

Schools Engagement Strategic Plan 2011-13



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Background

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) was established with explicit aims to increase higher education opportunities and access in the region of Greater Western Sydney (GWS) and to help build social and intellectual capital. Its first schools strategic plan (2008-10) recognised that educational outcomes would be enhanced by closer University/school relationships and mutually beneficial collaboration. Students would be encouraged to see school-to-university as a seamless transition, with more aspiring to higher education, and many increasing their knowledge and skills, preparedness for university participation and success, and future options. This renewal reflects the experience and positive results of 2008-11.

The schools engagement strategic plan is linked to the overarching UWS blueprint *2010-15: Making the Difference* through that plan's aim to "Create a superior and engaged learning experience" including, among other actions, to:

- » Create pathways that attract talented students from diverse backgrounds
- » Ensure students achieve the highest possible academic standards
- » Implement a comprehensive Indigenous education strategy.

Vision

UWS is engaged in mutually beneficial activities and relationships with the schools across GWS and is regarded as their University. UWS and the school sector work in partnership to enhance educational opportunities and pathways, build knowledge and skills, encourage and support educational aspiration and lifelong learning, and foster schools/university awareness, interchange and involvement. Innovative models of teaching and learning and collaborative programs help to increase student engagement and educational attainment. UWS is a University of first choice for GWS students. The University/schools partnership contributes to the growth, prosperity and profile of the Region.

Aims

- 1 To build sustainable University/school relationships that facilitate identification and achievement of common or complementary goals
- 2 To increase knowledge and capacity in Greater Western Sydney through University/school partnerships and collaborative activities
- 3 To provide opportunities for school and University students which increase their options and help them to achieve, educationally and in other spheres
- 4 To encourage school students, teachers, staff and parents in Greater Western Sydney to feel a sense of ownership about UWS and to become advocates of it so it is increasingly a destination of first choice for university aspirants.

Strategic foci

Relationships and awareness

- » Engage with the school sector at all levels, with a focus on GWS, to build mutual awareness, cooperation and partnerships
- » Facilitate school sector participation in planning, prioritising, implementing and reviewing approaches and programs, to increase ownership, relevance and effectiveness
- » Connect school students and their parents with the University to raise awareness of the opportunities it offers, and create ownership, regional loyalty and pride
- » Foster and support the participation of a wide range of UWS staff in schools engagement to provide a robust resource base and enhance programs
- » Link with business, community and other organisations to broaden the scope, perspectives and reach of school-related initiatives
- » Celebrate achievements and publicise UWS/schools activities in the wider community to raise the profile of the University, the schools and the region, and engender support.

Knowledge and capacity

- » Establish and extend innovative UWS/school learning partnerships, programs and activities that enrich the academic and professional development of school sector staff and UWS staff
- » Undertake school-related research to generate new knowledge, and disseminate the results to inform policy and practice
- » Provide schools with access to academic and technical expertise, data, resources, facilities and equipment
- » Assist the school sector to address identified priorities and implement new government initiatives, including the Australian curriculum
- » Identify and pursue external funding and sponsorship opportunities to establish, expand and diversify UWS/schools engagement programs.

Aspiration, attainment, recognition and prospects

- » Create, enhance and promote a variety of opportunities and pathways to encourage and enable school students from all backgrounds and a range of academic achievement levels to enhance their educational attainment and increase their post-school options
- » Enrich the learning and development of gifted and talented students and help them to realise their potential
- » Raise the educational aspirations and attainment of school students with a demonstrated capacity to succeed but who might not see post-school study as an option or who need extra support and encouragement to reach their goals
- » Build Indigenous school students' skills and confidence, aspirations and attainment, and higher education preparedness and participation
- » Help to address students' needs in specific subject areas, particularly science, technology, engineering and maths
- » Run, partner in and support programs that recognise and reward the achievements of school students
- » Provide experiential learning for UWS students that will be of benefit to them personally and professionally.

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