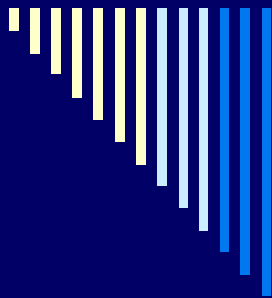



Size and Shape

**DA Sewry
(Discussant)**





Ric's Framework

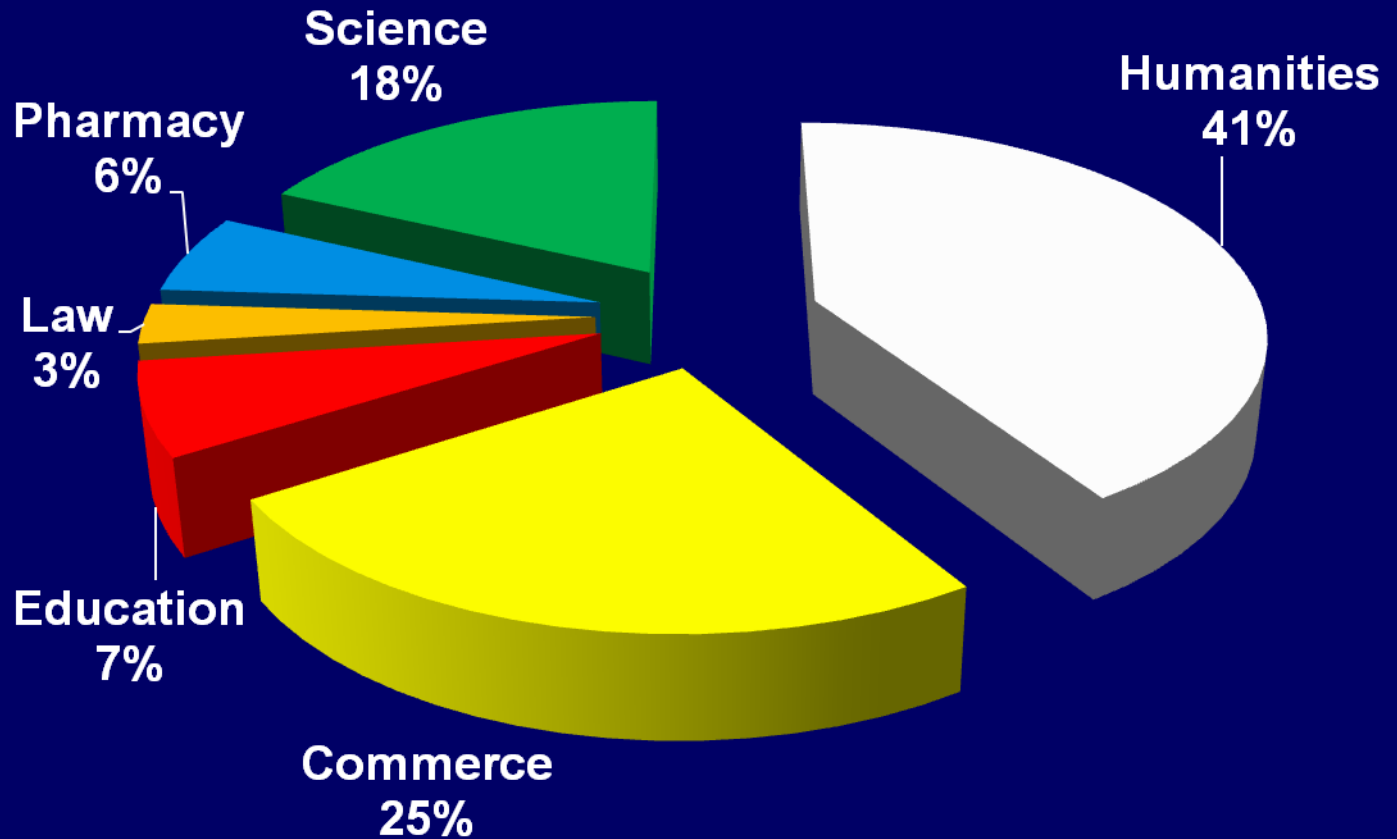
Constraints and Drivers

