



Equity and Diversity Plan 2007 – 2009

CONTEXT

University commitment

The University clearly states its commitment to equity and diversity in its *Strategic Plan 2006–2010*. This is articulated in Key Operational Priorities one and nine which aim to

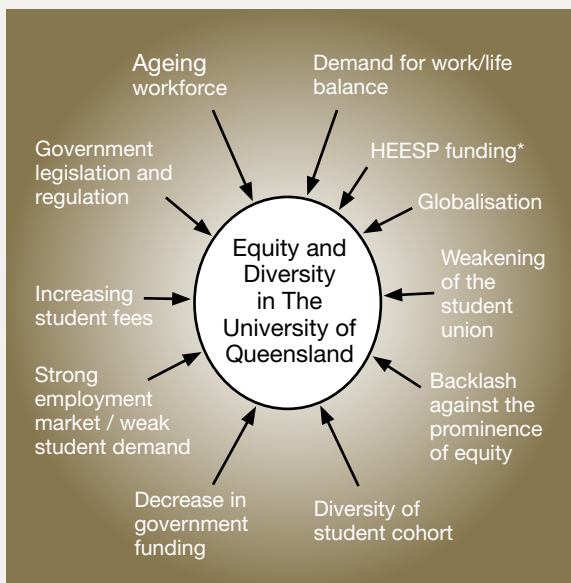
1. Attract and retain the most able students, with the aim of achieving equity and diversity in the student population.
9. Implement best practice in managing people, resources and systems, ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff regardless of their backgrounds.

Changing environment

The environment has changed markedly since the creation of the first *Equity and Diversity Plan 2004–2006*. Of those changes, the key external influences identified as likely to have the greatest impact on equity and diversity at the University in the next 2-3 years are summarised below.

These have been taken into account in developing the *Equity and Diversity Plan* for 2007–2009.

The key external influences impacting Equity and Diversity in The University of Queensland



* Higher Education Equity Support Program funding – a Commonwealth funding initiative to support improvement in access, participation, retention and success of students from designated equity groups

ASPIRATIONS

The following statement summarises what the University is striving to achieve in terms of equity and diversity:

“A diversified, inclusive institutional culture at UQ”

The detail below provides a vivid description of what success would look like if this were realised.

Commitment to equity and diversity

- Equity and diversity is embedded in UQ’s culture and operations and is an attribute valued by staff, students and graduates;
- Tried and successful pedagogies take advantage of diversity to enhance the educational experience for all;
- Staff and student profiles are more representative of the wider community, in particular Indigenous Australians and students from Low Socio-Economic Status backgrounds;
- The cultures of equity groups are integrated into the development of a more inclusive institutional culture.

Workplace culture

- Flexible, responsive work practices reflect the diverse needs of equity groups;
- Managers understand how to fulfill their responsibilities in the area of equity and diversity;
- Faculties and organisational units demonstrate the progress made in representation of equity groups.

Student representation

- In all equity groups, UQ has a level of access and retention equivalent to, or above, State and National levels;
- A dramatic improvement in the representation of students from equity groups in professional courses.

Staff representation

- Improved staff representation at all levels and across disciplines with respect to gender, ethnicity and racial diversity, especially at the most senior levels;
- An inclusive environment exists for staff with disabilities;
- Better representation of equity groups on UQ committees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In creating a diversified, inclusive institutional culture, the University will focus on the following three priorities for 2007–2009. This section provides the rationale for these.

1 Improve the recruitment of students from low SES backgrounds and Indigenous Australian students

The number and share of UQ places taken up by students from low SES backgrounds has gone backwards over the past five years. This is despite a significant increase in ease of access to UQ, more places on offer, and the lowest minimum entry score for a number of courses since 2004.

Enormous disparity exists in the rate of transition from Year 12 to university between high schools in low SES and high SES areas. The Queensland Government's State-wide Survey¹ in 2006 found that transition to post-school education and training was found to be associated with socio-economic status, increasing consistently from 57.9 per cent for the lowest SES quartile to 74.5 per cent for the highest SES quartile. The proportion of students who entered employment-based training increased as socio-economic status declined.

The experience of the last two years shows that successful recruitment of more students from low SES backgrounds will depend on building aspiration. Broadening the pool of potential recruits for the Ipswich and Gatton campuses, where access is easiest, fits in with the University's general goals for the growth of student numbers at these campuses, as well as the University's equity goals. This could help to relieve overcrowding pressures at St Lucia.

2 Increase the number of Indigenous Australian staff in academic and general positions

Despite the University's publicly stated commitment, little action has as yet occurred to increase the number of Indigenous Australian staff in academic and general positions. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the University remains unacceptably low. Of the total UQ staff in 2006, 0.42% have identified themselves as being from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds (25 staff). This is a decrease of two staff on 2005 figures (0.08%). Between 2004 and 2006 only two of these staff were employed in academic positions. An Indigenous Employment Strategy was endorsed by the University Executive early in 2006. Some elements await approval of resources, however, implementation of actions not requiring resources has still not commenced.

Resources need to be found to fund key initiatives in the Indigenous Employment Strategy. However, this on its own is not the answer. A sense of urgency must be communicated from the most senior levels of the University to implement all aspects of the Strategy.

3 Increase the number of female staff at senior levels

Women remain under-represented in senior academic, research-only, and administrative positions. There has been little change in the number of senior women in academic and research-only positions over the last 2 years. Women are well represented in administrative positions, however numbers drop off at the senior levels.

