

## **21 Australian Universities to take part in Global Survey on the Academic Profession**

“Is this what you expected academia to be?” This is one of the questions academics across the nation, and the world, will be answering as part of the largest survey ever conducted regarding the academic profession and its ability to contribute to knowledge societies.

Beginning next week, the Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at the University of New England (UNE) will invite around 5,500 individuals across 21 Australian universities to participate in the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) survey.

The survey will focus on how changing university environments may affect the attractiveness of the academic profession as a career and the way academics contribute to the wider community.

The study will also be conducted in 20 other countries, namely: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China/Hong Kong, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela. The current study follows up on a Carnegie Foundation project conducted in the early 1990's, of which Australia was also a part. The global CAP survey is being coordinated by the International Centre for Higher Education Research based at Germany's Kassel University.

“This is an important project with the potential to greatly benefit our understanding of the dynamics of the academic profession in Australia and how our academics compare to their colleagues globally,” UNE's Professor Lynn Meek, leader of the Australian team said.

Professor Meek said the CAP survey was particularly well placed to investigate the profession's views on the increasing relevance of internationalisation and managerial adaptations of their workplace, and how its views may be changing on these matters.

“In this period of rapid change stimulated by globalisation and national policies promoting the knowledge economy, it is essential to understand the orientations and actions of knowledge workers, especially those of the academic profession who play such an important part in the knowledge production process” he said.

A common survey instrument has been developed which will be administered to a representative sample of academic staff in the participating countries during 2007. The survey will be administered online, with the Australian data to be incorporated into the international set, enabling international comparative analyses regarding the changing nature of the academic profession.

Questions for the study include:

- To what extent is the nature of academic work changing?
- What are the external and internal drivers of these changes?
- To what extent do changes differ between countries, disciplines and types of higher education institutions?
- How do academic professions respond to changes in their external and internal environment?
- What are the consequences for the attractiveness of an academic career?
- What are the consequences for the capacity of academics to contribute to the further development of knowledge societies and the attainment of national goals?

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