



30 August 2011

Ravindra Kalpagé  
Human Resources Manager  
Faculty of Commerce and Administration  
Victoria University of Wellington

Email: [ravindra.kalpage@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:ravindra.kalpage@vuw.ac.nz)

**Re: School of Information Management Change Proposal**

1. This submission on the School of Information Management (SIM) Change Proposal is made on behalf of the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA). VUWSA is the official representative body of students at Victoria University of Wellington and has been advocating on their behalf since 1899.
2. This submission is based on feedback from SIM Class Representatives and FCA Faculty Delegates. This submission does not oppose or support the proposed changes but does present a number of questions that our representatives would like assurance on within the outcome document.
3. It must be noted that VUWSA is not opposed to changes to academic programmes that are justified and respond to the academic needs of students or the demands expressed by students for changes in course offerings. VUWSA also understands the external demands upon both the University and the Faculty in times of tight fiscal restraints. However, we are concerned that there may be a possibility that the proposed changes may have flow-on into the academic experiences of students. We are seeking assurance that this is not the case.
4. With regard to the Introduction. There are two points on which we would like clarification. The first is a hint of what is to come to FCA Faculty Board – the MIM review. Our representatives would like assurance that the restructuring of this degree is not directly connected to the proposed changes (ie. an added, but buried, rationale that is academic in nature) but was in process sometime before these changes have been proposed. Getting to the point: Was it anticipated before the MIM [and the BBIS] went under internal review that staffing changes would be occurring in SIM so a tightening would need to occur to the academic offerings?
5. The second clarification in the introduction is an assurance that the alternative four year pathway replacing the BBIS will continue. The introduction does appear to support this; however, there is some concern amongst representatives that a decrease in resources may either slow down the development of this qualification or result in it not being put into place at all. Our representatives (both class reps and faculty delegates) did support the BBIS being

discontinued due to the sound rationale given by SIM and the assurance that another pathway was being created. If SIM does not have an adequate resource level we would be highly concerned.

6. Points 4 and 5 above are crucial for us. Whilst there is always some overlap between management and academic decision-making at Victoria, it has been a custom at Victoria to replace programmes that are being removed with more viable offerings (as what has been offered in the disestablishment of the BBIS). VUWSA would be very reluctant to advise representatives in the future to support the withdrawal of papers and programmes if the flow-on effects result in a disestablishment of jobs which, in turn, and most importantly for students, reduce both the paper/programme offerings AND quality of educational experiences (through reduced resources).
7. Regarding the disestablishment of the position of Senior Teaching Fellow, representatives have expressed to VUWSA concerns regarding elements of the current position and how these will be maintained. Of particular importance concerns ELCM/INFO320. These papers connect students with relevant E-Commerce or Information Systems through project sponsors. Representatives have expressed concern that, with this role being disestablished, there will be flow-on effects into these courses. These effects centre on the need for industry connections and the time factor needed within one's role to carry out the sourcing of businesses and the connecting of students into the right business. Whilst, businesses can apply for students to work on projects in the current model, our representatives are also aware that staff have to have necessary connections and time to make things work. Our representatives would like assurance that disestablishing this position to raise the research profile of SIM and meet accreditation requirements will not affect students in these courses or planning to undertake these courses in the future.
8. As with other changes occurring at Victoria this year, VUWSA is concerned that changes to Schools and Units do have academic implications which need to be addressed. It is clear that SIM's recognises that academic demands have led to these changes. As the representative organisation of students at Victoria, VUWSA would just like assurance that the flow-on effects are not academic in nature.

Yours sincerely



Seamus Brady

**President**

Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association