

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Studies in Australian Universities

Rolffe Peacock, Chapter 2 appendix B, *Understanding Small Business: Practice, Theory and Research* (2nd edition, 2004)

.....emerges from research.....small business and entrepreneurship education will provide the drive and impetus for growth in an enterprise culture and increase in economic health. (Carland and Carland 1993)

The research illustrated a clear bias towards training students to work in large organisations, rather than equipping them with the business and entrepreneurial skills to help them succeed in small business (K. Clayton, ASCPA Small Business Adviser, June 25 1999).

Whilst there has been some growth since the early 1990s, small business and entrepreneurship education in Australia has not achieved the prominence of education programs offered throughout the world (J. Breen, ASCPA Small Business Committee, June 25 1999).

In Australia at the end of the twentieth century, the terms enterprise and entrepreneurship are still seen as vague and confusing, and at least partly responsible for the poor understanding by the education community and ultimately a poor level of involvement in education and training activities in this field (J. Breen, January 6 2000).

There is an important case to be made for Australian universities to include small business and entrepreneurship studies within their programs (Peacock 1997). Beginning with the Wiltshire Inquiry (1971), various surveys, researchers, commentators and the federal government have urged universities to provide such studies; however, there are few structured small business and entrepreneurship courses taught within most Australian universities (Kelmar 1988, McCosker 1991, Waldmann 1993, Breen and Burgin 1999a). The views of a sample of graduates of the University of South Australia add support to the case - a majority of respondents feel that a small business subject should be part of current teaching programs.

A number of overseas writers have argued that higher education should have an important role because of its benefits to the small business sector (Zeithaml and Rice 1987; Gibb and Scott 1987; Chamard 1989; Hanage 1992). Appropriate university studies can open the possibility for more graduates to become small firm owner-managers and employees. The need for management training for self employment and the skilling of employees can be part of their small business education. Students planning a professional career can also be introduced to the possibilities of providing advice and consultancy in the small business sector.

Dolton and Makepeace (1990) estimated an econometric model of the self employment decision for a large sample of UK higher education graduates. Their motivation to do this was in response to pressure on higher education institutions to assist in the growth of the small firm sector. They found that "the decision to become self employed is not totally independent of the subject of degree studied" and that students undertaking management and professional studies had a higher incidence of self employment.

Din and Gibb (1990) evaluated the general failure of the 1971 New Economic Policy in Malaysia to increase entrepreneurship and the number of small businesses. Their recommendations for change included the provision in higher education of "awareness, understanding and insight of the world of work of the owner-manager."

Johnson and Pere-Verge (1993) surveyed UK owner-managers of SMEs regarding their employment of graduates. Their motivation for the study was that SMEs were increasingly becoming major players in the graduate employment marketplace. From their findings they concluded that higher education needs to provide for an awareness by students of their potential usefulness as SME employees and to help provide required skills.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Studies

The earliest formal education relating to small business had to do with the start up, management and operation of small firms. These are the fundamental themes of the early textbooks and also many current ones. (1)

From the 1960s there arose, especially in the US, strong interest in the teaching of "entrepreneurship". Despite this, there remains no agreement as to a definition of an entrepreneur in contrast to that of a small business owner-manager (Hornaday 1990, Moran 1998). Most people would accept that an entrepreneur is the high-flying achiever who "gets big things done" in any organisation, although most publicity is given to such a person who grows a very large business.

Proponents of a separate entrepreneurship discipline tend to restrict entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial sector is viewed as "emerging enterprise, start ups and new firms" and Hindle (1999) defines entrepreneurship as "..... the creation and management of a new organisation designed to pursue a unique opportunity and achieve rapid profitable growth". This "new venture approach" is in contrast to a wider "managerial approach" to the concept of entrepreneurship which is not restricted to new ventures.

The first tertiary level courses in small business (having to do with managing and operating small firms) emerged in the 1940s in the US and Japan, and then in all western countries in the decades following (Sexton and Bowman 1984, Schaper 1999).

Waldmann (1993) states that during the 1980s US universities began offering under graduate majors in entrepreneurship. The objectives of the courses according to Plaschke and Welsch (1990) were to:

- identify and evaluate the characteristics of prospective entrepreneurs,
- evaluate the opportunities and risks of a venture,
- assemble financial, technical and human resources to initiate a new venture, and
- create, develop, acquire or merge a business.

