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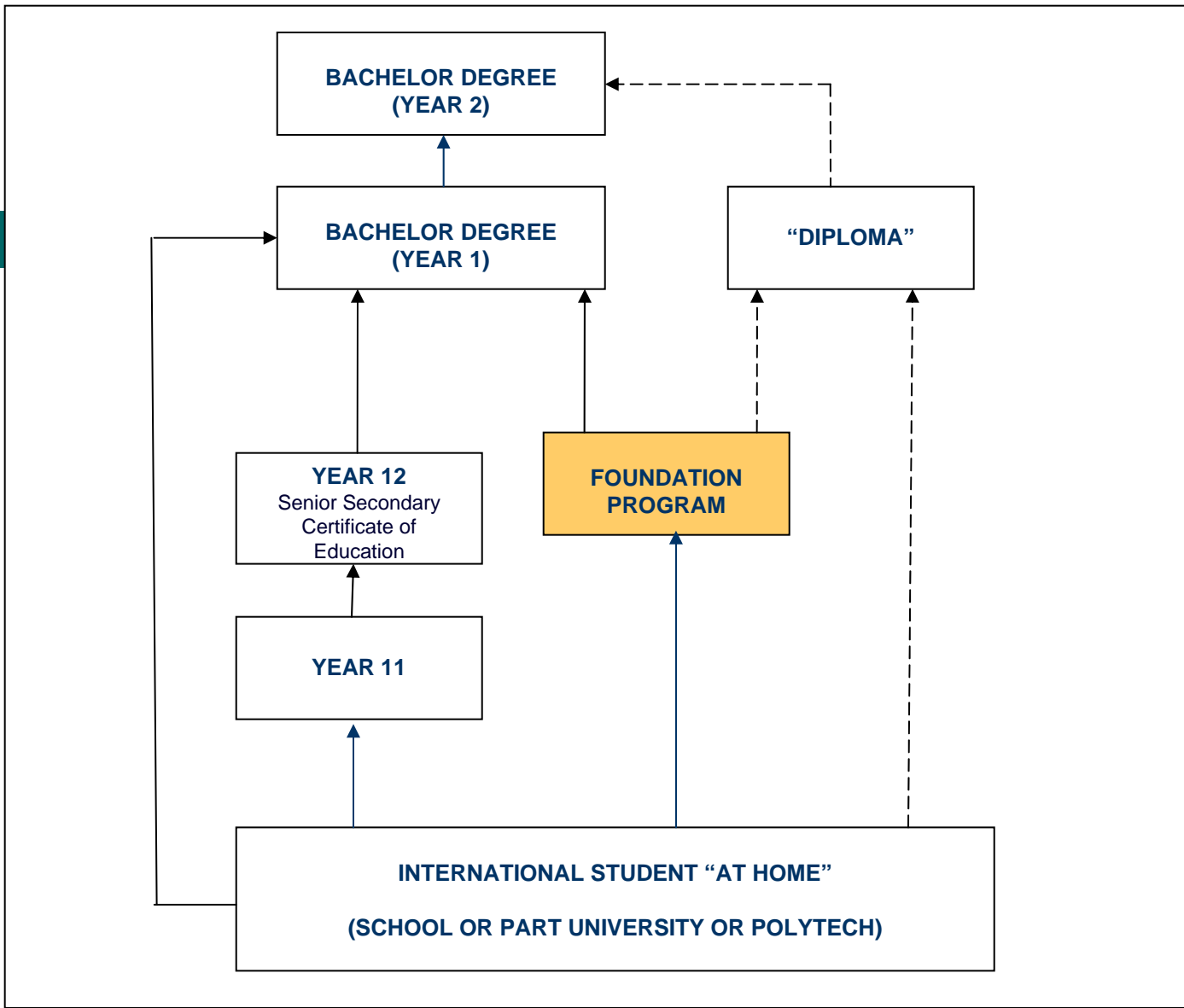


# **17TH IDP AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

*securing the FUTURE for International Education:  
Managing growth and Diversity*



# **Foundation Programs as a Preparation for University Study – The UNSW Experience**



**Possible Pathways**

# “which pathway is best ?”

- No particular pathway is best for all students
- Each entry route will suit some students more than others
- Given a choice of pathways international students (and their families) will decide where to spend their money (where and how to study)

