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The motif on the cover is based on a nineteenth century carving of a ship's prow from Choiseul, Solomon Islands. To *Directions: Journal of Education Studies,* it signifies forward movement.

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Curriculum Review and Development in the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education, The University of the South Pacific.

This Issue is dedicated to the loving memory of Vulori Sarai who passed away in 2019.

She was a phenomenal woman - friend, colleague and educator par excellence. Her words will live on through this Issue and her work will live on through the lives of her many students.

Concluding and Continuing Curriculum Review and Development Work

Matthew Hayward, School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

This special issue of *Directions* presents reflections upon an extended round of curriculum review and development, conducted by particular academics and administrators, at a particular institution, at a particular time. In 2017, the University of the South Pacific undertook its second major curriculum review initiative of the decade, following (though not directly continuing from) the Strategic Total Academic Review project (STAR), which had commenced in 2010. As would be expected from a large group of academics across diverse disciplines, there were a range of responses. But it is fair to say that in many sections, the team tasked with facilitating the curriculum review process met with a staff already experiencing a considerable amount of administrative fatigue. That the final experiences recorded in this special issue are generally positive is a testament to the patience and dedication of the curriculum review team, and the willingness of academics to rise to what was in some quarters perhaps an unwelcome challenge.

In some disciplines, particularly where there was continuity with the STAR project, things seem to have run relatively smoothly from the start. As reported by Yoko Kanemasu, Tui Rakuita and Andreas Kopf in their contribution to this volume, academic staff in their discipline approached the latest curriculum review process with aplomb, supported by school-level workshops, structured reporting, and a stable roster of retained STAR trainers. With continuous administrative support, group discussions seem not to have questioned the value of the curriculum review process in itself, but to have considered how it may best be made to work for a Pacific-oriented curriculum.

Elsewhere, there was stronger resistance. As Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Ledua Waqailiti and Vulori Sarai report, curriculum review activities were seen by some in their school as 'irrelevant' or 'a waste of time', and while progress could be made with the curriculum review team present, once they departed, 'havoc happened'. In a reactionary setting, it may not be a coincidence that the authors describe a gendered dimension to this disunity, with a 'men's club' mentality undervaluing the contributions of the female academics on the team. Yet when three women academics—each with their own preconceptions on the process, from open enthusiasm, to overburdened reluctance—came together with the curriculum development team, they discovered an 'enriching process' that helped the academic to 'enjoy teaching', and the student to enjoy 'improved exam results'. One author's resolve to pass on her experience of curriculum review to trainee teachers indicates a lasting benefit that goes beyond the immediate aims of the exercise.

If an institutionally driven curriculum review activity appeared in some contexts as an intrusion upon fixed orders, elsewhere it was a formality that seemed to distract from the substantial work already underway. Fiona Willans details her experience of an earlier phase of curriculum work—still connected with STAR, and, tellingly, introduced at the time as 'curriculum mapping' rather than 'curriculum review' or 'development'—and cautions against paperwork exercises that require staff to fill in tables without any serious explanation of their purpose. Against this superficial approach, Willans presents three cases in which curriculum mapping has provided what she sees as genuinely value to programmes at three different stages of development: the initial planning phase, when the broad social aims behind a programme's conception must be refined into realisable, complementary outcomes; a later, transitional phase, when a programme has been pulled out of alignment by the different conceptions of successive coordinators over a number of years; and a still later phase, where dwindling student numbers suggest that a programme is, for whatever reason, no longer meeting the

requirements of prospective students. Willans shows that curriculum mapping was a vital part of the conception and/or development of these programmes, reminding us that curriculum review is an essential part of academic life, and that it can work effectively within functioning disciplines regardless of managerial agendas.

