

Equity and Diversity



Trends in the representation of EEO target groups

The University continued to maintain numbers of Indigenous Australian staff and that number was significantly above the NSW benchmark. The representation of academic staff from non-English speaking backgrounds was 10% in 2010, while professional staff from non English speaking backgrounds was 5%. Women comprise 67% of professional staff and 54% of academic staff. Women held 41% of senior positions (academic Level C and above, Professional HEW 10 and above) across the University, which increased from 40% in 2009. In 2010, 5% of professional staff and 8% of academic staff reported disabilities. See Appendix 1.

In alignment with its Strategic Plan 2005–2010, the University's Equity and Diversity Plan (2008–2010) contains specific goals, strategies, performance indicators and completion dates to respond to key equity and diversity matters. The development and implementation of the plan was a significant step in addressing issues of equal opportunity and diversity across the University.

University development program for women

The program included initiatives aimed at assisting with the professional development of academic and professional staff across the University. In 2010, a number of workshops, training sessions and activities were held to support and develop female staff.

Research workshops for female academic staff

A full-day workshop held in June was facilitated by Dr Kath Fisher, Division of Research, and Ms Rachel Callahan, Manager, Equity and Diversity. Some 16 female academic

staff and PhD students attended. The aim of the workshop was for experienced researchers to provide information, strategies and tips on how to establish a research career. The workshop targeted all female academic staff, but particularly those who were in the early stages of developing a research career. The workshop provided an opportunity for academic researchers to form peer networks and begin the process of framing a research plan. The feedback from those who attended was positive and plans are under way to develop an online network of female researchers to enable them to network, seek ideas and discuss issues around their research. It will also serve as a repository of information and papers of interest.

University mentoring program for female academic and general staff

This is a comprehensive scheme targeting female academic and professional staff on all three campuses. A number of workshops were held in the first part of the year titled Advancing Your Career Mentoring Workshop – Being a Mentee. The workshops gave female staff an opportunity to find out how the program works and how it can assist in their professional development. In 2010, eight academic staff and four professional staff worked with a mentor as part of the program.

Academic promotion workshops

A workshop was held in June for female academic staff to address the specific issues and challenges women face in developing research careers and applying for promotions. The workshop included five speakers who shared their expertise and experience with academic women considering applying for promotion at the University.



Promoting SCU's Women's Lunchtime Networking Forum

These forums provided an opportunity for female staff to hear from interesting and inspirational speakers, connect and network with colleagues, exchange ideas on topics that are of interest to them in the workplace, and discuss development and support opportunities for female staff. The structure for each forum included presentations from internal and external key speakers, followed by a facilitated discussion. It gives female staff the opportunity to have input and provide feedback on issues relating to the promotion and support of women at SCU.

In 2010, on the Coffs Harbour campus, 35 academic and professional female staff listened to Brigitte Muir share her inspiring story about becoming the first Australian woman to climb Mount Everest and the first Australian to climb the highest peak on each continent.

Brigitte shared the hardships, tears and laughter of her experiences, telling the group 'Live your dream, don't dream your life'.

On the Lismore campus, more than 50 academic and professional staff attended a lunchtime forum around the theme of women in higher education. Speakers included Vice Chancellor Professor Peter Lee; Jennifer Mossfield, HR Manager Organisational Development; and Associate Professor Rebecca Coyle, Acting Head of the School of Arts and Social Sciences. A question-and-answer session provided an opportunity for speakers and the wider group to engage in discussion.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8 on the Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast and Tweed

Heads campuses. Morning teas were held with the theme Empowering Women to End Poverty by 2015. Events included powerful and inspiring speeches, displays showing local and international projects empowering women, storytelling and music. The celebrations were attended by more than 150 staff and students.

Equity and Diversity Contact Scheme

In line with the University's commitment to providing an environment for staff and students that embraces and supports knowledge of and respect for equity and cultural diversity that is free from harassment and discrimination, an Equity and Diversity Contact Scheme was implemented in 2009. There are now 12 Equity and Diversity Contacts across the University. An email to all students and staff is sent out regularly by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, advising them of the scheme. Information about the contacts is on the University equity website and displayed on posters across the campuses.

Courageous Conversations about Race workshops

Workshops under the banner Courageous Conversations about Race were held in November for Equity and Diversity Contacts and all staff. The interactive workshops aimed to further develop cultural competence and literacy among participants by challenging members of the University community to think through the various ways race affects their life and professional practice. Content offered an innovative departure from standard trait-based cultural awareness programs and engaged participants in a more meaningful manner.



SCU Fusion Committee

The Equity and Diversity Office played a major role in the Fusion Committee, which was comprised of more than 50 volunteer staff and students. In 2010, the committee organised successful events on Harmony Day in March and during the four-day Fusion Festival in September. At the Coffs Harbour campus the event was called the Multicultural Fusion Festival.

Events included cultural (art, film, food, music), sporting and social activities, public lectures, and forums. The free events helped to create an inclusive environment, and brought together students, staff and the community to celebrate and embed diversity.

The committee worked with local community groups to organise events on the campuses. An important outcome was the building and sustaining of relationships developed within the University community and within the wider regional community.

Southern Cross University Indigenous Events Co-ordinating Committee (SCUIECC)

National Sorry Day was marked across Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast and Lismore campuses on May 26 with a special guest lecture by Professor Judy Atkinson, Director, Gnibi College of Indigenous Australians. Professor Atkinson delivered her lecture at the Lismore campus and it was broadcast to the other campuses.

Members of the public, staff and students participated in NAIDOC Week activities at SCU's campuses co-ordinated by the committee. Celebrations commenced with the Citizenship Belonging Country art exhibition in the

library at the Lismore campus on July 5. The exhibition featured paintings from Indigenous Aranda artists from Hermannsburg in the MacDonnell Ranges of the Northern Territory – all family members of renowned artist Albert Namatjira. This exhibition exemplified the national theme for NAIDOC Week 2010 – *Unsung Heroes: Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way*. This theme recognised that many unsung Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made huge contributions to Australian society.

Family days were held at the Gold Coast campus on July 7 and at the Lismore campus on July 9. Both featured bands, arts and crafts, information stalls, face painting, hip hop and didgeridoo workshops, cultural performances, a jumping castle, sausage sizzle and kids' activities. An Aboriginal flag-raising ceremony and barbecue lunch were held at the Coffs Harbour campus.

Activities planned for 2011:

- to implement strategies from the University's Equity and Diversity Plan 2011–2015;
- to continue to promote staff and student awareness of equal opportunity and cultural diversity through cultural celebrations, workshops, promotional materials and events;
- to continue to collect and analyse equal employment information for patterns that impact on equal opportunity;
- to continue to expand and enhance the University's development program for women; and
- to expand on Courageous Conversations about Race and Indigenous cultural safety workshops for all staff.

The Southern Cross University Multicultural Policies and Services Program Report 2010 is included at appendix 2.