Sizes and Shapes

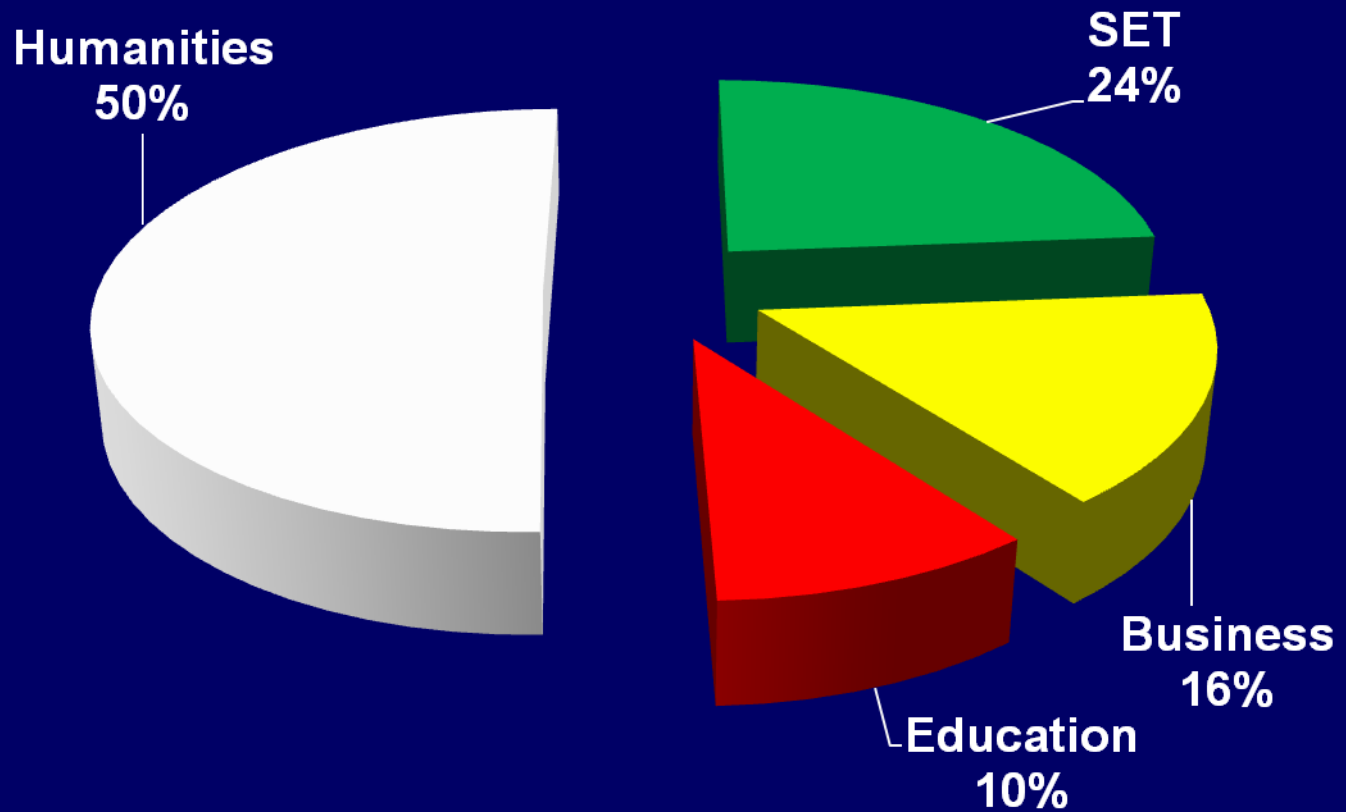
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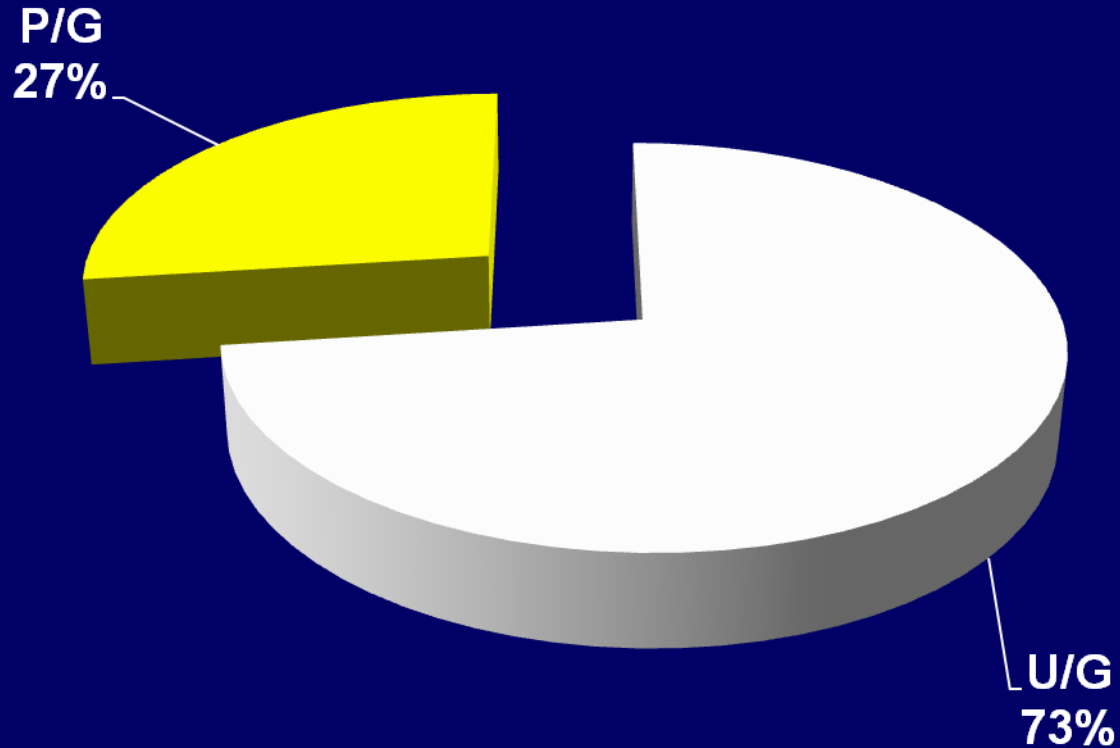
Current Size and Shape: Faculty



