.

9. What are the key areas of research management/administration that require your greatest involvement?

While I oversee all of the business units in my office, I still spend a considerable amount of my time in the research development arena working with researchers and research teams to identify opportunities and develop competitive applications. As part of the Division's executive management team, I also contribute to the formulation of the QUT research and innovation agenda.

10. What are your opinions on central management versus faculty management of research activities?

Good question. I am not a fan of the devolved model of administration because I have not found it to work particularly well. In my experience, the level of advice/assistance available varies considerably from faculty member to faculty member. Central offices tend to provide more consistent advice and have people with the right expertise available to respond to complex situations/opportunities.

11. What advice can you provide to individuals working at smaller institutions that have a vision of building international programs, but lack the core infrastructure of human and other resources needed to do so?

My advice would be to identify the institution in the sector which is acknowledged as having "best practice" and arrange to spend time with their key people. I think it is also important to take "bite size chunks" and not try to do too much too soon.

12. In what directions – in both Australia and elsewhere – do you see international research management/administration moving in the next five years?

I think research management/administration is rapidly becoming more professional and entrepreneurial. Most universities in Australia are trying to adopt a more corporate approach to their business and as such we will probably see the recruitment of a new breed of senior research managers with corporate/business backgrounds.