# “do Foundation Programs provide a sound preparation for university study ?”

- I believe the answer is a resounding “yes
- The weight of evidence over more than 15 years at UNSW demonstrates that:
  1. Foundation programs provide an excellent academic and social preparation for Australian university study
  2. Foundation programs provide the support, care and guidance required by international students from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds

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**We can identify three underlying characteristics of good Foundation programs...**

# Foundation Programs:

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1. Are specifically international
2. Offer flexibility and choice
3. Have close university links

# How do we know that our Foundation Year is doing the job for which it was designed?

We use two major measures:

- Student feedback on their experiences in the Foundation Year
- Student academic performance at university

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# **Student Feedback...**

# Cheryl Elvina Halim



UNSW Foundation Year Graduate from  
Indonesia

**UNSW University Medallist in Chemical  
Engineering 2000**

## Cheryl Elvina Halim

“....Foundation Year gave me a strong background for my university studies. It provided technical skills and as well worked on improving my communication skills. I met a lot of people there whom I still keep in touch with after so many years, although we are not studying in the same field.”

# **Son Bao Pham (Sean)**



UNSW Foundation Year Graduate from  
Vietnam

**UNSW University Medal for Computer  
Science in 2001**

PhD candidate in Information Retrieval and  
Natural Language Processing

## Son Bao Pham (Sean)

“ I enrolled in UNSW Foundation Year to help me learn how to study and cope at an Australian University. In Foundation Year, I found I could strengthen and build on what I knew, improve my English skills and adapt to my new learning environment. I also received a good solid basic grounding in what to expect when I eventually started my bachelor degree in Computer Science. In Foundation Studies I learnt critical thinking and study skills that have been very useful to me in my academic life.”

# **Kwong Kar Yee (Cindy)**



UNSW Foundation Year Graduate from Hong Kong

Studying Bachelor of Commerce - Accounting & Finance Major, Accounting Honours Stream

**Winner of the CPA Australia Prize for Year 1 Accounting**

**Winner of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Prize for Year 1 Accounting**

## Kwong Kar Yee (Cindy)

“I enrolled in UNSW Foundation Year as I was convinced that it was the best pathway to UNSW, and it was.”

