

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

This Action Plan outlines the 2008 initiatives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under each strategy of the Schools Strategic Plan, "Building Better Relationships with Schools: 2008–10".

Strategy 1 - Engaging with the school sector

Develop and maintain school sector relationships to enable open communication, matching of goals, alignment of priorities and formulation of programs, and to foster understanding, cooperation and interchange

Sub-strategy 1.1

Engage with the school sector at all levels with a focus on Greater Western Sydney (GWS), including government, governance and representative bodies, professional associations, groups of schools and individual schools of all types, to build mutual awareness, cooperation and partnerships

New initiatives

- Program of briefings for relevant Ministers and senior government personnel
- Mutually beneficial sector-level formal agreements in relation to specific GWS schools or groups of schools
- Centrally coordinated connections with the NSW Department of Education and Training, the Institute of Teachers, the Centre for Learning Innovation and other school sector bodies
- Extension and enhancement of the links between UWS Colleges, Schools, Centres and Units, and the GWS school sector

Continuing initiatives

- Schools Reference Group of GWS sector leaders and school principals
- School of Education Committees of Cooperation (west and southwest)
- Participation of schools in UWS events
- UWS contributions to school sector conferences and publications
- Links with teacher professional associations

KPIs

- Number and range of UWS/school sector connections established or maintained
- Number of connections resulting in new partnerships/collaborative programs
- Other strategies contribute

Sub-strategy 1.2

Develop joint goals and agreed program areas linked to the State Plan and school sector priorities, and reflecting UWS teaching and research strengths

New initiatives

- UWS/school sector agreement on goals and program areas for 2008-9 (for development of programs, see 2.1)

KPIs

- Schools Reference Group agreement on joint goals
- Existing programs that support the goals identified
- New mutually beneficial programs supporting each goal scoped

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Sub-strategy 1.3

Ensure ongoing involvement of the sector in decision-making on implementation and review of the Schools Strategic Plan and Action Plans

New initiatives

- Schools Reference Group input to implementation and agreement on review mechanisms
- GWS school sector representation on working groups investigating new initiatives
- Mechanisms for GWS schools to comment on issues and activities

KPIs

- Reference Group briefed on progress and involved in addressing implementation issues
- Sector involvement in planning of new activities

Strategy 2 - Collaborating to achieve results

Extend and establish collaborative programs and activities with schools and provide schools with access to expertise and resources to help them meet their needs and goals

Sub-strategy 2.1

Maintain and develop University/school partnerships and implement programs and activities that are linked to UWS teaching and research strengths and address identified sector needs, issues and interests

New initiatives

- Development of new partnerships and programs agreed under 1.2 (strategies 3,4 and 6 contribute)
- Development of school engagement activities around the UWS Greening Strategy
- Assessment of the potential for existing school engagement activities and school-related Regional and Community Grant projects to serve as models for future programs/activities

Continuing initiatives

- A range of collaborative action research and school-based projects (eg Fair Go, Values Education)
- School of Education Communities of Practice
- School of Education professional experience placements (primary and secondary)
- School of Psychology trainee School Counsellor placement supervision
- Classmates and Classmates Club
- Learning through Community Service units linked to schools
- IT student practicums
- Language program support in public and community schools
- Sports high school applicant fitness testing

KPIs

- Extent to which programs and activities are mutually beneficial
- Positive evaluation of programs and activities (school sector & UWS perspectives)
- Extent to which programs can be used as models
- Extent to which new programs are aligned with sector/State Plan identified priority areas and UWS strengths
- Other strategies contribute

Sub-strategy 2.2

Implement and enhance the Indigenous school student outreach program

New initiatives

- Indigenous school student outreach program (see also elements under strategies 3, 4 and 5)
- Indigenous high school partner program

KPIs

- Progress against specified performance indicators for each element of the Indigenous school student outreach program

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Sub-strategy 2.3

Work with the GWS school sector on initiatives to increase interest and skills in science and maths among teachers, trainee teachers, undergraduates and school students

