



The University of Sydney

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## Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, 6 June 2007

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### 4. Report of the Chair

#### 4.2 The University of Sydney response to the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) Priorities and the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) recommendations

##### *Recommendation*

*That the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee note the University of Sydney response to the IHEAC Priorities and the AVCC recommendations.*

The University of Sydney is currently addressing the IHEAC Priorities and the AVCC recommendations in the Following ways:

*The University agrees with IHEAC's 7 Priorities and supports recommendations from the AVCC. The University of Sydney provides for your perusal activities currently being undertaken and some planned for the future, in no way is this espoused as a exhaustive list but an overview of the significant headway we have made in meeting the objectives which are described under each of the priority headings. In saying this there is also much more that we are planning to do as-well-as can be done in the future.*

### **IHEAC Priority 1**

**Encourage universities to work with schools and TAFE colleges and other training organisations to build pathways and raise levels of aspiration and confidence of Indigenous students.**

*The University supports IHEAC priority 1 and has made significant headway in meeting both IHEAC and the AVCC recommendations.*

#### **Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) University of Sydney, Koori Centre.**

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience was established with Alexandria Park Community School to link mentors from the University of Sydney with disadvantaged students in Yr 9. The program focuses on schools with a majority of Indigenous kids to provide them with strong role models and a cross cultural educational experience. Indigenous students have Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors. This gives Indigenous students the opportunity to see that there are good non-Indigenous people who care. It also gives the non-Indigenous mentors a chance to learn about Indigenous people in a modern day situation, allowing for personalisation in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous relations.

AIME began in August 2005 and consisted of 6 weeks of interactive workshops with the NRL, Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company, Taronga Park Zoo, Hip Hop artist Wire MC, Artist Bronwyn Bancroft and Indigenous writer Ruby Langford Ginibi. This event was run with no direct funds. Last year the program expanded, to include year 10 students from Alexandria Park, and a year 9 group Leichhardt Secondary College and we anticipate further exciting expansion within the program this year.

In 2007 Tempe High School, Balmain Secondary College and St Scholastica's have also come on board. To date there are 150 volunteer mentors from the University of Sydney student population.

Any University student can apply to become a mentor and obtain free mentoring training.

#### **Student Ambassador Program**

The Koori Centre has recruited 6 mainstream Indigenous students to work with the Centre's Indigenous Liaison Office to run information sessions for students in metropolitan high schools with high numbers of Indigenous student enrolments.

## APPENDIX C

Ambassadors are trained to present small Powerpoint presentations and workshops. The ambassadors are on casual contracts for the work they carry out.

### **Pathways Project.**

TRANBY, Faculty of Economics and Business and AIME, with involvement from the Koori Centre on the Project Management Committee. This project is funded by DEST as a part of the *Schools to University Pathways* initiative and starts in May 2007. The initiative aims to strengthen aspirations and pathways for Indigenous students from schools to college and/or university.

In 2006, the University allocated project funds to three recruitment projects in the faculties of Health particularly designed to increase the number of Indigenous students in mainstream health programs.

- a) Engaging Future Health Professional Project – this project aims to identify and engage senior Indigenous high school students in structured learning activities and a work exposure program which informs their choices about tertiary study in health
- b) Bridging the Gap ( Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery) – a project designed to provide intensive training to Aboriginal Education Assistants in selected high schools so that they are more effectively able to provide career advice to Indigenous students
- c) Opening Doors and breaking Down Barriers. This project will be conducted by the University Department of Rural health at Broken Hill and involves a whole of community approach to supported, integrated and structured learning environments.

### **Visits to Schools**

The Koori Centre runs an Information Program for primary and secondary schools. A representative of the Koori Centre will, upon request, visit schools to provide Indigenous students with information on the wide range of courses offered by the University of Sydney, together with details on enrolment, student support, Indigenous Programs including the Cadigal Special Entry Program, student facilities, Indigenous scholarships and on campus accommodation. This program is open to all schools in New South Wales.

### **School Visits to the Koori Centre/University**

The Koori Centre also provides the opportunity for primary and secondary schools to visit the Centre. Times are arranged with the Community Liaison Officer and students are given a tour of the Koori Centre, introduced to staff members, provided with an information package and taken through the Information Program. Students are also taken on a familiarisation tour of the University of Sydney including galleries, museums and Faculties.