Willans concludes her reflection upon the earlier round of curriculum mapping by calling upon the institution to 'see beneath the admin and recognise a truly valuable and ongoing exercise', suggesting that her experience has left lasting reservations about institutional commitment to the process. It is reassuring that the article by Joseph D. Foukona, Morsen Mosses, Sofia S. Shah and Jessie Chella, reflecting on the 2017–19 round of curriculum review conducted in the School of Law, suggests much progress in this respect has already been made. It was clearly not without its challenges. As the authors explain, there are real disciplinary reasons for the initial scepticism of some of their colleagues. Historically, legal education has remained close to the traditional tertiary pedagogical model, where individual experts maintain ownership of particular courses reflecting their special areas of expertise, and students go from class to class with little 'direct coordination between subjects'. Times were changing even before the school undertook the curriculum review and development work in 2018, but as the authors note, the received pedagogy has remained in many ways at odds with the constructivist principles that underpin curriculum alignment.

If traditional legal education could be 'isolating for both teachers and students', this sense has perhaps been compounded at USP by the geographical location of the School of Law. Based at Emalus Campus, Vanuatu, staff have with some justification felt removed from executive decision-making at the main campus in Suva. In this context, it is understandable that staff may have interpreted the 2017–19 curriculum review process as yet another imposition from senior management, in which they had little say. That Foukona, Mosses, Shah and Chella describe a procedure that was ultimately productive and empowering is a testament to the independence of the school, and a sign that top-down requests can be met with a 'bottom-up approach', where staff members 'take ownership on how best to improve their course[s]'.

Under this model, formalised curriculum work is a dialogic process, initiated by senior management, guided and documented by the curriculum development team, and enacted within the disciplines by academics on the ground. The experience described by Law academics show that such a dialogic approach can satisfy the various needs of the different—to adopt the contemporary managerial parlance—stakeholders. The university achieves its desired outcome: a working curriculum map, showing that the courses constituting a given academic programme combine to produce the graduates the university claims it produces, verifiable through a series of aligned assessments. The school maintains ownership of its programmes at every level, and—collaborating with the curriculum development team and representatives from the faculty—experience active involvement in university initiatives. At the same time, faculty representatives gain a greater understanding of the peculiarities of a particular discipline, and, in the specific case of the School of Law, a refined understanding of the importance of precise language in curriculum work. Here, then, Law appears not as an old-fashioned discipline which has to 'catch up' with the rest of the university, but as a valued and valuable contributor to an institutional process.

Foukona, Mosses, Shah and Chella report a change in the school's understanding of this process, from the initial perception of a 'time-consuming hassle with lots of paperwork', to an 'enriching experience working together as a team to ensure there was curriculum alignment'. It is this process of 'changing minds and hearts' that Dorothy Spiller, Ann Cheryl Armstrong and Sujlesh Sharma discuss in their contribution to this special issue. Surveying USP academics' perceptions of curriculum development work, they reflect on the different narratives that academics bring to curriculum review, corroborating the range of views presented in the articles of this special issue. Spiller, Armstrong and Sharma observe

that one of the more stubborn narratives is the view that managerial initiatives are encroachments upon the 'real or imagined university culture of the past'. While the authors are sensitive to the experiences that underlie this narrative, they rightly conclude that it is not in itself productive, tending towards the maintenance of the status quo, and remaining incompatible with the continual self-reflection and development that must form the heart of curriculum development. Noting the generally positive accounts of academics reporting 'the enjoyment of participation and working collectively', they call for greater commitment from the university management in terms of 'how they involve the academic community'.

Spiller, Armstrong and Sharma acknowledge that the 2017–19 round of curriculum development was driven by senior management, 'against the backdrop of an institution-wide accreditation process'. However, they point out that it was from the start also intended to foster self-sustaining Communities of Practice, with disciplines maintaining 'collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need'. The articles comprising this special issue suggest that such ambitions will be most valuable for those programmes where either the curriculum has fallen well out of alignment, or where staff are for whatever reason disengaged from the commitment to continual self-reflection and re-evaluation of the curriculum. The process may be less transformative for those programmes already operating with strong, discipline-based COP, where the involvement of an institutionally directed team may be taken as an interference, or a rehashing of an already well-thought-out alignment. Yet even here, it may not be without use, since academics in these programmes will likely have ideas that can be usefully shared with others in the university, via the curriculum development team.

