

Appendix 2: Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (2007)

1. PROGRAM and SERVICE DELIVERY

Objective 1.1

Ensure that curricula is inclusive and considerate of cultural diversity.

The University has a strategic commitment which is reflected in its graduate attributes, to provide courses that equip students with a cultural awareness global world view encompassing a cosmopolitan outlook as well as a local perspective on social and cultural issues, together with an informed respect for cultural and Indigenous identity.

Outcome 2007

- All University courses being reviewed are required to indicate how cultural diversity is recognised and addressed within the course and units, including how the course exposes students to a variety of cultural perspectives.
- In the School of Law and Justice all first year Bachelor of Laws students are exposed to cross-cultural curriculum materials in the Legal Process unit. The School's mission aims to graduate students who are '*gender, culturally, socially, politically, environmentally and ethically aware*'. Graduate attributes for all courses include cultural awareness.
- The School of Arts and Social Sciences has embedded crosscultural perspectives in the curricula of the Bachelor of Social Sciences, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Media, that include cultural diversity, refugee populations, intercultural communications, diversity in the workplace, social inequality and social justice.

Objective 1.2

Provide information and support for students and access to language resources of staff.

Outcome 2007

- Student Peer Mentor programs were extended to all internal courses across the University. A pilot program was implemented in three distance education courses. A specific target group was Australian students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- A list of languages spoken by staff is maintained, updated annually, and accessible to all staff via the University intranet. It is used as a resource to support students via the Student Support Centre and Schools.
- The International Office offers language courses to staff to assist in the development of language skills.
- The English Language Centre runs Intercultural Communication Sessions with the University community, student volunteers and students from non-English speaking backgrounds throughout the year.

Objective 1.3

Social harmony – multiculturalism.

Outcome 2007

- The University held a *Fusion Festival* from 11 to 14 September on its Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Tweed Gold Coast campuses which brought together students, staff

and community members to celebrate International Student Day and to think about cultural diversity and human identity. Focusing on mutual enrichment through broad engagement, the week-long Festival incorporated traditional activities such as sharing food, sport, dances and musical performances, but also went further and addressed more difficult and complex topics. Public lectures, workshops and discussion panels focused on themes such as political oppression and refugees, reconciliation after war and interfaith dialogue for peace, with perspectives coming from international students' immediate personal experiences.

- A *Diversity in Education* conference for students, staff and community members was held during August 2007. The conference was free for students, staff and community members. The conference attracted a large contingent of local senior high school students. Plenary sessions included panels of secondary and tertiary educators, while concurrent workshops and presentation sessions explored the many aspects of diversity including approaches to education; the enrichment of education through acknowledgement of diversity in educational settings; as well as addressing barriers to access, participation and success.
- A public lecture and discussion panel titled *Human Rights and Education* was presented by Zahra Ghahramani.
- The School of Law and Justice hosted an *Islamic Legal Perspectives Conference*.
- The worship needs of students are accommodated with the provision of an appropriate multifaith space on campus. Facilitation of meetings and informal discussion groups are held for students from different faith backgrounds. A multifaith advisory committee oversees the coordination and facilitation of Chaplaincy activities.
- The University Centre for Peace and Social Justice is an interdisciplinary community of scholars, focusing on difference that potentially contributes to the inclusion or exclusion in full citizenship. Markers include race and ethnicity, with researchers in the Centre committed to strengthening core values of diversity including tolerance, mutual respect and mutual recognition. The Centre publishes a newsletter, and presents research seminars which are publicised and available to staff, students and the community.
- *Harmony Day* was celebrated across the three campuses with a range of activities including sharing of food from across the world, music and dancing and posters and literature promoting and celebrating a culturally diverse society.

Plan for 2008

- Continuation of curricula that is inclusive and considerate of cultural diversity.
- The Centre for Peace and Social Justice will convene a major international conference on *Activating Human Rights and Peace: Universal Responsibility Conference* in July 2008.
- Annual Cultural Diversity Lecture in 2008.
- Continued operation of Student Peer Mentoring Programs to support students in the transition to University life across all schools.
- Continue to celebrate and recognise cultural diversity by holding cultural celebrations during the year with staff, students and the community.

- Week long *Fusion Festival* activities to be held on Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Tweed Gold Coast campuses bringing together students, staff and community members in celebrating International Student Day and thinking about cultural diversity.

2. STAFFING

Objective 2.1

Provide ongoing training and education in cultural diversity to university staff.