### **Information for Indigenous Tertiary Education and Community Organisations**

The Koori Centre also runs an Information Program for all Indigenous Tertiary Education Centres and Community Organisations in NSW and the wider community, which can be arranged with the Schools and Community Liaison Officer or other members of staff.

### **Indigenous Portal, University Website**

The University has just completed an update on its website to ensure ease of navigation access to appropriate information. Recent updates have incorporated an enhanced website for the Koori Centre along with the development of a new website for prospective Indigenous students which provides details and information which are specific to prospective student enquiries. For existing Indigenous students, an Indigenous MyUni portal has been created which highlights Indigenous specific information including scholarship and research opportunities as well as heralding special events and sharing student and staff news.

### **Proposed Projects for late 2007/early2008**

Partnership with Catholic Education Office to establish a program of familiarisation tours to the main campus of the University of Sydney for year 10 students in metropolitan Catholic Schools. Students would be introduced to the culture and experience of being on campus. This proposed project may be linked with the current AIME Project.

## **IHEAC Priority 2**

**Develop a concerted strategy to improve the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolments.**

*The University has put in place several strategies so as to attract and retain Indigenous undergraduates. Please also see priority 4 and 5.*

### **Cadigal Special Entry Program**

The Cadigal Program is an access and support program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who want to study at The University of Sydney. Any course offered by the University (excluding block-mode / away-from-base courses) can be studied through the Cadigal Program.

Applicants need to be in one of the following two categories:

- people under 21 years of age who have completed the NSW Higher School Certificate or an equivalent examination (HSC applicants);
- people over 21 years of age (mature age applicants).

### **Away-From-Base Programs (AFB) (Previously known as Block-mode)**

AFB teaching has been successfully implemented in Indigenous education for the past two decades. AFB programs are based on the understanding that educational programs for Aboriginal people must be organised and conducted in a manner which reinforces the values, beliefs and practices important to Aboriginal people and communities. The programs are presented in 6 one-week study blocks each year. So that students from non-metropolitan areas can attend. Travel, accommodation and meals are funded for those students registered with Abstudy.

### **Diploma in Education (Aboriginal)**

Diploma in Education (Aboriginal) is a two-year course which offers students education skills training. Subjects in the Diploma include: Academic Literacies, Teaching and Learning, and Research Skills.

### **Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies)**

The Diploma in Education articulates directly into the Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies) i.e. the Diploma counts as the first two years of the Bachelor degree course.

### **Graduate Certificate/ Diploma/ Master of Indigenous Languages Education**

The Graduate Certificate is a one-semester course and is open to applicants who have completed two years of teacher training or an equivalent course.

The Master of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) is a one-year degree and is open to applicants who have a recognised teaching qualification such as a four-year degree, or a Bachelor degree and a Diploma of Education.

Students who complete the Graduate Certificate can undertake two extra units of study in the second semester and qualify for the Graduate Diploma or, if they achieve an average grade of 70%, can enter the Masters program in the second semester. These courses are for Indigenous educators who wish to develop their skills in Indigenous languages teaching.

### **Aboriginal Health Science Preparatory Course**

This preparatory course is open to:

- Students with a HSC mark lower than that needed under the University's Cadigal Policy or
- Mature age students (over 21) or
- Individuals who may not have studied for some time

### **Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion**

The Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion (**GradDipIndigHlthProm**) is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers who have a role in promoting the health of their communities. The course will give you the opportunity to add knowledge and skills in promoting health to your clinical and community knowledge skills.

### **Diploma in Indigenous Primary Health Care**

The Diploma in Indigenous Primary Health Care offers Aboriginal Health Workers in remote communities the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in primary health care and community development. The course has been designed to ensure that a student's learning is connected with day-to-day work in the communities. The knowledge and skills gained reflect the competencies required for best practice primary health care.

The course is for the newly appointed Aboriginal Health Worker or someone who is already working as an Aboriginal Health Worker who has not had formal training and wishes to develop skills in primary health care and community development.

### **Marketing**

## APPENDIX C

Many elements of current Marketing Strategies are carried out collaboratively between the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang, in particular the Student Ambassador Program, attendance at Careers Markets and Indigenous specific information days. However given the discipline specific target groups some marketing initiatives are done separately. The University recently held a university-wide Indigenous Marketing and Recruitment forum (outcomes to be announced shortly).