There is no denying that the requirement for yet more reporting and documentation can be a burden to a programme where serious, targeted curriculum revision is already underway. However, in my experience of the 2017–19 round of curriculum review, we received considerable administrative support in updating and maintaining the documentation. In my own discipline, Literature, I have twice been involved with curriculum review at USP. The first time, at the tail-end of the STAR project in 2013–15, I was tasked with mapping the programme; without any clear explanation of the purpose or the process, and still less any institutional or administrative support, I conducted the work largely alone. It was, unsurprisingly, a distracting and largely meaningless exercise, producing documentation that was, I am sure, scarcely read by anyone, and which had little effect on the programme as a whole. The second time, in 2017–19, I worked as part of a team, comprising most of the Literature staff, an Assessment and Curriculum Consultant, and a Curriculum Review Coordinator. This time round, I found it truly productive. The questions and suggestions posed by the curriculum development team encouraged us to reflect upon and revise the aims of specific courses, and their place within the programme as a whole; to reconsider the function of particular assignments within courses, ensuring the distribution of a suitable range of assessment types across the programme; and to generate collegial cooperation in developing our understanding of the function of the Literature programme, moving away from the maintenance of largely discrete courses, as had been the norm.

The emphasis was upon the process rather than the report—the territory rather than the map—and it was this that made it for me a valuable and productive experience. Yet I also felt considerable administrative relief, especially when compared with the previous round. Against our busy timetables, it was the Curriculum Review Coordinator who scheduled our meetings and kept us accountable to the process. And in the meetings, while the team discussed and adjusted assessment, course and programme components, it was the Curriculum Review Coordinator who recorded all changes as we went; after each meeting, she would produce clean copies of the latest rubrics, outcomes and map. This meant that the paperwork was done for us, while we concentrated on the big picture, the alignment of the programme as a whole—surely the academic's ideal scenario.

My experience of the 2017–19 curriculum review process, is consistent with those described in the contributions to this special issue of *Directions*, suggesting that a centrally driven initiative can work well, so long as academics are given ownership of the procedure, and encouraged to accept it as a formalisation of an inherently valuable process, rather than a distraction from that process. However, in the specific context of the University of the South Pacific, ownership is not only a matter of personal academic preference. Beginning in 2017, the curriculum work discussed in this special issue came in a period of institutional transition. On the one hand, half a century from its founding by Royal Charter, USP has come some way in decolonising its curricula and embedding Pacific values within university life. In 1997, Epeli Hau'ofa founded the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies. Since then, 'Pacific consciousness' has been institutionally validated as an expected outcome for undergraduate and postgraduate students, with all programmes required to demonstrate how they contribute to this outcome. In 2012, the Centre's Pacific Worlds course was made compulsory for all undergraduate students, and in 2018 it launched a BA Major in Pacific Studies, Heritage and Arts. In this respect, the university is doing more than ever to honour the 'cultural heritage and diversity of Pacific societies', as stated in the university's formalised graduate outcomes.

At the same time, the university aspires—again, more than ever before—towards international recognition, ranking and accreditation. Across the past decade in particular, senior management have introduced a number of reviews, consultancies, workshops and programmes that were implicitly or explicitly intended to bring the university in line with international standards and practices. It must be said that, at least in the early days, not all of these initiatives were carefully explained to staff at all levels, and my experience of corridor conversations in the early part of the 2010s suggest that if there was an overarching strategy behind these projects, it was not well understood on the ground. It must also be said that greater unification was felt from around 2016, when the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) mobilised a range of well-explained measures, culminating in 2018 with the university's accreditation under the US-based accreditor WSUSC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission).

The two drives—towards Pacific-oriented curricula and practices, and international standards and accreditation—are not in themselves incompatible, but they have sometimes been at tension. As Armstrong, Waqailiti and Sarai report here, part of the resistance to the 2017–19 curriculum development project felt in their school stemmed from staff 'not liking the fact that other people were telling us to do this exercise', because 'from a Pacific island perspective, there are those of us who don't take too kindly for those from outside telling us what to do'. The university administration has a history of bringing in outside consultants to instruct on things that academics felt were being doing very well already, or to present general principles that may not have spoken to our particular situations.

