Introduction

The Community Engagement Strategic Plan provides a framework for implementing, reviewing and improving the objectives, strategies and activities that realise and give value to the relationship between the University and the community. It is a major platform for achieving University Strategic Goal 6:

- Productive engagement with our regional, national and international communities.

and for imparting the Attributes that we aim to develop in all our students and which distinguish them as UOW graduates. The Plan is guided by the University's Values and Principles.

The University’s governing Act requires it to “provide educational facilities of university standard, having regard to the particular needs of the Illawarra region; and to disseminate and increase knowledge and promote scholarship”. In the spirit of our University Vision, we seek to fulfill this role in all our community interactions - regional, national and international - by applying excellence, leadership and innovation to achieve mutual benefit and development.

Definition

This Plan defines community as a collective term for the individuals, groups, and organisations/ companies who co-exist and interact with the University in its many locations, who benefit from its services or who partner it in research and learning.

Engagement with our multifaceted communities is a dynamic interchange of knowledge and resources between the University and its partners. Communities benefit directly from the University’s international reputation, educational programs, expertise, facilities, and presence as an employer. The University itself gains through productive alliances; through the environment that attracts and enriches the lives of students and staff, and through community support for our programs and development and the employment of our graduates.

Scope of the Plan

Our community reaches from the Illawarra, the Shoalhaven, the South Coast, the Southern Highlands, and southern Sydney to national and international spheres of interaction and influence. The Community Engagement Plan has general application to all these communities but specific reference to those where the University is able to make direct contact. Our interaction with our national and international community partners is also the subject of objectives and strategies in the University’s Research and Internationalisation Strategic Plans. Similarly, the Plan for the Shoalhaven Campus and other Education Centres
gives more specific expression to strategic activities for those communities while linking visibly to the overall objectives in this Plan.

**Priorities 2005-2007**

This Plan provides a framework for achieving a series of priorities that will refine and develop our engagement role:

- To improve two-way communication by establishing a co-ordinating hub for University/community liaison and involvement.
- To highlight and facilitate the productive ties between University research and scholarship and community development.
- To work with communities to improve educational opportunities.
- To participate in programs and events that aim to enrich social and physical environments.
- To develop the Innovation Campus and the Medical School as flagships that will enhance the University and community profiles nationally and internationally.
The External Environment – Snapshot 2004

Nationally, 2003 Higher Education reforms recognise the legacy of Australia’s universities to the community: “Resilience, both economic and human, is driven by education, and universities in particular. The kind of Australia, the standard of living enjoyed by its citizens and its values, will be largely driven by research, teaching and scholarship undertaken by Australian universities.” (Federal Minister for Education, Science & Training, November 2003).

The Commonwealth Higher Education Support Act 2003 provides for a special regional loading for regional universities (including Wollongong). The Act also emphasises the need for a university to be accountable, via transparent processes and good governance, to its community stakeholders.

Internationally, the University is facing a widely diversified environment which features:
- the knowledge-based economy and its demands for advanced technologies, creative industries and lifelong learning;
- volatile geo-political scenarios
- ecological degradation
- public health risks

The UOW and Community Environment – Snapshot 2004

Community action played a key role in bringing a university presence to Wollongong and its region more than 50 years ago. Since that time, the University of Wollongong has acknowledged its responsibilities, under its Governing Act, to provide education and research facilities, to disseminate knowledge, to participate in public discourse, and to provide services attuned to the needs of its regional community.

The University has been a primary factor in the Illawarra region’s shift from its traditional economic base of heavy manufacturing industry and coal-mining to a more diversified and sustainable economy. The University has become a major driver of regional development and the second largest non-government employer in the region. We contribute more than $500 million to the regional economy each year.

The borderlines of our community, initially drawn around the Illawarra, have been increasingly extended. In the past decade, the University has responded to community needs and located campuses and centres at Nowra, Bega, Batemans Bay, Moss Vale and Loftus in Southern Sydney.

Internationally, the University interacts with and contributes significantly to communities through its research links and as a provider of quality education. It offers on-shore programs that attract overseas students to study in Australia and off-shore courses at its campus in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and in partnership with institutions in a number of other countries, including China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand. The University also interacts with these international communities through the international students who take our graduate attributes back to contribute to their home regions.
Challenges, 2005-2007

The University recognises that, as our communities are multifaceted, so to is our own structure and the range of activities. The challenges before the University over the planning cycle are:

- To strengthen the operation of the recently-formed Office of Community & Partnerships as a coordinating point, facilitating contact and collaboration between community members and the University's faculties and units.
- To explore and define the effective scope of our community engagement as a university with a growing international profile.
- To monitor and review community strategies across all relevant Plans (eg, the Internationalisation Plan).
- To ensure that traditional community interaction through educational outreach and research partnerships are maintained and strengthened.
- To realise the potential for community engagement in developments that will play a significant and defining role over the life of this Plan:
  - the Innovation Campus, Wollongong (iC), a community that will, over its 15-year development, employ 5000 people;
  - the new graduate Medical School which will train general practitioners to work with regional, remote and rural areas here, nationally and overseas;
  - the Shoalhaven Marine & Freshwater Centre which will provide education and skills training, research and development, and long term employment opportunities in the NSW South Coast.
- To be sensitive to the aims and priorities of organisations that are responsible for promoting and overseeing community development (including: government departments, regional Councils, development agencies and professional bodies).
To engage with our communities interactions to achieve mutual benefit and development.

