

Japanese programs were left to cope with shortages of instructors, funding, facilities, such as language laboratories, and a number of other associated problems all at once.

The consequence is a genuine sense of crisis for Japanese studies programs in our universities and colleges and in other areas of the education system. (ibid.:3)

Ideally this was the time for Australian academia to take advantage of the increased demand for Japan skills and literacy, and to develop programs that effectively contributed to the national interest as well as to individual student's intellectual development. Instead, Japanese academia had to first cope with the immediate difficulties brought about by the *Tsunami*-like influx of student numbers.

4.2 Staff Shortages

The previously mentioned 1988/1989 survey of Japanese Studies in Australia could not have been more timely. It took place when the *Tsunami* influx of students was actually happening all across Australia. For this survey, thirteen universities and one college in Australia were chosen to give a detailed description of their programs in the form of an essay. In them, vivid accounts were presented of how each program was coping or, in many cases, struggling with the new situation.

Almost without exception, every institution listed staff shortage as the major problem which needed to be addressed immediately. Shortage of staff resources was experienced on two fronts. One was the teaching staff shortage in the Japanese studies area, language teaching as well as Japanese culture and related courses. The other was the shortage of Japanese specialists in other areas, such as Japanese economy, commerce and finance, political science, law and so forth.

The first impact brought about by the staff shortage in Japanese studies departments was a steep up-ward curve in the students-staff ratio. At the University of Queensland, for example, the student-staff 'EFTSU' ratio¹⁶

rose from approximately eighteen to one (17.78:1) in 1987 to twenty two to one (22.125:1) in 1988. At the University of Sydney, the increase was from between sixteen and seventeen to one (16 to 17:1) in 1987 to twenty to one (20:1) in 1988. McCormack claims that the Queensland figure is almost certainly a national record (McCormack 1988:40).

The immediate consequence of the rise in students-staff ratio was the increase in each staff member's teaching hours. It also meant that teaching styles might have to be altered. It has been a long cherished principle that the teaching of language should be conducted in a small group of students. In the face of the influx of students, it became unrealistic to keep to small class teaching. Griffith University reported its situation:

...increased student numbers have resulted in major logistical problems. Small-group teaching which the Division once prided itself on is no longer possible. With classes as large as thirty-five, students have sometimes had to sit on the floor.
(Twine 1989:43)

The most obvious solution to the problem would be to increase staff numbers. At most universities it was not, however, a simple task. A sudden increase of students does not always translate into an increase in funding to that particular discipline. In most cases, the funding has to compete with many other disciplines within the university. Some larger centres of Japanese studies were able to find internal resources to create new staff positions. Three new positions in Japanese were approved at the University of Queensland, and two possible positions at Monash University (McCormack 1988:41).

At most other universities, however, the situation was not so fortunate. The University of Western Australia described its situation. The Japanese course was first offered at UWA in 1972 with four full-time staff members with eighty-two (82) students. By 1988 full-time staff numbers increased by only one, while the number of students more than trebled to two hundred and fifty (250) (Krishnan 1989:101). The situation was similar in many other institutions. Even the University of Sydney, which had the

longest established Japanese program in Australia, reported:

The immediate problems in the teaching of Japanese and Japan-related courses at the University of Sydney are largely financial. Funding to provide ideal (or even satisfactory) staffing levels is unavailable and there is little physical space for expansion. (Clarke 1989:92)

The other aspect to the staff shortage was that qualified academic members now had more opportunities to seek an appointment with other universities that offered better working hours, conditions and more research opportunities. This resulted in added difficulties in Japanese programs in some universities, particularly those away from the major centres such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. McCormack presented an extreme example of this in describing the situation of the University of Adelaide, where the majority of academic staff members had been lost to other universities in the midst of the *Tsunami*.

...part-time and full-time tutors have taken up tenable lectureships at other universities, and lecturers have moved to universities which offered better working hours and conditions and allowed more time for research. Although a number of new appointments were made to commence in 1989 ... the Centre faces the prospect by mid-1989 of having only one staff member with more than one year's experience in the Japanese language program [of University of Adelaide]. (McCormack 1989:28)

McCormack also reported that all the seven newly-hired staff members had been recruited from outside Australia. They were from Japan, Malaysia and Britain.

4.3 Maintaining Quality Teaching

The *Tsunami* of 1988 brought with it a multiple of problems: shortage of qualified academic staff, climbing students-staff ratios, increasing teaching load which tended to lead to lowering of staff morale. The shortage of