In 1986 Solomon reported 418 US educational organisations with formal entrepreneurship courses and Hills and Welsch (1986) found that 80% of business students expressed an interest in taking one or more courses in entrepreneurship/new ventures.

In 1993 Waldmann compared small business and entrepreneurship education in Australia and the US and found only two Australian universities that offered degrees that included a significant emphasis on small business. One of these concentrated on retail management. There was no Australian university offering entrepreneurship as a course or as a major at either under graduate or post graduate levels. Individual small business and entrepreneurship/new venture subjects were available in only a minority of universities.

Australian Surveys and Reports

There have been a number of Australian surveys and reports regarding small business education at all levels (primary and secondary school, tertiary education and vocational education). The following make a case for universities to provide studies in entrepreneurship and small business.

The focus of the Wiltshire Inquiry (1974) was upon the management aspects of the small business sector and the problems of the need for manager-owners to wear the many "hats" of functional and general management without the aid of internal specialists. It argued therefore for the necessity to develop small business management education programs and that universities had a role in providing "Formal undergraduate courses in small business administration".

In 1979 the National Training Council commissioned a national survey of small business education and training needs, and the report was produced by Bailey and Royston (1981). It was recommended that small business oriented under graduate and post graduate electives or courses should be established to "present a further option for employment to students". It

was felt that this should be particularly the case in professional areas 'where graduates may eventually be responsible for managing their own small businesses'.

In 1982 the Ralph Committee handed down its report to the federal government. It had been established to examine the state of management education in general in Australia, and to examine the special needs of small business for management education. It strongly supported the recommendations by Bailey and Royston for small business education at the tertiary level, and its Recommendation 43 stated "That formal programs in business and management education in tertiary institutions include at least one elective in small business management".

Following the Ralph Report, the federal government requested that the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Committee examine in detail the training needs of small business. The subsequent report (CTEC 1984) agreed that "Degree courses in business/commerce should include units which are related to small business activity and the management of small businesses" because tertiary students should be regarded nationally as potential intenders and therefore encouraged to consider entrepreneurship and self employment as career alternatives. The report, undertaken by emeritis Professor G. Meredith, argued that because university graduates were a significant proportion of multiplier agents providing services to small businesses, and small business researchers and policymakers, there was a need for small business studies in degree programs.

The Beddall Inquiry (1990) confirmed the belief of small business advisory groups and trade associations that management education should be incorporated into tertiary education "..... in order to reach the maximum number of people that may, at some stage of their careers, be owner-managers of a small business". Evidence to the committee also indicated that a large number of students undertaking professional tertiary courses eventually found themselves managing their own business, but had received very little preparation in management education.

In a report by the Employment and Skills Formation Council (1994), the capacity to identify and exploit wealth creation and employment possibilities was linked with a need to increase efforts to incorporate enterprise education into courses at all levels (p. 36).

The Karpin Inquiry (1995) concluded that the Australian community did not support an enterprise culture and argued that Australians needed a better developed entrepreneurial spirit. Of the five key challenges for economic growth in Australia identified in the report of the Inquiry, the first was development of a positive enterprise culture through education and training (p. xviii). It stated that primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary students needed to be exposed to the value of enterprising and entrepreneurial behaviour. In the first of its 28 recommendations the Inquiry asked higher education to provide "units in entrepreneurship and small business formation and management". The aim was to include skilling for potential small business owner-managers.

Australian higher education institutions have been urged to provide small business and entrepreneurship studies in order to:

- facilitate enterprising behaviour,
- add small business management and employment to the possibilities for graduate employment,
- promote the provision of services and consultancy to small business managers, and to
- provide a background for small business researchers and policymakers.

According to a number of commentators and researchers however the actual performance of Australian universities in providing such education has been limited.

Australian Commentators and Researchers

Kelmar (1988) said that Australian universities did not perceive a great demand for specific small enterprise courses, whereas in the United States a proliferation of courses had emerged within the university system. He attributed this to a general belief in Australia that "small business will take care of itself" and that in any case the TAFE system had developed

small business management courses. He felt that universities had an opportunity “to develop courses in small enterprise philosophy”.

