

Leading multi-disciplinary Faculties: preliminary observations

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Outline

- A working definition
- Why it matters
- Entering and/or creating a multi-disciplinary Faculty
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Leadership

Multi-disciplinary or 'super-faculties' faculties: a working definition

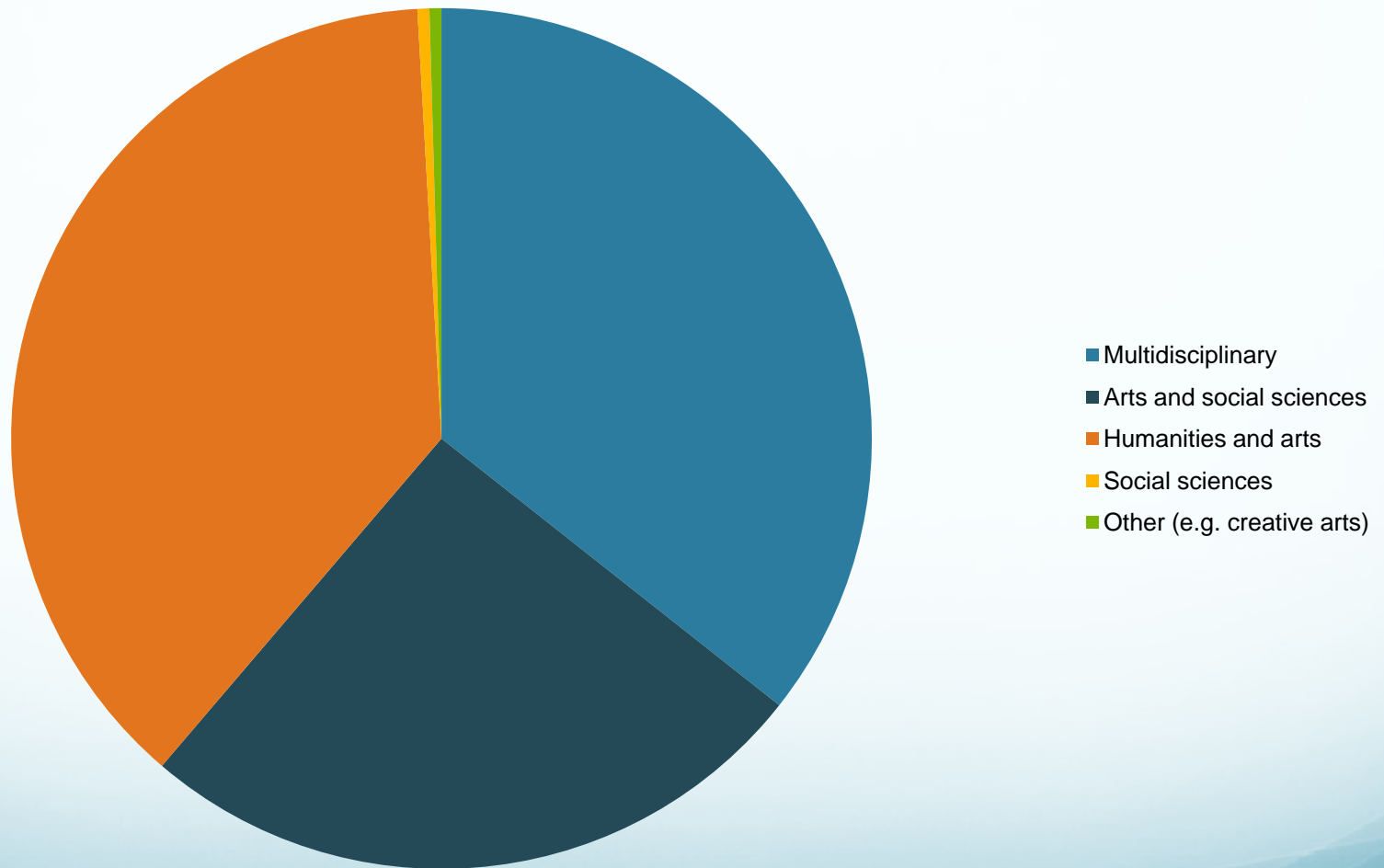
Broad academic and administrative units that include disciplines beyond the 'traditional' remit of the arts; they include (or are expected to include) unexpected collaborations and partnerships; drawing from multiple disciplines to redefine new entities outside normal or discipline-cognate boundaries.

Why it matters

The ASSH disciplines across Australasia are part of increasingly complex multidisciplinary teaching, learning and research environments.

Many universities have or are in the process of aggregating to larger units—often driven by the quest for increased administrative and fiscal efficiencies.

DASSH members



Some initial questions

How do 'cultural' and disciplinary-specific practices, assumptions and behaviours operate against the backdrop of broader multi-disciplinary staffing, teaching, research and community engagement activities?

What are the challenges and opportunities for the ASSH disciplines and subject areas in these larger units?

Our contexts

- Entering a 'super-Faculty':
 - The Faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts at Charles Darwin University (CDU)
- Creating a 'super-Faculty':
 - The Faculty of Arts and Business, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

Challenges

- A diverse 'family' (at best, lack of a common language, at worst, clashing values)
- Workload models (one size does not fit all)
- EFTSL inequities and cross-subsidisation
- The rise of utilitarianism in a demand-driven system
- Inequity in community engagement
- Increased centralisation of support services at Faculty level leads to increased dependency at School level

Opportunities

- Scope for new teaching collaborations and teaching products
- Unexpected alliances in research
- Courses (ie. degree programs) are more visible to students than subjects, disciplines or units
- Is there strength in numbers across ASSH and other disciplines?
- The regulatory environment may be 'enforcing' the maintenance of disciplinary boundaries (TEQSA standards)

Some thoughts on leadership

- Does disciplinary background affect leadership of multidisciplinary faculties?
- Adopting the appropriate leadership style: are there better and worse options?