

1.8 Guarantee of Service

Following the articulation of the University's strategic priorities, the University has developed an integrated planning and quality assurance framework.

Council has approved Functional Plans for:

- Capital Development and Management
- Equity and Access
- Information Management and Technology
- International; Learning
- Teaching and Curriculum Management
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Regional; Research and Research Training
- Strategic Staffing
- Student Services
- Divisional Plans for the three academic Divisions:
 - Arts
 - Business
 - Health and Applied Sciences.

Quality Assurance

Southern Cross University is strongly committed to the pursuit of continuous improvement. The University has developed a Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan as part of its strategic planning framework.

With regard to its learning and teaching functions, there are feedback and peer review mechanisms, which are all part of the normal functioning of the University.

In support of its commitment to quality in learning, teaching, and curriculum design and development, the University has approved a Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Management Policy and Plan.

The University's Teaching and Learning Centre plays an important role in enhancing the quality of academic practice, and provides guidance and assistance to academic staff. Among its major activities is the delivery of seminars for staff and the management of student feedback on units and on teaching. During 2002 staff undertook 303 student

evaluations of units, and the Centre provided formative feedback to staff based on observations of teaching.

Consumer Response

The University has several ways to collect and analyse student and graduate feedback. The University participates in a nationally-benchmarked Graduate Destinations Survey and Course Experience Questionnaire. All of the results of the Course Experience Questionnaire compare very favourably with the national averages. The scales are: good teaching; clear goals and standards; appropriate workload; appropriate assessment; generic skills, and overall satisfaction. On all these scales, Southern Cross University is equal to or higher than the national averages.

A student satisfaction survey conducted in 2002 indicated high levels of satisfaction with services provided by Southern Cross University.

The Library conducted a nationally-benchmarked client satisfaction survey. The results indicated high levels of satisfaction with service quality and service delivery. The biggest gap in expectations was the adequacy of the collection, which is a major challenge in the current funding environment.

Complaints Management

During 2002, the University developed a co-ordinated Complaints Management Framework. In response to feedback from students, the Framework specifies timelines for all levels of response.

The Council also approved policy and procedures for a Student Ombud function in July. The Student Ombud received 33 complaints and enquiries in 2002. Of these, 28 were given advice or referral information, three were resolved with an informal investigation, and two were investigated and formally reported to the Vice-Chancellor.

The University's Academic Board received 15 appeals against results, of which six were referred back to Heads of Schools and resolved, one endorsed the decision of the School, six were found not to have grounds and two were granted special examinations.

Reviews

Following the finalisation of the University restructure, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Quality) chaired a cross-university curriculum review, which comprised both internal and external expertise. The outcomes of the review will refine the alignment of the University's offerings with the Strategic Directions approved in 2001, will avoid and remove any unnecessary duplication, and assist in positioning the University for future growth and success.

Academic Board has reviewed its Standing Orders, Rules and structure. In addition it has reviewed its undergraduate and postgraduate award rules, and its policies on course accreditation and course and unit review.

The University conducted a review of the quality of the university experience for students. The report and recommendations will be incorporated into planning for 2003.

During 2002, the University reviewed its programs in information technology and multimedia, law and tourism, a total of eight programs.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Indigenous Australian Employment

The University continues to maintain numbers of Indigenous Australian staff that are well above the benchmarks of other NSW Universities. The proportion of Indigenous Australian staff at this University is 4.6 per cent of general staff and 3.8 per cent of academic staff.

Funding for an Indigenous Australian Cadetship in Information Technology has been approved for 2003 and planning has commenced for a number of Indigenous Australians Traineeships in various work units across the University for 2003.

Indigenous Australians Cultural Awareness workshops were held in 2002 for University staff.

Women

Women comprise 62 per cent of general staff and 42 per cent of academic staff. Women hold 39 per cent of senior management positions at this University and the proportion of women at Academic Level E has increased to 19 per cent.



Staff and Students with Disabilities

Six per cent of general staff and six per cent of academic staff report as having a disability.

Disability awareness training was offered to staff in 2002.

The disability committee met during 2002 and made recommendations for the erection of railings to a number of external paths and stairways on the Lismore campus.

There are disability contacts in each of the administrative work units and academic divisions of the University.

Ethnic Affairs.

The Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement continues to incorporate cultural diversity into the University Equity and Access Plan 2002-2005.

(See the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement at Appendix 1, p 43)