New initiatives

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) interest and capacity building program (see also elements under strategies 3, 4 and 5)
- Lachlan Macquarie College partnership – maths and science enrichment for teachers and students
- Development of an integrative science unit open to teachers, undergraduates and year 10/11 high school students from 2009
- Development and evaluation of web-based STEM materials for schools in collaboration with the DET Centre for Learning Innovation (linked to broader online initiatives; see 2.4 below)
- Recruitment and training of high school maths teachers as sessional maths support tutors with the UWS Student Learning Unit
- Mathematical Literacy Project (online access to academic expertise)

KPIs

- STEM capacity building program elements implemented
- Progress with Lachlan Macquarie partnership
- Evaluation of enrichment programs and materials

Sub-strategy 2.4

Provide GWS schools with access to academic and technical expertise, relevant research results and other data, online resources, facilities and equipment

New initiatives

- Development of online access to educational resources for GWS teachers and students, in collaboration or liaison with the DET Centre for Learning Innovation
- On-campus lecture series with high-profile interesting speakers
- UWS-wide register of speakers, equipment and facilities GWS schools can use, with discount or no-charge arrangements
- Work towards development of a showcase of best practice teaching approaches from existing sector examples and research results

- Advice to the school sector on service and service-learning proposals
- Dissemination of learning arising from the UWS Learning and Teaching Action Plan
- Dissemination of learning arising from the programs under this Strategy

KPIs

- New initiatives providing schools with access to resources, information and data are used by schools and positively evaluated

Strategy 3 - Enriching and empowering students

Enhance students' confidence, knowledge, skills and educational attainment through enrichment and equity programs

Sub-strategy 3.1

Enhance educational opportunities and pathways, and students' confidence and ability to reach their potential and realise their aspirations

New initiatives

- GWS school student mentoring program with UWS student mentors
- ASPIRE program for UWS student leaders linked to GWS schools
- Work towards development of flexible UWS courses conducive to Indigenous styles of learning
- Enabling programs for Indigenous students
- Whitlam Institute Young Australian Voter Participation Forum
- Nursing subjects for the HSC (Sydney West)
- Investigation of further options for year 10 or year 11 students to study university subjects
- Working group to plan development of an English literacy program, drawing upon existing School of Education programs and units

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Continuing initiatives

- UWS Day at Campbelltown and Penrith including ongoing access to UWS e-learning site for participants
- School of Education Professional Experience 3 units that help address needs in sector priority areas eg Classmates Writing Circles
- Further development of school/TAFE/University pathways

KPIs

- Participant feedback and teacher-observed data on programs and events
- Assessment of possible future programs progressed
- Strategies 2 and 4 also contribute

Sub-strategy 3.2

Provide specific opportunities for high-achieving school students, students with a demonstrated capacity to succeed but disadvantaged by circumstances, under-achieving students with identified potential, and Indigenous students

New initiatives

- Extension of the Fast Forward program
- Working group to explore options for Gifted and Talented program/s
- Programs that nurture and engage Indigenous students and complement the high school curricula
- Participation in DET E-buddies program
- Writers into Schools

Continuing initiatives

- A range of School of Education programs with disadvantaged groups and refugee groups

KPIs

- Demonstrable improvements in aspiration/attainment of the students who participate in programs
- Gifted and talented program/s developed
- 3.1 and 3.3 contribute

Sub-strategy 3.3

Develop and implement innovative learning programs and run events to address needs and interests in specific subject areas, particularly science, technology, engineering and maths

New initiatives

- Programs to support better results in STEM subjects (see 2.3; and including for example the next four activities)
- YSF@UWS science leadership program
- Extension activities for science students
- Further investigation of how to extend Maths toolbox for use in schools and implementation of the most viable options
- GWS Superhub for "F1inSchools" competition (with Mt DrUITT TAFE)
- New competitions
- All UWS Schools consider developing and/or implement new subject-specific programs or events

Continuing initiatives

- Hosting Siemens Science Experience
- Science in the Suburbs
- Astronomy nights
- UniSteers
- What Matters? writing competition
- Running/hosting/assistance with national student competitions eg NSW section of the National Brain Bee Challenge, Tournament of the Minds
- Participation with other universities in Honeywell Engineering Summer School
- Participation in lecture series and educational opportunities for students run elsewhere
- Participation in CSIRO academic and student research scheme
- Specific School of Education programs eg Con-X-ion homework centres in science
- Education students' participation in Australian Academy of Science DEST-funded Primary Connections program