Current Size and Shape: Major Area



Current Size and Shape: UG vs P/G





Size and Shape Debate

□ Involves two sub-debates

■ Qualitative/Philosophical Debate:

- freedom to teach whom-, what-, when-, how-soever

■ Quantitative/“Capacity to cope” Debate:

- numbers, ratios, workloads, space, money, performance measures

□ Nothing prolongs the debate more than the former, and nothing sharpens the debate more than the latter





Passion

- ❑ Academe, more so than many other professions or organisations, is driven by passion
- ❑ No amount of money/resources will create real, sustainable passion, but passion has an uncanny habit of creating money/resources
- ❑ A *Passion Index (PI)* might be a useful tool





Impact of Size and Shape Decisions

- Changes in size and shape impact daily operations manifestly
 - Number of lectures repeated daily
 - Hours in the day, days in the week
 - Content of lectures presented
 - Ratio of time allocated to thinking, teaching, assessing, interacting
 - Kinds and levels of interaction with colleagues and students
 - Styles of meetings
 - Levels in the hierarchy



Decision-making Equations

$$y = PI(x) + c$$

$$y = MKInfra(W,E,S) + Space(x) + (\Sigma SchoolLeavers(Fac)) + R + \Sigma (ValDrivenConstraints(Uni) + ValDrivenConstraints(Fac) + ValDrivenConstraints(Dept) + ValDrivenConstraints(Staff)) + Other$$

□ Variables and complexity of the solution space

(MAX:analysis + MIN:ill-considered action + MIN:risk-aversion)
= (Lengthy Decision-making + Lack of Agility + Paralysis)
= Vulnerability



Observations: Rhodes

- Rhodes is:
 - Intellectually wealthy, but monetarily poor
 - Per capita research output excellent, but on aggregate weak
 - Individually large, but collectively small
 - Punch above our weight, but are no match for heavyweights
- Rhodes occupies a **unique position** which could just as easily be described as a **precarious position**





Observations: Rhodes (cont.)

- Excellent environment (facilities)
- Processes
- Quality students
- Good interaction
 - Teachers, students, researchers, supporters
- Mostly, small and manageable classes
- Generous amount of freedom to T&L, Res, CE, Prof, Admin



Observations: Rhodes (cont.)

- Limited funds for “risk” ventures
- U/G “cash-calf”
 - R1/student (RU) <> R1/student (UP)
 - Limited U/G volume to support initiatives, eg. P/G free tuition
- Funds need to be **well spent**
- P/G sensitivity
 - Key persons vs dept/faculty/university
 - Changes in research subsidy received





Growing

- ❑ Organic growth (growth by stealth)
 - ❑ Conservative, fiscally prudent, un-dramatic, easy to agree to, but lethal in the medium to long term
- ❑ How do we respond to the question:
 - ❑ “you’re doing a great job, can you do a bigger great job?”
- ❑ Do we see the future based on
 - ❑ Current resources, or
 - ❑ Current resources plus capital plus ongoing?





Proposal: Size and Shape

- Determine our “Capacity to cope”
 - Solid information is needed
- Measure/monitor the Passion Index (PI)
 - No passion, no progress, no growth
- Consider the number of variables in the decision-making equation
 - we may be trying to satisfy too many



Proposal: Size and Shape (cont.)

- Need to be pragmatic, but
 - Remember we are a university
 - Monitor government/professional interference
 - Don't sell our souls
 - Keep the qualitative debate alive
- Drivers to spark U/G and P/G ventures
 - Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)
 - Grand Challenges: DST and others
 - Ideas underpinning: Sandisa Imbewu, Focus Areas, areas of excellence





Proposal: Size and Shape (cont.)

□ U/G

- Can't afford not to grow
- Allow “great jobs” → “bigger great jobs”
- Education (U/G degree) and Health Sciences (Nursing)
- Avoid four-year degree: rather improve teaching and learning; transform extant courses



Proposal: Size and Shape (cont.)

□ P/G

- Improve the throughput rate
- Increase the number of staff with Ph.Ds
- Grow in both new areas and “great jobs” →
“bigger great jobs”
- Take care not to undermine U/G programme
- Growth strategy must be steered and
measured





Finally

- Ric's idiom and sitcom title
 - “Cut your coat according to your cloth”
 - “Never mind the quality, feel the width”
- Nothing wrong with prudence, quantity alone is no solution
- For Rhodes to maintain its position in HE
 - Cloth needs to get wider, longer, more agile and more robust
 - Coat needs to be tailored, labelled with a distinctive brand and of the highest quality





Further discussion ...