McCosker (1991) in exploring the topic of “What Can Universities Offer Small Business” claimed that although at least 19 universities were involved in teaching small business management, the majority of universities gave little attention to small firms. He said that many Australian academics had little understanding of the valuable contribution and the unique needs of small business, and that those in authority had not fully recognised the validity of relevant enterprise education and research. He argued that universities had a complementary role to entities such as TAFE, industry organisations and small business development bodies which provided hands-on training for starting enterprises and for managing going concerns. Universities could provide information, advice and research for small business, and could educate professional graduates in small business management for their own needs and to better service the small business sector.

Williams (1991) claimed that the overall education system, including universities, placed most of its emphasis on preparing students to be employees in large firms and the public sector, or to become employed professionals. What was needed to restore the balance was an equal emphasis on “entrepreneurial aspirations and action”. Education was needed which could lead to innovation, independent action and new enterprise.

Waldmann (1993) compared entrepreneurial and small business education in Australian universities with that in the US. By examining the under graduate and post graduate handbooks of all Australian universities for the 1992 academic year he concluded that “neither SB education nor entrepreneurship is considered an important topic in most Australian universities”. The findings contrasted sharply with figures available from the US where small business education and entrepreneurship were considered important topics in the majority of universities.

The latest overview of small business and entrepreneurship university education has been provided by Breen and Bergin (1999a).

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Education in Australian Universities, 1998

J. Breen and S. Bergin released in March 1999 a survey, jointly sponsored by the Australian Society of CPAs and the Small Business Research Unit of the Victoria University of Technology. The aim was to follow on from the Karpin Report (1995) and to ascertain the university attitude towards, and the extent and type of teaching of, small business and entrepreneurship education in Australian universities.

A questionnaire was mailed to 170 Heads of Business Departments and other individual staff at 39 universities. Non-business faculties were not surveyed on the assumption that little small business and entrepreneurship teaching took place there.

A total of 135 responses was received representing an 89% response rate, including 59 questionnaires from departments which taught small business and entrepreneurship. All 39 universities responded.

Responses were sought to the statement, *I believe there is a need to develop an **enterprise culture** in Australia.* A high proportion of 87% of respondents agreed with the statement and 80% believed that universities had a role to play in such development. 65% agreed with the statement *It is important for business students to study small business and/or entrepreneurship.* However for both statements the positive response was heavily skewed by respondents who taught small business and/or entrepreneurship eg. only 37% of non-teachers in the areas agreed with the second statement.

Collected data indicated that 29 of the 39 universities taught small business or entrepreneurship subjects, either as part of a complete course in these areas or as separate elective subjects. A further three universities covered similar material in other subjects. Half of the teaching took place in three major disciplines – business/commerce,

accounting/finance, and management, and the newer, less traditional universities generally had a greater teaching involvement.

In 1998 only ten universities (26% of the 39 respondents) offered between them 15 complete small business or entrepreneurship **courses** (defined as a series of subjects which satisfy requirements for a formal qualification such as a certificate, diploma or degree).

Only five **under graduate courses** were available at four universities, and all had low student enrolments (averaging 19 students). These courses all majored in small business rather than entrepreneurship: **(2)**

- Bachelor of Business (SB Management)
- Bachelor of Enterprise Management
- Bachelor of Commerce (SB Management)
- Bachelor of Business (Accounting and SE Management)
- Bachelor of Business (Tourism and SE Management)

A further ten **post graduate courses** were offered at seven universities, comprising six one-year graduate certificates, 2 graduate diplomas, an MBA in New Venture Management, and a Masters in Enterprise Innovation. The majority of the courses focussed on entrepreneurship, new venture management or innovation. With the exception of a 1998 enrolment of 111 students in the Masters course at Swinburne University, other enrolments averaged only 22 students.

Previous studies (Kirchmajer 1994) had identified as “key players” universities which offered three or more subjects in small business or entrepreneurship. In addition to the ten universities offering complete courses in 1998, a further six universities offered at least three subjects in the fields. The 16 **key players** comprised:

(C) means course/s and (S) means subjects.

NSW Southern Cross University (C); University of Newcastle (S); University of New England (S); University of Technology Sydney (S); Wollongong University (S).

QLD Griffith University (C); Queensland University of Technology (C); University of Queensland (C); Bond University (S).

SA University of SA (C); University of Adelaide (C).