Outcome 2007

- A Cultural Diversity Training Program, incorporating the elements of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural safety was implemented across the University. Workshops were offered to staff across the three campuses in April and November. The workshops included a core component for all staff, with specific additional components for academic staff, allowing staff to gain a broader knowledge of diversity issues and discuss strategies for increasing sensitivity and awareness of diversity issues within the workplace and in the University's programs and activities and creating inclusive and culturally safe work environments.
- The Recruitment and Appointment Policy requires that all staff participating on staff selection panels must have completed training in staff selection and interviewing. This training includes anti-discrimination and cultural diversity segments, with an emphasis on the principles of merit selection and highlighting the value of a culturally diverse workplace.
- Position descriptions for staff include selection criteria – 'A commitment to staff and student equity and cultural diversity within the workplace' (general staff positions) and 'an awareness of equal opportunity and the principles of equity and access as they pertain to staff and students' (academic positions).
- EO Online anti-discrimination training modules to be completed as part of Staff Selection and Interview Training, and completion requested for new and existing staff.
- New Employees Guide (induction manual) contains comprehensive staff equity information incl. EEO, Non-discriminatory language guidelines, and staff responsibilities for International Students.
- Staff selection panels may include a representative from Human Resources or Equity Services which is a resource that provides additional support in ensuring that staff selection is based on merit.
- All advertised vacancies express the University's commitment to equal opportunity, occupational health and safety and cultural diversity.
- The University provides Intranet based anti-discrimination training modules for all staff, plus an additional module for managers.
- The University's Teaching and Learning Centre provides workshops and learning opportunities for staff focusing on teaching and learning methods for students from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 2007 the Centre held a forum for staff titled *International and Intercultural Perspectives Forum: English Proficiency in International Students*.

Plan for 2008

- Aim to improve the University's Equity profile (as per the University's Strategic Plan)
- Continue to promote a positive culture that is free of discrimination and harassment and recognises and values cultural diversity.
- As part of the University's Equity website a Cultural Diversity Annual Calendar will be developed containing links to cultural community activities, locally and regionally.
- The Cultural Diversity Training Program, incorporating the elements of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural safety will continue to be offered to staff across the University.
- The implementation of a more comprehensive induction and orientation program for new employees will include compulsory completion of EEO Online, a web based antidiscrimination training program.
- Establishment of a program for the annual recruitment of trainees and explore the possibility of targeting EEO groups to fill trainee positions.

Objective 2.2

Ensure staffing profile is analysed and reported annually.

Outcome 2007

- The staffing profile of people from culturally diverse backgrounds was analysed and reported to the University Executive.

Objective 2.3

Continue to promote a positive culture that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Outcome 2007

- The University provides intranet based anti-discrimination training modules for all staff, plus an additional module for managers.
- Celebrated and recognised cultural diversity and harmony by holding cultural celebrations and cultural awareness events during the year with staff, students and the community.

Plan 2008

- The University will continue to promote a culture that is supportive of diversity in order to attract and retain staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Provision of cultural diversity training is an ongoing commitment of the University.
- Establish a program for the annual recruitment of trainees, exploring the possibility of targeting equity groups, including people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Analyse and report on the staffing profile of people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Continue to provide online and face-to-face training to promote a culture free from discrimination and harassment.

3. COMMUNICATION

Objective 3.1

Communicate the University's objective to develop a culture of knowledge and respect for equity and cultural diversity.

Outcome 2007

- *Living Library* – one-to-one half-hour conversations with a 'living book' for staff and students to experience the diversity at SCU first-hand. Participants ask questions of the 'books' or just listen to their stories. The 'books' are people from the University, students and staff as well as members of the wider community who have volunteered their time to talk about their personal story about what life looks like from other cultures and perspectives.
- The University displays posters for international, national and local multicultural events, and promotes events that support intercultural understanding. Relevant culturally diverse event information is also placed on the University website.
- Cultural diversity resources and electronic links are available via the Equity website.
- All externally advertised staff vacancies express the University's commitment to cultural diversity.

Plan 2008

- Continue to review and revise the Equity website to ensure the continued inclusion of relevant information related to cultural diversity.
- Continue to build on successes in diversity initiatives and achievements and publicise these within the University and in the local community.

4. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Objective 4.1

Incorporate cultural diversity into University plans.

Outcome 2007

- Cultural diversity is incorporated in the University's Strategic Plan 2005–2010, with one objective being to 'take a prime role in the intellectual, economic, environmental, social and cultural development of our region'.
- The Equity and Diversity Committee met for the first time in 2007. An important aspect of the new Equity and Diversity Committee's function is to advise on strategies for improving access, participation, retention and success of students from equity target groups and champion equity and diversity amongst staff and students. This Committee reports directly to the University Executive on the achievement of equity objectives within the University. The Committee has developed a University Equity and Diversity Plan which identifies ways in which the University can further assist staff and students in equity target groups through targeted activities and programs. The Plan includes objectives specifically targeted at providing an environment for staff and students that embraces and supports a knowledge of and respect for equity and cultural diversity.

Plan 2008

- Implementation of the University's Equity and Diversity Plan.
- Continue to monitor and review all University plans and policies to identify opportunities to embed relevant cultural diversity strategies and targets to progress the University's commitment to cultural diversity and evaluate progress made towards creating an environment that supports diversity.