KPIs

- Programs evaluated as having a positive impact on student learning
- Event feedback

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Strategy 4 – Enhancing professional skills

Enhance the skills of GWS school staff through professional development activities and provide opportunities for school and UWS staff to learn from each others' experience

Sub-strategy 4.1

Help to address school staff development needs which have been identified by the school sector

New initiatives

- Work with the GWS school sector to help to build teacher capacity in STEM (see 2.3)
- Enhancement and development of professional pathways for school staff in Indigenous education
- Subject-specific workshops and seminars for GWS teachers
- Investigation of the following options and implementation of those assessed as the most feasible:
 - a program of curriculum-specific days at individual schools or across sub-regions or sub-sectors
 - leadership courses for aspiring school executives, new school executives and senior executives
 - postgraduate or short courses at UWS assisted by study grants to teachers, including the possibility of online learning
 - provision of electronic updates in specific subject areas
 - provision of speakers for school development days

Continuing initiatives

- Extension and enhancement of the School of Education's professional development programs and Education Knowledge Network (education alumni)
- School of Education Australian Government Quality Teaching Program (AGQTP) projects

KPIs

- Greater range and number of professional development opportunities for schools
- Opportunities developed with sector input
- Number and range of activities aiming to build STEM capacity
- Degree of school staff participation in activities and positive evaluation
- More UWS Schools/Units involved in conducting professional development
- Other strategies contribute

Sub-strategy 4.2

Provide and facilitate opportunities for University and GWS school staff to share knowledge and learn from each other's experience

New initiatives

- School staff invitations to existing UWS seminars relevant to their disciplines
- School sector involvement in the Ethical Scholarship Forum
- On-campus networks/forums with representation from across school sub-sectors
- Opportunities for UWS and school staff to share experiences and work collaboratively in Indigenous education
- Linking of teachers with academics through the website schools page

KPIs

- GWS school staff participation in seminars/forums
- Increased school/UWS staff links

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Strategy 5 – Building awareness

Foster UWS/school interaction and information exchange, and raise awareness of the achievements of GWS school and University students and educators to engender regional loyalty and pride

Sub-strategy 5.1

Run events, activities and platforms, and provide information, to increase familiarity with the University and how it can assist schools and students to achieve their goals

New initiatives

- Schools page on the UWS website
- Website pages for Indigenous school students
- Promotional, information and support materials for Indigenous school students
- Fliers on schools' former students' achievements at UWS
- Use of school sector channels to publicise events and opportunities

Continuing initiatives

- Marketing program including Open Day, Future Students website pages, Course Decision Day, Information Evenings, Career Advisors networks and markets, Contact Centre, campus tours, course-specific promotions, publication and distribution of UWS publications
- "Get Ready for Uni" website pages for school students with disabilities
- GWS school visits by UWS students, academics and general staff

KPIs

- Positive feedback from events and interactive/information products
- Increased hits on schools page
- Increased course enquiries and first preferences
- Other strategies contribute

Sub-strategy 5.2

Run programs that recognise and reward the achievements of school students and schools in GWS to build relationships and promote the Region

New initiatives

- Investigation of new awards for school students, teachers and/or schools in GWS
- Investigation of mechanisms for recognising schools' involvement with UWS

Continuing initiatives

- Most Outstanding Year 11 Student Awards presented by UWS staff
- Scholarship recipients and teachers luncheon with VC
- Triple Advantage and the scholarships program for GWS students
- Alternative entry and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous students

KPIs

- Proposals for recognition agreed with Reference Group
- Number of school leaver scholarship applications

Sub-strategy 5.3

Publicise UWS/school achievements and engagement activities in the wider community to raise the profile of the University and the schools, and engender support

New initiatives

- Launch of Schools Strategic Plan
- Community communication plan
- Identification of achievements of GWS school students and staff and help in publicising them
- Promotion of new and existing UWS/school programs