VIC Swinburne University of Technology (C); Victoria University of Technology (C); La Trobe University (S).

WA Curtin University of Technology (C); Murdoch University (C).

In addition to the 16 key players a further 13 universities offered two subjects each or less.

Details were not provided of **subjects** taught within the 15 courses. Of the remaining subjects, 44 post graduate and 57 under graduate subjects were taught in 1998.

The breakup of these subjects below indicates that 42% of all subjects covered entrepreneurship, but these comprised 52% of all post graduate subjects compared to 33% of all under graduate subjects. 27% of subjects covered small business management, but predominated in under graduate courses (32% of all subjects) compared with 20% of all post graduate subjects.

Total	UG	PG	
SB Management	18 32%	9 20%	27
“Entrepreneurship” *	19 33%	23 52%	42
SB Finance/Accounting	8 14%	6 14%	14
Other	12 21%	6 14%	18
	57 100%	44 100%	101

* includes subject titles related to start ups, and innovation,

Student enrolments for the 1998 courses were 75 (UG) and 268 (PG), and for non-course subjects 3240 (UG) and 1098 (PG). **However all enrolments represented less than 1% of business and management students in the universities.**

Breen and Bergin believed that there had been considerable **growth** in small business and entrepreneurship education since 1995. More than twice as many universities now offered at least three subjects in the field, and the number of subjects had probably doubled. Most of the universities participating in the survey expected an increase in enrolments in the area in 1999.

Despite apparent growth it remained true that Australia still has a long way to go to approximate the prominence of equivalent programs offered in the rest of the world and especially in the US.

Respondents were asked for the factors which they regarded as “significant **barriers** to small business and/or entrepreneurship education at your university”. The major barrier epitomises the poor small business image in Australia as part of a poor enterprise culture (refer Chapter 1). 41% of respondents felt that “small business and/or entrepreneurship are low on departmental priorities” and 44% said that there was a “lack of staff interest in small business and entrepreneurship”.

Another predominant barrier (according to 48% of respondents) was the “volume of other content specified by requirements of professional bodies”. These requirements squeeze out the number of elective subjects available to students but also beg the question as to why small business / entrepreneurship subjects are not part of professional requirements. In particular, the two professional accountancy bodies and the banking/finance bodies have never specified such subjects as essential for professional guidance.

One of the researchers, J. Breen (January 2000) believes that a barrier has also been created by the vague and confusing terminology between enterprise, entrepreneurship and small business (see earlier in this chapter and also Chapter 1):

The confusion of terminology between enterprise, entrepreneurship and small business often means that poor public perceptions associated with operating a small business lead to the same perception of activities that fall under the label of either enterprise or entrepreneurship (p. 6).

Only 26% of respondents felt that there was a lack of student interest in small business and entrepreneurship (36% disagreed with this, and 28% were unsure). When asked what might encourage their departments to offer more studies in these areas the main **catalyst** was “increased student demand” (27% of respondents).

Given the low small business image in Australia this will not happen naturally as a matter of course. The lack of priority given to the issue by academics and their departments has been indicated as a barrier, and 41% of respondents also said that “staff with interest and expertise are otherwise committed”. Catalysts for change therefore have to be external to the university sector. These need to be government in pursuit of a sound enterprise culture, bodies representing small businesses and industry, and professionals such as accountants, financiers and managers.

Breen and Bergin (1999b)) also stressed the vital role of the existing “champions” already teaching and researching small business and entrepreneurship, some 80 academics:

Further growth of teaching in this field may depend on interested academics convincing their departments to place a higher priority on teaching small business and entrepreneurship education. The continued support of external bodies is crucial in enabling existing academics to influence their departmental colleagues to develop this field as a priority area of study (p. 46).

Breen and Bergin (1999a) found that there was generally not a lack of interest by students in small business and entrepreneurship. Kelmar (1988) found that 58% of graduates from the University of New England "would have been interested in studying a unit on small enterprise management". The following section provides the graduate viewpoint from the University of South Australia.

Alumni Viewpoint

Following the only recorded systematic survey of Australian university graduates concerning small business teaching undertaken by Kelmar (1988), a questionnaire was prepared for graduates of the University of South Australia (Peacock 1997). It included topics covered by Kelmar plus additional information. A convenience sample of graduates was obtained as follows.