UOW Goals

**Productive engagement with our regional, national and international communities.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Indicators (revised 2006)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Promote the sharing of knowledge between the University and its communities</td>
<td>1.1 Promote OCP as a coordinating centre for community engagement.</td>
<td>• Extent of use of “available expertise” database</td>
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<td>1.2 Encourage and promote collaborative partnerships with community groups, business and industry to find solutions for community needs, particularly through the Community Engagement Grants Scheme.</td>
<td>• Extent of media coverage</td>
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<td>1.3 Acknowledge and reward good practice in community engagement.</td>
<td>• Number of awards, grants or other forms of recognition received per year for community engagement activities</td>
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<td>1.4 Enhance the role of University’s Alumni networks, at home and overseas, as bridges between the University and community by providing avenues for mutual contact and support.</td>
<td>• Recognition of staff community role</td>
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<td>1.5 Encourage community involvement in University programs, particularly through Faculty and Centre-based Advisory Boards.</td>
<td>• UOW staff representation on external/ community/ professional boards and forums</td>
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<td>• Community representation on UOW committees</td>
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<td>• UOW students on accredited community internships/ service learning/ volunteer work in community</td>
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<td>• Number of courses with an embedded work experience/ contextualised learning component</td>
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<td>• Number of research programs conducted in partnership with community groups or members</td>
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<td>• Number of other partnerships involving the sharing of knowledge</td>
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<td>• Public lectures/ community-focused forums and conferences conducted by UOW staff (number and attendance)</td>
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<td>• Number of applications received and number of projects awarded funding under CEGS</td>
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<td>• Number of Community Engagement newsletters/ other forms of communications issued</td>
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<td>• Level of recognition of UOW media channels (survey)</td>
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<td>• Level of recognition of community investments by UOW (survey)</td>
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<td>• Ratings of effectiveness of UOW’s communications (survey)</td>
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<td>• Extent of external use of C&amp;P website/ Events Calendar</td>
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<td><strong>Contribute to sustainable economic and environmental management</strong></td>
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|   |                                                         |     | • Level of contribution to the regional economy  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of collaborative partnerships/ projects for improved economic and/or environmental management  
|   |                                                         |     | • Level of external recognition received for environmental activities and improvements  
|   |                                                         |     | • Level of student contribution (number of students working on environmental research project with community partner; community service projects)  
|   |                                                         |     | • Research outcomes which have economic and/or environmental impact  
|   |                                                         |     | • Level of community support for Innovation campus and Graduate Medical School  
|   |                                                         |     | • Level of recognition of UOW’s contribution to regional economy/environment (survey) |
| 3 | **Strengthen incentives and resources for educational growth and development** | 3.1 | Provide educational resources, facilities and programs for community benefit. |
|   |                                                         | 3.2 | Actively support higher levels of educational aspiration and achievement in schools by providing advice, training and outreach. |
|   |                                                         | 3.3 | Improve access to higher education by developing scholarship programs, in conjunction with community, business and other educational providers. |
|   |                                                         | 3.4 | Continue to improve access to higher education by supporting the development of the Shoalhaven Campus and regional Education Centres. |
|   |                                                         | 3.5 | Contribute to improving community participation in life-long learning by facilitating access to university studies. |
|   |                                                         |     | • Community focused forums/ conferences held at UOW (number and attendance)  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of scholarship programs offered annually  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of schools visited to provide: (1) careers assistance; (2) learning activities; (3) other  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of UOW educational outreach and enrichment programs  
|   |                                                         |     | • Enrolments by course at Shoalhaven Campus and Education Centres  
|   |                                                         |     | • Enrolments in access and equity programs  
|   |                                                         |     | • Joint programs and initiatives with schools and other education providers  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of other partnerships promoting educational development  
|   |                                                         |     | • Levels of participation on higher education by region |
| 4 | **Take an active role in community social and cultural development and well-being.** | 4.1 | Contribute to the cultural development of the region by facilitating access to the arts in the community and on campus. |
|   |                                                         | 4.2 | Encourage community involvement in sport and recreation by providing facilities and promoting events from regional to international level. |
|   |                                                         | 4.3 | Continue to promote community health and fitness through research activities and outreach programs. |
|   |                                                         | 4.4 | Add to the University’s and community’s awareness and understanding of other cultures by providing access to events, discussions and programs. |
|   |                                                         | 4.5 | Support wider appreciation for Australian Indigenous cultures by promoting University activities and partnerships. |
|   |                                                         |     | • Participation in arts and cultural programs  
|   |                                                         |     | • Participation in sports and recreation programs and events  
|   |                                                         |     | • Programs and initiatives that promote diversity and appreciation of Indigenous cultures  
|   |                                                         |     | • Projects and initiatives that promote community health, fitness and well-being  
|   |                                                         |     | • Number of partnerships promoting social and cultural development and well-being  
|   |                                                         |     | • Feedback on programs and initiatives |
This Plan is complemented by other plans, notably:

- the Core Function Plans for Research and Internationalisation,
- the Faculty and Unit Plans,
- the University Education Centres & Shoalhaven Campus Plan,
- and the Student Equity and Support Plan.