### **Scholarship Current**

Since 1999 the University has been proactive in awarding scholarships for Indigenous students. Annually the University provides upwards of \$250K for Indigenous student Scholarships. The Chancellors Committee has also provided strong support over many years awarding their own Indigenous Bursaries.

### **Proposed Scholarships**

It has been proposed that in 2008 scholarships maybe re-categorised into three main areas:

- Targeted Scholarships for HSC students with a UAC of 90 and above.
- Merit scholarships for continuing students which will be based on merit; and
- Equity scholarships

Final total still to be determined.

## **IHEAC Priority 3**

### **Improving the level of Indigenous postgraduate enrolment, enhance Indigenous research and increase the number of Indigenous researchers**

*The University has strategies in place of Indigenous postgraduates but it is an area which we believe needs more attention. Currently we have in place.*

### **Postgraduate Support**

The Koori Centre welcomes inquiries from potential Indigenous students who are considering postgraduate study via coursework and/or research at the University of Sydney. We have a dedicated staff member to respond to initial enquiries and an academic staff member to assist with academic issues.

In addition the Koori Centre has a Research Fellow, who provides postgraduate research and academic career mentoring support for Indigenous Australian postgraduate students and staff from across the University of Sydney. This includes advising on the extensive administrative and academic resources available at the University, what the doctorate involves, research training options, research path choice, academic career development and doctoral study, and early career research planning and management. This member of staff is also available to provide supervision to postgraduate research students from across the University through the Koori Centre and for the Cumberland campus administered via Yooroang Garang.

### **Support for Indigenous Academic Staff**

Currently there are support mechanisms in place at the University of Sydney for Indigenous academics to progress through their higher degrees. The Research Fellow was employed to assist staff in achieving increased annual research quantum. (See Koori Centre website for recent research [www.koori.sudy.edu.au](http://www.koori.sudy.edu.au))

### **Current and Proposed Research**

The Koori Centre has the following projects underway:

- ‘Enhancing Success for Indigenous Aboriginal Postgraduates’ for journal publication.
- A retention model for Indigenous Undergraduate Success - Pilot Evaluation of non-traditional entry student experience in the first undergraduate year.
- Innovative longitudinal study of undergraduate Indigenous student success to graduation.

### **Scholarships**

5 postgraduate scholarships valued at \$5K are available each year through the University ‘Indigenous Support Fund’. As well as discretionary funds for students who wish to apply for assistance to attend conferences.

## **IHEAC Priority 4**

### **Improve the rates of success, retention and completion for Indigenous students**

Student success is facilitated by the careful management of:

1. students orientation to University study by the provision of comprehensive **Orientation programs**
2. appropriate flexible enrolment loads which allow students the opportunity to study at **reduced load** while accessing concurrent academic support through the **Aboriginal Health Science Support program, on the main campus the Academic Skills Program via admission through the Cadigal Special Entry Program.**

*The University has taken a proactive role in seeking to better prepare first year ‘Cadigal Special Entry Program’ students. Hence it will be interested to see the results of the Carrick Institute Priority Project.*

In 2006 after much discussion of success, retention and completions it was decided that the Koori Centre should apply to the University for funding from the University Strategic Initiative funds to undertake a first year experience study. This application was successful and the project is looking at first year success for students enrolled in the ‘Cadigal Special Entry Program’.

The Koori Centre runs Indigenous Student information days at the beginning of each year in the lead up to O-Week (SWOT) for in-coming first year undergraduate and postgraduate students and again in August for prospective students as part of the Sydney Uni Live event. Both programs offer extensive information on everything

from access to facilities, to scholarships. Representatives from across the University including the Scholarships Office, Financial Assistance Office, Security, Residential Colleges and Sports Associations contribute to the program along with staff from Abstudy and the Counselling Service.

### **HIEAC Priority 5**

#### **Enhancing the prominence and status of Indigenous culture, knowledge and studies on campus.**

##### **Klub Koori**

This student-run University registered association aims to address Indigenous issues both within and beyond the University and is composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Together their aim is to make people aware that Indigenous Australia is not a 'shoe-box' issue in which only indigenous people can be involved. Klub Koori endeavours to collaborate with non-Indigenous people who have a common interest in playing both active and supporting roles in Indigenous affairs. It is through this collaboration that Klub Koori educates people about Indigenous history, expression, culture and humour in a way that encourages open engagement and feedback.