New Outlook was a quarterly periodical issued by the University of South Australia to graduates, general and academic staff, sponsors and contacts. The actual number of recipients within each group is not known but the graduates would number many thousands. In the March 1996 section, within the Alumni section, the writer asked graduate readers to provide their views on small business studies in the university. A questionnaire was inserted in each copy of the edition with a reply-paid envelope.

It cannot be claimed that the result was a statistically representative sample of all the students of past years. There would be many graduates who did not receive *New Outlook* and their addresses are unknown. The strength of the survey lies in the fact that there were 1,602 responses and as far as is known this is the largest group of graduate comments ever made in Australia regarding small business education in universities. 1,602 survey forms were completed by 977 males (61%) and 625 females (39%). The discipline groupings in which they graduated are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1
GRADUATING DISCIPLINES

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Applied Science and Technology	244	15	66	34
Art, Architecture and Design	91	6	49	51
Business and Management	505	31	77	23
Education	218	14	33	67
Engineering	229	14	96	4
Health and Biomedical Sciences	62	4	32	68
Humanities and Social Sciences	126	8	30	70
Nursing	76	5	9	91
Other	51	3	62	38
	1,602	100		

The largest response (31%) came from the disciplines of Business and Management which comprise the largest faculty of the current University with 21% of students in 1995. Lowest responses came from Health and Biomedical Sciences (4%) and Nursing (5%), both new and small disciplines in the University. The male/female proportion of responses were generally indicative of the disciplines involved, with female responses predominating in Health and Biomedical Sciences, Education, Humanities and Social

Sciences, and Nursing, and male responses dominating in Applied Science and Technology and Engineering. Since the current ratios of male/female students in Art, Architecture and Design, and in Business and Management, are close to one, the response from Art, Architecture and Design is about as expected, but a greater female response could have been expected in the Business and Management disciplines.

More attention began to be paid to small businesses by the Government and the media from the early 1980s and 75% of the respondents obtained their qualifications in this period, 13% in the 1970s, 7% in the 1960s and the remaining 5% before 1960. 77% of respondents obtained qualifications at the bachelor, master or Phd level, and the balance of 23% in certificates, associate diplomas and diplomas.

SB Operators and Advisors

It was found that a significant proportion of graduates had close ties with the small business sector.

The question was asked *Are you, or have you been, a small business owner-manager since graduation?* Overall, 25% of all graduates (404 persons), answered in the affirmative. They comprised 291 males and 113 females i.e. the latter comprised 28% of the small business operators. This can be contrasted with the general belief that women comprised about one third of all small business owner-managers in Australia (ABS cat 1321.0, 1996; cat 8127.0, 1996).

The question was also asked *Since graduating, have you provided professional advice, or acted as a consultant, to small business owner-managers?* 26% of all graduates said Yes. The composition of 305 males (74%) and 106 females (26%) was similar to that for manager-owners. The main areas in which advice or consultancy was offered by the 411 graduates comprised:

	%
Management	32
Accounting and taxation	21
Consultancy	19
Computing	7
Marketing	5
Legal aspects	3
Other	13
	<hr/> 100% <hr/>

Small Business Management Studies

One of the main purposes of the research was to ascertain the extent to which students had been exposed to small business studies in their courses and how this compared with their views now of the role of such studies in current programs of the University.

In response to the question *In your university studies did you undertake one or more small business management subjects?* 234 graduates said Yes i.e. 15% of the sample. The overall percentage is well below those given for small business ownership-management (25%) and for assistance/consulting (26%), but varied considerably between discipline groupings from 27% in Business and Management to 6% in Health and Biomedical Sciences, 3% in Education and 1% in Nursing.

Small Business Topics

Graduates were given a list of 13 possible topics for a small business subject and asked to rank the five they regarded as the most important. In his survey Kelmar (1988) nominated 12 topics from which Peacock excluded Control, Staffing, and Selling, but added Human Resources, Innovation and Commercialisation, Franchising, and Computers. The exercise was an attempt to ascertain the views of graduates now employed in the workforce regarding

the areas of small business study deemed important by them. 1,368 graduates responded and their rankings are shown in Table 2.