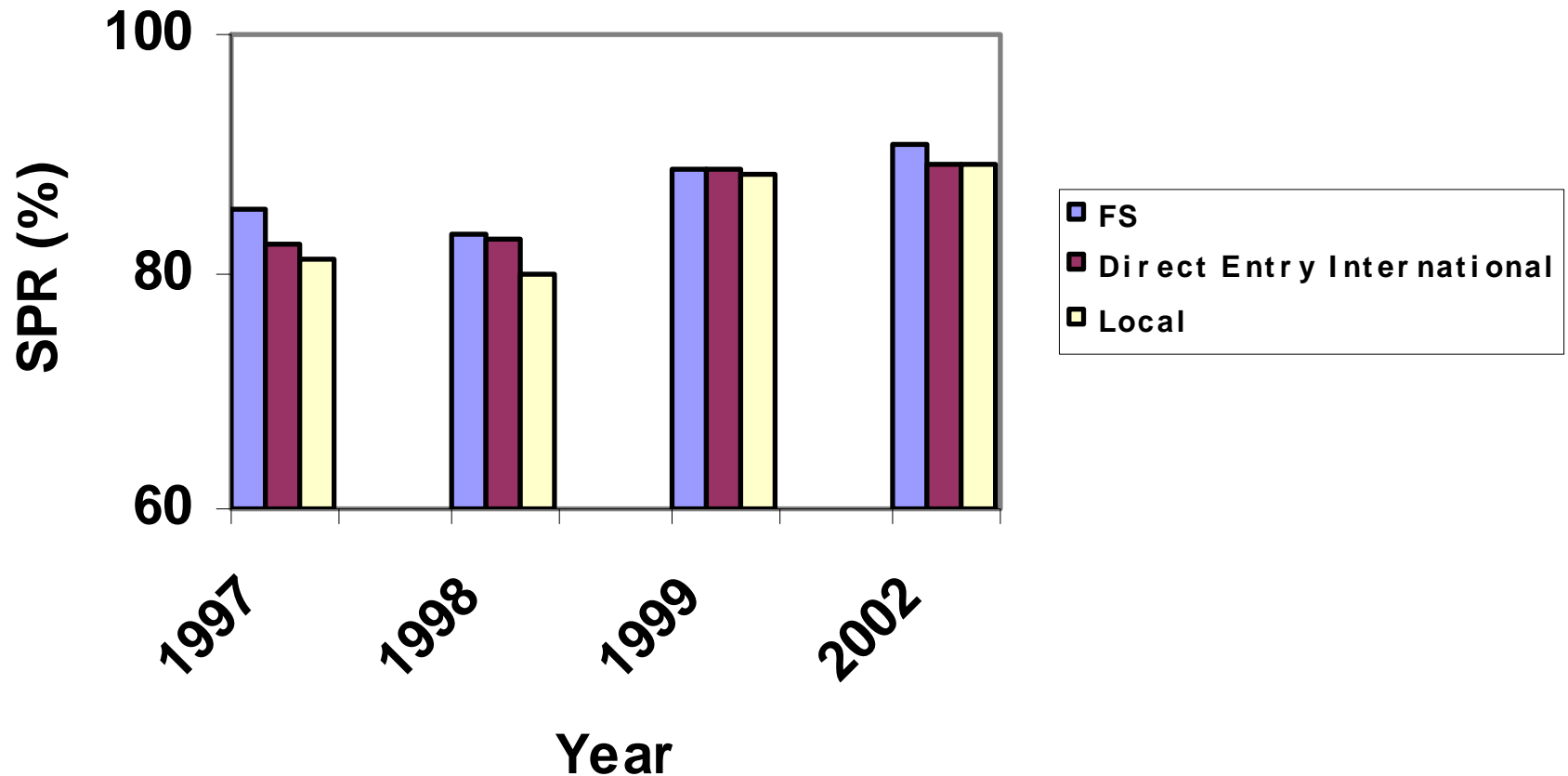
“.... The program is finely integrated with first year Commerce, so there is minimum pain during the transition from Foundation Year to university. Further, it encourages critical thinking, which is essential to successful learning.”