The positive experiences outlined in this special issue are evidence that this feeling can be overcome, if the consultant is sympathetic to this context, and responsive to academics' needs and concerns. But with Pacific pedagogies, philosophies and methodologies so often marginalised within Pacific education generally, and the university specifically, there is also an understandable suspicion of educational practices and principles brought in from the outside. This suspicion is perhaps compounded when these practices arrive as part of the institutional push towards global recognition. The curriculum development work described in this special issue was not directly initiated as part of the bid for WSUSC accreditation, though the two processes did coalesce in the reporting, but the language of the curriculum development work covered here—constructivism, curriculum alignment, and so on—are the dominant terms in contemporary pedagogical discourse, and may therefore bear connotations of globalising trends that are blind to Pacific pedagogical traditions.

Yet as Kanemasu, Rakuita and Kopf point out in their article here, there is no inherent incompatibility between Pacific modes and 'outside' pedagogies or technologies. And while the introduction of the latter takes place in situated conditions, where various factors—technological, cultural, institutional, disciplinary—shape and delimit what can be done with them, the history of 'formal' education in the Pacific is the history of Pacific ingenuity in adapting imposed practices to meet local requirements. It is telling that Konai Helu Thaman—who has done more than anyone else in the university to argue for the importance of Pacific epistemologies in Pacific tertiary education—is the one academic named by Armstrong, Waqailiti and Sarai as having already been actively working towards both curriculum development and alignment, and a functioning Community of Practice, long before this curriculum review initiative was underway. This illustrates the importance of Kanemasu, Rakuita and Kopf's caution against the oversimplification of complex cultural and pedagogical developments into a simple binary that would separate Pacific practice from 'outside' influences. Pacific educators have ample experience of incorporating, adapting and indigenising all manner of modes and materials, according to present Pacific needs.

Ownership is therefore paramount, whether we think at the level of the postcolonial region—instilling and maintaining Pacific principles in a globalised educational context—or the academic programme, retaining disciplinary agency in an institutionally driven process of revision. The experiences reflected in this special issue show that in either case, the university has an important role to play. It has a responsibility to honour the commitment to Pacific needs stated in its university graduate outcomes, integrating 'traditional and contemporary practices to sustain Pacific societies'. It is also a reality that the university has to compete with other institutions, across the member countries and internationally, and it may do so by playing to its unique strengths and potentials—certainly by supporting disciplines such as Pacific Studies, Marine Studies and Pacific Languages, but also by truly embedding Pacific values, epistemologies and experiences into curricula and campus life. Curriculum review and development, including mapping and alignment, has the potential to perform at both levels, providing the documentation needed by accreditors, national higher education authorities, and other partners, while driving the self-reflection and development needed to ensure that our programmes remain properly responsive to the Pacific societies the university serve.

As described above, I have gone through two centralised rounds of curriculum review at USP. The first round focussed primarily upon the map, requiring a particular job by a particular deadline, without informing why it was needed or what would be done with it. It produced the report, but no self-reflection. The second round, with the support of the curriculum review team, allowed for discussions that led to serious reflection within the discipline, refining our assessments and courses towards real improvements in the programme. The documentation was secondary, but the careful mapping of these courses was handled through the administrative support provided for in the centralised process—a relief not to be underestimated when deadlines are so many. Given the success of this round, as recorded by the contributors to this special issue, the university might wish to consider the establishment of a permanent Curriculum Development Unit. A glance through other university websites will show that this is a standard feature for universities of a comparable size, and while it would, to my knowledge, be the first of its kind in the Pacific Islands, this may be one of those measures that help USP to stand out from its regional counterparts.

With or without a formal Curriculum Development Unit, for the university to sustain the goodwill and momentum recorded in this special issue of *Directions* as it extends the curriculum review process to other programmes, it has a duty to invest—perhaps in resources and staff, but, most fundamentally, in the process rather than the report. The articles presented here demonstrate what can be achieved when this investment is made, and offer a valuable resource towards the planning and preparation for this next stage.