The most popular topic in this survey and also in Kelmar's survey was the general one of Small Business Management Practice and Planning. Then followed in this survey the technical topics of Finances and Financial Management, Marketing, Legal Considerations, Taxation Aspects of Small Business, and Accounting Practices. The remaining 7 topics received much lower weighted rankings and first preferences. The topic of Entrepreneurship Development which ranked second in the Kelmar survey had a low ninth in the South Australian results with only 68 first preferences. Innovation and Commercialisation was not suggested by Kelmar but recorded only 33 first preferences in South Australia. In selecting the small business topics the South Australian graduates have given little weight to the more entrepreneurial aspects of small business studies.

TABLE 2

PREFERRED TOPICS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Weighted Average (1)</u>	<u>1st Preference (2)</u>
Small Business Management Practice and Planning	4,603	650
Finances and Financial Management	2,738	177
Marketing	2,625	158
Legal Considerations	2,173	130
Taxation Aspects of Small Business	2,058	82
Accounting Practices	2,019	102
Human Resources	1,272	77
Computers	1,208	76
Entrepreneurship Development	1,139	68
Innovation and Commercialisation	683	33
Exports	174	11
Franchising	167	10
Imports	98	5

- (1) 5,4,3,2,1 points allocated for first, second, third, fourth and fifth preferences respectively
- (2) 1 point allocated for first preference

Current Small Business Subject

Better informed views of people regarding the worth of studies to themselves and their professions and occupations can be found after graduation when experience has been gained in the workforce and the community. In the final section of the survey form graduates were therefore asked *Do you feel that a small business management subject should be part of the present teaching program for your discipline in the University of SA?* Overall, 64% of the graduates (1,020) answered in the affirmative, comprising 693 males (68%) and 327 females (32%) – see Table 3. Within the discipline groupings of Art, Architecture and Design, Business and Management, and Health and Biomedical Sciences, more than 80% of each group said Yes and the lowest number of affirmatives were in Nursing (32%), Education (33%) and Humanities and Social Sciences (36%). Although 16% of the sample replied in the negative, 20% said that they were unsure.

TABLE 3**SB MANAGEMENT TO BE TAUGHT NOW**

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Applied Science and Technology	152
Art, Architecture and Design	74
Business and Management	422
Education	74
Engineering	154
Health and Biomedical Sciences	47
Humanities and Social Sciences	55
Nursing	25
Other	17
	1,020

The survey has indicated that although only 15% of graduates had undertaken some form of small business studies at the university, 64% believe that the current programs for their disciplines should include a small business subject. About a quarter of graduates had become small business operators, and also a quarter had provided formal assistance to small firms. It is not unreasonable to believe that the percentage may have been greater had more students been exposed to the small business culture in their courses.

A Rationale

Why should universities in Australia provide small business studies ? The reasons have been articulated both from official surveys/reports and from knowledgeable commentators, as summarised below. In addition, a majority of graduates sampled from the University of South Australia believe that this should be the case. Note that the students were from the overall university and not restricted to the business and management courses of the university.

1. To redress an imbalance. Because much of university education focusses upon being an employee and large organisations there is a need to also present the direct wealth creating small business sector.
2. To improve the enterprise culture and the small business /entrepreneurship image in Australia.
3. To add to the choices of graduates the opportunities for employment in the small business sector as employer or employee.
4. To point students to what is needed to start up and manage their own business.
5. To improve the advisory services offered to small business owner-managers. University educated professionals need an exposure to the world of small firms.
6. To improve the standards and output of people involved in the research and policymaking of the small business sector.

Action

It is probably unrealistic to imagine all universities in Australia committed to a full program in small business studies, despite the strong reasons for this and the ability of several universities to successfully achieve this. An alternative that has been suggested by the South Australian research is an elective small business subject available to all under graduate disciplines.

The curriculum for the subject could be developed within the rationale provided by the six reasons outlined above.

1. Positive responses of the surveyed graduates to a small business subject can be attributed at least in part to their experiences in the real world after graduation.. The subject therefore should be designed to help solve the awareness problem, to highlight enterprise and wealth creation, and to present the “world of small business” and its stakeholders including employers and employees.
2. The key aspects of start up and small business management should be presented.
3. Technical aspects such as financing and marketing should be explored.
4. Sources of assistance and the roles of advisors and consultants should be studied.
5. The wide role of entrepreneurs/entrepreneurship and innovation should be explored.