# Student Performance

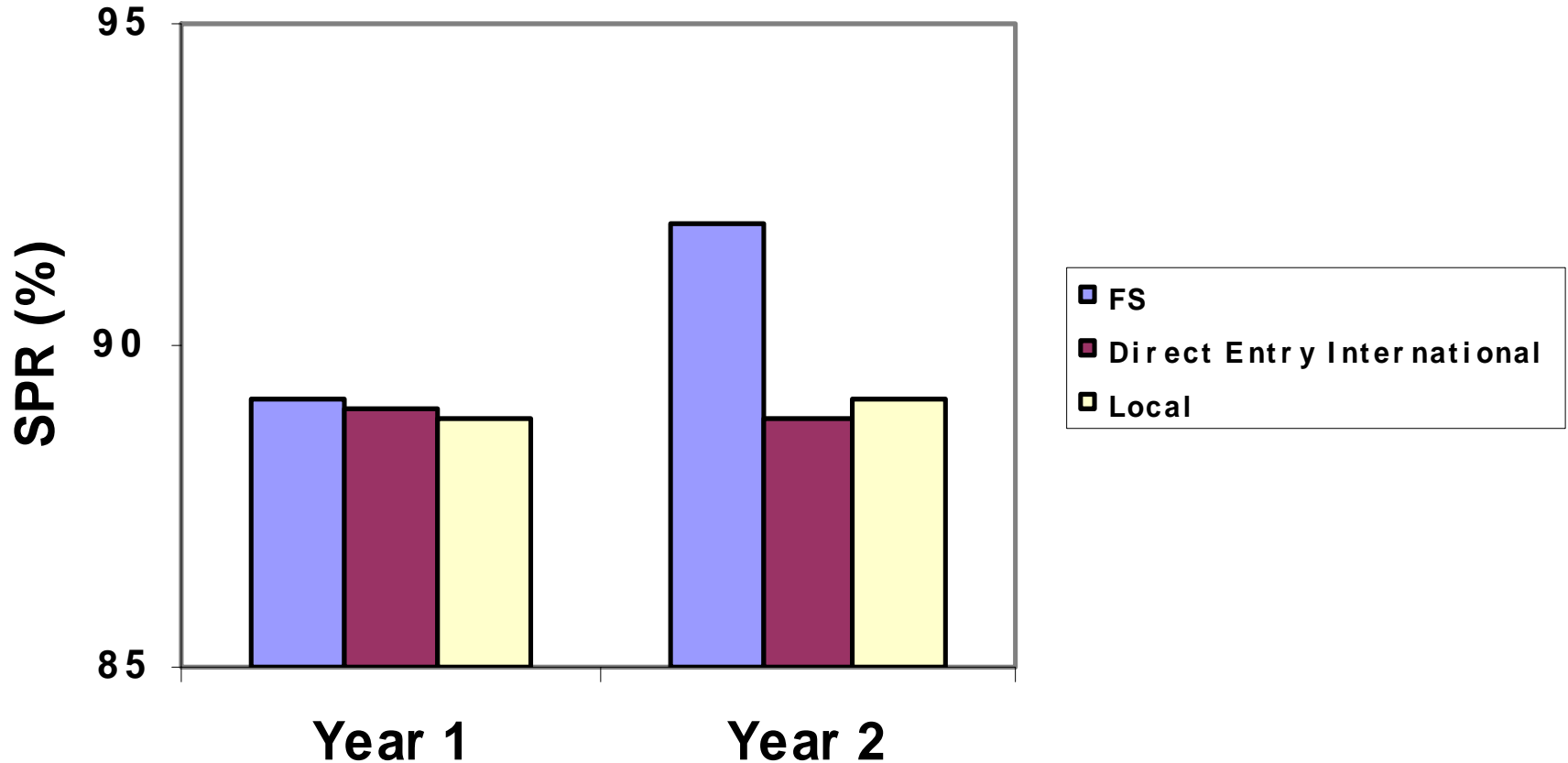
At UNSW we have monitored the aggregate university performance of our students over a number of years.

A useful measure of student success in undergraduate study is the ***Student Progress Rate (SPR)***. The SPR is calculated as the percentage of total attempted course load successfully completed in minimum time.

# Summary Student Performance Across All Faculties (1997, 1998, 1999, 2002)



# Summary Student Performance Across All Faculties - 2002



## In Conclusion :

- A Foundation program will not suit all international students and the availability of a variety of pathways to university study allows students and their families to choose the one that best suits them.
- Both the qualitative data on student experiences in Foundation Year, and the quantitative data on subsequent student performance at university, confirm that Foundation programs are an excellent preparation for university study.

## Specifically International:

- The pace, style and teaching philosophy are focused on supporting international students.
- Small tutorial classes.
- A team of full-time student counsellors and student welfare officer provide pastoral care.

## Specifically International (cont'd)

- The use of English in the academic context is studied as a separate subject
- A familiarisation with Australian society and culture is an integral part of the program.
- Specialist teaching staff chosen for their experience in teaching international students

# Flexibility and Choice:

- A variety of program types and lengths is available.
- Choice of starting date.
- Students may enter university in either Session 1 or Session 2.
- Students choose the “stream” of study that best suits their intended university degree.

## Close University Links :

- The curriculum is designed by (or in close collaboration with) university academics.
- Specific streams of study (subject groupings) are specified by universities as appropriate to specific degree groupings
- Students know that they will be accepted by the nominated university (or universities) provided they achieve the appropriate academic standard in the programme.

## Close University Links (cont'd)

- The teaching format allows students to develop the learning skills required by the lecture/tutorial format used by universities.
- Academic quality is overseen by the UNSW Academic Board through the Pre University Education Committee.

## Close University Links (cont'd)

- Independent Subject Consultants, normally drawn from academic staff at the University of New South Wales, preview examinations, review marked examination papers and monitor the curriculum and assessments standards.
- At UNSW Foundation Studies students study on the University campus and have full access to campus facilities.

# UFY Graduate Placements by Faculty