Despite being a priority in the 2004 Equity and Diversity Plan, no real gains have been made in improving the number of women in senior positions. The difficulty in bringing about change in this area is mirrored across Australian universities. Interestingly, when women apply for promotion they have a high rate of success: 80% of women who applied for T&R promotion were successful in 2005, which is the highest success rate since 1999. The number of women applying for T&R Professor increased, and there was 100% success rate for the six applicants. Relatively small numbers of women applied for 'research-only' academic staff promotion, though their success rate was high (88.9%, 8 out of 9 promoted). No women applied for promotion to research-only level D.

Women tend to apply for positions only when they are confident of success. Academic and administrative managers must also acknowledge women's readiness for promotion and take steps to actively support women putting themselves forward as candidates in a more timely manner.

¹ Department of Education, Training and the Arts, Queensland Government, the 2006 *Next Step* report on the destinations of Year 12 school leavers in Queensland <http://education.qld.gov.au/nextstep/pdfs/2006pdfs/nextstepreport06.pdf>

STRATEGY INTO ACTION

A series of actions were agreed to implement each strategic priority². A key driver was nominated to monitor and drive each priority with accountabilities allocated to relevant senior University staff for implementation of specific actions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Improve the recruitment of students from low SES backgrounds and Indigenous Australian students

Key Driver: Academic Registrar

NOTE: Consultation with the Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit will be undertaken in regard to any actions related to Indigenous Australian students and/or communities.

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
1.1 Integrate the general and specialist UQ recruitment teams to create and implement an integrated strategy.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
1.2 Target marketing to low SES groups explaining the benefits of tertiary education, particularly at UQ.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
1.3 Reserve places for articulation from vocational education partners to UQ, particularly targeting transition learning programs and recognising prior learning.	Director, Student and Academic Administration
1.4 Develop additional scholarships which are specifically targeted at students from low SES groups.	Academic Registrar
1.5 Promote scholarship opportunities to potential students from low SES backgrounds.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
1.6 Employ UQ students to act as ambassadors who join UQ recruitment teams in building relationships with the teachers, students and families associated with the students' former primary and high schools.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
1.7 Work with communities and schools to better understand the impediments and aspirations for students from low SES backgrounds coming to UQ.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
1.8 Identify why UQ's current low SES students chose UQ.	Director, The Equity Office
1.9 Work with other universities and Government to promote higher education to the broader community.	DVC (Academic)

² A list of participants involved in the development of this Plan is provided in Appendix A.

STRATEGY INTO ACTION (CONTINUED)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Increase the number of Indigenous Australian staff in academic and general positions

Key Driver: DVC (Academic)

NOTE: Consultation with the Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit will be undertaken in regard to any actions related to Indigenous Australian staffing matters.

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
2.1 Present the Indigenous Employment Strategy to the Senate Standing Committee for Equity, Diversity and the Status of Women.	Director, The Equity Office
2.2 Disseminate the Strategy across the University through a series of workshops.	Director, Human Resources Division
2.3 Employ an Indigenous Employment Officer in the Human Resources Division in 2007 to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy.	Director, Human Resources Division
2.4 Implement the Indigenous Employment Strategy including action by both central divisions and faculties.	Director, Human Resources Division

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Increase the number of female staff at senior levels

Key Driver: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Ipswich)

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
3.1 Acquire data on the retention of women compared with men at the University.	Director, Human Resources Division
3.2 Conduct exit surveys with staff leaving the University to identify why they are leaving in order to inform the development of retention strategies.	Director, Human Resources Division
3.3 Enhance staff induction and career development activities to significantly move beyond the provision of information about policies and procedures to encompass career planning, effective leadership, capacity building and mentoring.	Deputy Director, Human Resources Division
3.4 Create separate induction and development streams for academic managers and early career staff that reflect a sequential and hierarchical development of knowledge, skills and attitudes about discrimination, equal opportunity, career advancement, and related matters.	Deputy Director, Human Resources Division

Notes

1. To assist with the implementation of the Strategic Priorities, the Director, The Equity Office will meet with accountable officers twice annually to discuss progress and provide assistance as required.
2. Accountable officers will be required to provide a brief annual statement on the implementation of Actions for which they have responsibility. The Equity Office will facilitate the development of this annual report against the University's *Equity and Diversity Plan* for presentation to Senate.
3. The University's *Equity and Diversity Plan 2007–2009* will be reviewed in 2008.

APPENDIX A

Review of UQ Equity and Diversity Plan 2004–2006, October 2006

The following senior staff (or nominees) took part as representatives of the University's senior planning community.

- Executive Deans:
 - Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences
 - Faculty of Business, Economics and Law
 - Faculty of Engineering, Physical Sciences and Architecture
 - Faculty of Health Sciences
 - Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Veterinary Science
 - Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Ipswich)
- University Librarian and Director of Learning Services
- Academic Registrar
- Dean of Students
- Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit
- Director, Human Resources Division
- Director, International Education Directorate
- Director, UQ Graduate School and Dean of Postgraduate Students
- Director, Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies
- Acting Director, Student Support Services
- Director of Planning, Office of Secretary and Registrar
- President, UQ Union (Student)
- National Tertiary Education Union, UQ Branch
- Chair, CALDIA Subcommittee of EDSW
- Chair, Disability Subcommittee of EDSW
- Chair, Ipswich Equity and Diversity Committee
- Chair, Standing Committee for Equity, Diversity and the Status of Women (EDSW)
- Director, The Equity Office

Facilitated by consultants Suzanne Capell and Associates Pty Ltd

For further information contact:

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