

Two degrees + one framework = more flexibility and choice for students

Chris Johnstone

Trish Brimblecombe

Faculty of Business and Information
Technology Whitireia Community Polytechnic
c.johnson@whitireia.ac.nz

In 2003 Whitireia Community Polytechnic offered a Bachelor of Information Technology programme in the School of Computing and a Bachelor of Applied Business Studies in the School of Business and Management. As a result of an institution restructure in 2004 the two Schools merged to form the Faculty of Business and Information Technology. The primary aims were to break down the School silos, take a fresh look at strategic directions and leverage the synergies that had been identified across the business and computing industry areas.

One of the initial projects that has emerged is a proposal to implement a common framework for the existing degrees that supports multiple pathways for students and the easier addition of new papers and majors. When the two degrees were implemented they each had a fixed structure with limited elective papers. In retrospect there is significant commonality. Already, some staff are teaching across the two degrees and some joint papers are running. However, there is a limit to how much can be achieved within the existing structures. There is also a gap between the two degrees that creates opportunities for developing new papers and majors.

The project aims to identify common elements and gaps and to design one flexible structure. This common framework will support easier enrolment in the degrees and their existing majors, and allow proposed new papers and majors to be developed and implemented seamlessly. It will provide students with more flexible study paths

and based on current student feedback will be more attractive to more students. It also aims to provide the institution with a more efficient and cost effective operation.

The project has been granted some strategic funding and is being coordinated by the degree programme managers. Their discussion will include considering how best to position the diploma programmes that currently feed into the degrees. The project tasks are to identify and confirm graduate profiles and potential job areas; identify commonalities; identify majors, core papers, pre- and co-requisites for both degrees; include consultation with all stakeholders; develop an appropriate enrolment and reporting structure for the student management information system; and prepare the application for academic approval. The timeline aim is to have the new framework in place for the 2006 study year.