This appears a tall order for one subject. It therefore has to be an introductory unit, with the emphasis upon awareness. Depending upon student demand, other subjects may need to be developed to cover aspects in depth. Some may be confined to a specific discipline or faculty. Examples could include Venture Creation, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Franchising, and Small Business Management. The initial awareness subject may be sufficient for a majority of students (many overloaded with the requirements of their discipline) to obtain more “hands on” learning of small business in the vocational education system, after graduation.

Summary

Recent research indicates that small business and entrepreneurship studies are the missing element in many universities in Australia. By 1998 there were only 16 “key player” universities teaching the areas, and only six under graduate courses with an average enrolment of 19 students. All enrolments represented less than 1% of business and management students at the time.

The major reason for such neglect is probably the lack of a strong enterprise culture in the community at large which perceives small business in a poor light.

A case has been made for a structured small business subject to be part of university teaching programs. Reports, surveys and commentators have provided arguments for this, and in the hindsight of their experiences in the business world, 66% of a group of graduates from all faculties of the University of South Australia have recommended this. The broad outline of a suitable subject has been suggested, with a key objective of reducing the lack of awareness of small business in higher education.

NOTES

1. The first US text in this area was Baumbach’s and Lawyer’s *How to Organise and Operate a Small Business* (Prentice Hall, 1940). An early small business text in Australia was L. Brodribb, *The Australian Manual of Small Business Practice* (Sydney: Rydges’ Business Journal, 1967); The first small business management texts designed for classroom teaching were G. Meredith, *Small Business Management in Australia* (Sydney: McGraw Hill, 1977) and B. Johns, W. Dunlop and W. Sheehan, *Small Business in Australia: Problems and Prospects* (Hornsby: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).
2. At the start of 2001 RMIT opened its new program Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship) with 48 students. *Prospective students needed a combination of academic results, a desire to set up business in a specific industry, and appropriate character traits, including an apparent perseverance and an aptitude for teamwork* (Stretton 2001).