It was through this Klub that the seeds of the AIME Project came to fruition.

##### **Indigenous Carnivale**

The Indigenous Carnivale is to be held at Sydney University on National Sorry Day, the 26th of May. The aims of the Indigenous Carnivale are to:

1. Target people who are not immediately involved in Indigenous affairs, in order to further their learning.
2. Communicate a message: "It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, if you have any connection to Australia you have a unique opportunity to learn and embrace the wonderful cultures of humour, art, music, and expression that is Indigenous Australia."

This event provides opportunities for young Indigenous artists to escape the stereotypes and perform with high profile non-Indigenous performers. The aim is to communicate a message of harmony, unity and merging of cultures while providing the opportunity for young artists to learn about the trade, gain exposure and obtain some invaluable connections, in a positive, warm and uplifting experience.

##### **Indigenous Education Advisory Committee**

This committee is chaired by the Acting Provost Learning and Teaching with membership drawn from various faculties and departments of the University, the Director of the Koori Centre and the Head of Yooroang Garang. The terms of reference are:

1. To develop strategies to increase the participation of Indigenous students at the University of Sydney by:

- \* Developing strategies to increase the enrolment of Indigenous students
- \* Developing strategies to increase the retention of Indigenous students
- 2. To develop an Indigenous research culture, by facilitating:
  - \* Activities to support research by Indigenous staff and postgraduate students
  - \* Activities to support Indigenous Research
  - \* Monitor and direct research to support Indigenous community capacity building
- 3. To strengthen University of Sydney Indigenous community collaboration and partnerships
- 4. To develop strategies for increasing the employment opportunities and career paths for Indigenous higher education staff that acknowledges:
  - \* Improved long term career prospects and reduced casualisation, and
  - \* Community workloads within the work profile of Indigenous staff
- 5. To identify opportunities for core Indigenous content in curricula in all appropriate courses
- 6. To promote and protect Indigenous intellectual property within the University of Sydney
- 7. To develop strategies which promote Indigenous culture across all areas within the University

### **Development of curricula across mainstream programs.**

Staff at the Yooroang Garang and the Koori Centre are actively engaged in the process of reviewing undergraduate and postgraduate health sciences curricula to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous health and history in health science curriculum across the whole University.

The Koori Centre undertook an audit of all Faculty of Education and Social Work units of study to determine Indigenous perspectives in the curricula. A future audit has been flagged with the Faculty of Economics and Business with interest shown from a number of other faculties.

### **IHEAC Priority 6**

#### **Increase the number of Indigenous people working in Australian universities**

*Although the current numbers of Indigenous employees is lower than the University would like it is proactive in increasing the Indigenous to non-Indigenous staff ratio.*

#### **Employment of and Indigenous Employment Officer**

The University of Sydney employed an Indigenous staff member to develop the University's *Indigenous Employment Strategy 2003-2006*. Since the development of this Strategy, a number of new traineeships and cadetships have been established at the University across all of its campuses.

Both the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang employ Indigenous students where possible within their Centres including through the Student Ambassador Program and for Information Days and School Visits.

### **IHEAC Priority 7**

#### **Improving the participation of Indigenous people in the university governance and management**

*Due to the unsuccessful appointment of an Indigenous Chair the University concede that there is more to do in this area. At present Indigenous staff sit on the following committees.*

The University has funding for a Chair position but is unable to fill it at present due to the present low base.

Within the University of Sydney, the Director of the Koori Centre is currently Chair the Board of Studies in Indigenous Studies; Ex-officio member of the University's Academic Board; member of: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, Faculty of Education and Social Work Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Indigenous Scholarships Selection Committee.

Other staff at the Koori Centre have membership on the Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Studies Committee; Return of Skeletal Remains and Secret Sacred Objects Committee, Project Management Committee (Faculty of Economics and Business Pathways Project), Generic Studies Committee (Institute of Teaching and Learning); Indigenous Presence Website Committee; University Marketing Forum; SWOT Committee; and the Hyperion User Group Committee.

Both the koori Centre and Yooroang Garang staff are consulted re curriculum issues and scholarships from Faculties throughout the University.