KPIs

- Media releases relating to University/schools partnerships or collaborative activities
- Stories in local newspapers arising from UWS media releases on schools and/or UWS
- Extent of dissemination of publicity material/stories via other mechanisms eg UniLife

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Strategy 6 – Conducting research and sharing the results

Undertake school-related research, particularly research linked to sector and regional priorities, and disseminate the results to inform policy and practice

Sub-strategy 6.1

Undertake school-related research and evaluation partnerships that meet sector-identified needs in practical ways

New initiatives

- Assessment of research outcomes against sector needs (as defined in State Plan and by Reference Group)

Continuing initiatives

- A range of ongoing school-related research and evaluation projects
- Development of school-related research proposals and funding submissions

KPIs

- Outcomes of evaluations in relation to identified sector needs
- Outcomes of evaluations against stated project objectives
- Number of new projects linked to identified sector needs

Sub-strategy 6.2

Identify and implement mechanisms for involving the GWS school sector more closely in decision-making on research proposals and sharing results

New initiatives

- Identification and implementation of mechanisms for school sector input to research proposal decision-making
- Development and implementation of a system for disseminating research and evaluation outcomes

KPIs

- Increased GWS school sector contribution to developing research proposals
- Research results applied in sector
- Extent to which research results influence sector policy

Sub-strategy 6.3

Research/evaluate the effectiveness and impact of program strategies for different types of students and use findings to inform future strategies and investments

New initiatives

- Desk research on the effectiveness of program strategies
- Mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of new programs implemented under the Strategic Plan

KPIs

- Report on effectiveness of program strategies
- Report informs review of Action Plan 2008

Sub-strategy 6.4

Identify sources of research funding where UWS/sector/school partnerships could leverage funding for projects of mutual benefit and develop joint submissions

New initiatives

- Identification of research funding sources where UWS/school partnerships could leverage funding
- UWS/school sector partnerships to develop research funding submissions

KPIs

- Potential sources of funding identified in consultation with Reference Group or through other means
- Number of joint submissions developed
- Funding received as a result of submissions

Building Better Relationships with Schools: Action Plan 2008

Strategy 7 – Ensuring support from the UWS community

Promote, nurture and systematically support school engagement activities within the University to help ensure the Strategic Plan and Action Plans are effective and sustainable

Sub-strategy 7.1

Ensure the Strategic Plan and Action Plans are owned and contributed to by all relevant areas of the University and establish the necessary internal infrastructure to support implementation of the Plans and the monitoring of progress

New initiatives

- Establishment of the Schools Engagement Unit
- Implementation of the Schools Strategic Plan via the Action Plan 2008 and documentation of progress
- Work towards incorporation of schools engagement activities into relevant UWS plans, policies and systems
- Decision-making and steering process for new UWS-wide initiatives
- Database of UWS/school activities
- Central UWS conduit for school communications
- University-wide program to recruit and train student mentors
- Mechanisms for academic and/or other forms of recognition for mentoring by UWS students
- Internal consultation and communication strategy
- Facilitation and support of UWS School, Centre and Unit engagement with schools
- Promotion of internal funding opportunities for schools work

KPIs

- Comparative number of UWS Schools involved with schools and number of activities or GWS schools each is involved with
- Extent of recognition of schools engagement in UWS plans and policies
- Progress in implementing Schools Strategic Plan and Action Plan 2008 as assessed against KPIs

Strategy 8 – Seeking support from the wider community

Seek external support to enhance and extend UWS/school sector activities

Sub-strategy 8.1

Identify and pursue external funding and sponsorship opportunities for University/school engagement activities

New initiatives

- Identification of government and other funding opportunities for UWS/school engagement activities and development of funding proposals
- Recruitment of sponsors, particularly in the GWS community

KPIs

- Number of successful submissions
- Number of sponsors recruited

Sub-strategy 8.2

Link with business, community and other organisations, particularly in GWS, to contribute to or develop programs and activities for schools

New initiatives

- Criteria and process for assessing school-related partnership proposals
- Identification of existing programs and activities for schools that UWS could contribute to or partner in
- Identification of potential business and community partners for new initiatives
- Establishment of partnership arrangements for agreed proposals

KPIs

- Number of possibilities identified and pursued
- Number of new partnerships