REFERENCES

- ABS, Cat. 1321.0, *Small Business in Australia 1995* (Canberra: AGPS, 1996).
- _____, Cat. 8127.0, *Characteristics of Small Business - Australia 1995* (Canberra: AGPS, 1996).
- J. E. Bailey and S. M. Royston, *Small Business Education and Training in Australia. Report on a National Survey Prepared for the National Training Council* (Canberra: AGPS 1981).
- J. Breen, "Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Small Business: Where are the Boundaries?" *Accounting and Finance Research Seminar* (Victoria University of Technology, January 6 2000).
- J. Breen and S. Bergin (a), "An Examination of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Education in Australian Universities," in L. K. Jago and J. Breen (eds.), *Small Business, Smart Business. Proceedings of the 12th Annual SEEANZ Conference* (Melbourne: Victoria University, May 1999), pp. 17-30.
- _____, (b), "Educating Entrepreneurs: Looking at Universities," *Australian CPA* (August 1999), pp. 44-46.
- J. C. Carland and J. W. Carland, "Entrepreneurship Curriculum Design in Developing and Changing Nations: Problems in Following the US Model", in J. Devlin and M. Trevino (eds.) *Free Trade: A Good Bet for Small Business. Proceedings of the 38th International Council for Small Business World Conference* (Las Vegas: 1993).
- J. Charmard, "Public Education: Its Effect on Entrepreneurial Characteristics", *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, 6 (1989), pp. 23 - 30.
- Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Small Business Management Education and Training for Australia. Evaluative study undertaken by G. Meredith.* (Canberra: AGPS, 1984).
- Department of Trade and Industry, *Report of the Committee on Small Business, June 1971* (Canberra: AGPS, 1974). (Wiltshire Inquiry)
- M. S. H. Din and A. Gibb, "Universities, Small businesses and Entrepreneurial Education: Towards a Holistic Approach", *Small Enterprise Development* (December 1990), pp. 27-36.
- P. J. Dolton and G. H. Makepeace, "Self Employment and Graduates", *Bulletin of Economic Research* (January 1990), pp. 35-53.
- Employment and Skills Formation Council, *The Shape of Things to Come: Small Business and Employment Skills* (Canberra: AGPS, 1994).
- A. Gibb and M. G. Scott, *Influencing Graduate Career Aspirations Towards Enterprise and Small Business, A Context Paper* (Durham: Durham University Business School and Department of Employment, 1987).
- R. R. Hanage, *Evaluation of Support Programmes for SMEs: A Quantitative Evaluation of the Durham University Graduate Associate Programme (GAP)*, DUBS Occasional Paper (Durham: Durham University Business School, 1992).
- G. Hills and H. Welsch, "Entrepreneurship Behavioural Intentions and Student Independence Characteristics and Experiences", in R. Ronstadt, J. Hornaday, R. Peterson and K. Vesper (eds.), *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research* (Wellesley, MA: Babson College, 1986).
- K. Hindle, "Here's a guide to identifying a real entrepreneur", *Australian Financial Review* (April 28, 1999), p. 1.
- R. Hornaday, "Dropping the E-Words from Small Business Research: An Alternative Typology", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 28 (1990), pp. 22-33.
- Industry Taskforce on Leadership and Management Skills, *Enterprising Nation: Renewing Australia's Managers to Meet the Challenge of the Asia-Pacific Century. Report of the Industry Taskforce on Leadership and Management Skills* (Canberra: AGPS 1995). (Karpin Inquiry)
- Inquiry into Management Report* (Canberra: AGPS.1982). (Ralph Inquiry)
- D. Johnson and L. Pere-Verge, "Attitudes Towards Graduate Employment in the SME Sector", *International Small Business Journal* (1993), pp. 65-70.
- J. Kelmar, "Should Universities be Teaching Small Enterprise Philosophy?" *Management Forum* (1988), pp. 72-79.
- L. Kirchmajer, "A Review of the Major Academic and Non Academic Entrepreneurship Training and Education Programs in Australia", (Wollongong: Unpublished 1994).
- C. McCosker, "What Can Universities Offer Small Business ?", (Toowoomba: Unpublished 1991).
- P. Moran, "Personality Characteristics and Growth-orientation of the Small Business Owner-Manager", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 16 (1998), pp. 17-38.
- S. Mozell and D. Midgley, "Community Attitudes to Small Business", in Industry Taskforce on Leadership and Management Skills, op cit., pp. 251-271.
- R. Peacock, "Small Business Studies: The Alumni Viewpoint", *Small Enterprise Series no. 33* (Adelaide: University of South Australia, May 1997).
- K. Perry, J. Breen and K. Clayton, "Universities need to get serious about Small Business and Entrepreneurship – new survey", cpaonline.com.au/ June 25 1999.
- G. Plaschke and H. Welsch, "Emerging Structures in Entrepreneurial Education: Curricular Design and Strategies", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (Spring 1990), pp. 55-70.
- M. Schaper, "Internationalising the Small Business Curriculum", in L. K. Jago and J. Breen (eds.), *Small Business, Smart Business. Proceedings of the 12th Annual SEEANZ Conference* (Melbourne: Victoria University, May 1999).

- D. Sexton and N. Bowman, "Entrepreneurship Education: Suggestions for Increasing Effectiveness", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 22 (April 1984), pp. 18-25.
- Small Business in Australia: Challenges, Problems and Opportunities. Report by the House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology* (Canberra: AGPS, 1990). (Beddall Inquiry)
- G. Solomon (ed.), *National Survey of Entrepreneurial Education* (Washington, DC: US Small Business Administration, 3/e 1986).
- G. Solomon, L. Fernald and K. Weaver, "Trends in Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship Education in the United States: An Update", in J. Devlin and M. Trevino (eds.) *Free Trade: A Good Bet for Small Business*. Proceedings of the 38th International Council for Small Business World Conference (Las Vegas: 1993).
- R. Stretton, "Entrepreneurs. Wake Up and Smell the Coffee", *Australian CPA* (June 2001), pp. 23-33.
- E. Waldmann, "Entrepreneurial and/or Small Business Education in Australian Universities", *Accounting Forum* 16 (1993), pp. 62-70.
- A. J. Williams, *Small Business Survival: the Roles of Formal Education, Management Training and Advisory Services*, in Bureau of Industry Economics, *Small Business Review 1990-91* (Canberra: AGPS 1991), pp. 43-82.
- C. O. Zeithaml and G. H. Rice, "Entrepreneurship/Small Business Education in American Universities", *Journal of Small Business Management* 25 (1987), pp 44 - 50.