The key objectives and strategies are presented above and are pursued in accord with the University’s Vision and Guiding Principles.

Implementing the Plan

The Vice-Chancellor’s Community Engagement Committee, which includes leading community representatives, has responsibility for overseeing the development, implementation and review of the Community Engagement Plan. The Committee will receive advice and support from the Office of Community & Partnerships which will promote and monitor initiatives and activities in the Faculties and appropriate University units.

Communicating the Plan

The Plan’s success depends on how well it has been communicated across the University and made available to the wider community for feedback. The communication method will comply with the University Communication Strategy for all plans and policies.

The effectiveness of the communication of the Community Engagement Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually by the Office of Community & Partnerships and reported to the Community Engagement Committee.
Performance Monitoring

**Action Plans:** Specific action plans for community engagement will be part of Faculty Plans and relevant Unit business plans. An annual work plan for monitoring the Plan’s objectives will also be developed by the Community & Partnerships Office.

**Performance Indicators:** The University employs a range of broad performance indicators (including those identified in the University Strategic Plan) to assess progress towards the objectives. Specific indicators measuring progress against individual activities will be identified in the Plans of Faculties and units.

**Review & Reporting Schedule**

The Community Engagement Plan operates under the Annual Review and Reporting schedule in Appendix 2 of the University Strategic Plan. At the end of each three-year planning cycle, the CEC will undertake a full review of the current Plan and develop a Plan for the next three-year cycle. The CEC will report to Senate, via the Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Plan Working Party, on progress against Objectives and present the next Community Engagement Strategic Plan. The Working Party will note any issues of alignment with the University’s Strategic Plan as part of the three-year review of the institutional Plan and the University’s planning structure.
The University’s Graduate Attributes are listed in full in our University Strategic Plan. Below are the sub-sets of particular relevance to community engagement.

Our graduates should be able to contribute the following specific attributes to their communities

- An appreciation and valuing of cultural and intellectual diversity and the ability to function in a multicultural or global environment.
- A desire to continually seek improved solutions and to initiate, and participate in, organisational, social and cultural change.
- An acknowledgment and acceptance of individual responsibilities and obligations and of the assertion of the rights of the individual and the community.

Our Research Graduates should be able to add the following:

- Ability to work collaboratively with individuals and groups across diverse levels and cultures.
- Intellectual honesty, professional integrity and a knowledge of appropriate ethical standards.
- Adaptability to changing research and work situations in local, national and international environments.
- Ability to seek out opportunities and apply knowledge in new and emerging fields of research that will provide social, cultural or economic benefit.
Appendix 2: Examples of Activities and Resources Supporting Community Engagement Objectives

Examples of activities and resources to support the achievement of the community engagement objectives and strategies are set out below.

(Note: The large headings correspond to each objective, with the next level of headings referring to strategies. Examples of how these strategies are being implemented then follow (activities are meant as examples only and are not to be considered an exhaustive list).

Objective 1: Promote the sharing of knowledge between the University and its communities

1.1 Work with community groups to find solutions for community needs by contributing University expertise, involvement and research.

- Community & Partnerships Office
- Web data-base of expertise
- University Contact Directory for Community liaison
- Representation on strategic community organizations, boards and committees
- Community engagement network through organized meetings and events.
- Public Lectures
- Access to and publicity for research solutions
- Student internships
- Conferences
- Special University resources/assistance centres, eg Science Centre & Planetarium, Northfields Clinic

1.2 Encourage students, graduates and staff to contribute actively to community service and public debate by supporting and acknowledging their activities.

- Student Development programs (Careers Service, UniCentre)
- Work experience, work integrated learning scholarships and internships
- Recognition of membership of community committees/groups
- Recognition of staff, student and graduate involvement in community engagement
- Promotion of payroll-giving to community organisations and charities by UOW staff
- Charity fundraising activities initiated by UOW staff and students
- Opinion pieces in the media
- Data-base of University expertise
- On- and off-campus lectures
1.3 **Enhance the role of University’s Alumni networks, at home and overseas, as bridges between the University and the community by providing avenues for mutual contact and support.**

- Support for Fellowships and other related awards
- Alumni Chapters
- Alumni news supplements
- Campus Chapter Bookshop, raising funds for scholarships and student prizes
- Faculty of Education and Faculty of Commerce careers seminars

**Objective 2: Contribute to sustainable economic and environmental management**

2.1 **Continue to support the development of the regional economy by collaborating with business, industry and organisations.**

- Contribution to local economy, as a major employer, a user of local services, attraction of businesses, residents and visitors.
- Innovation Campus
- Graduate Medical School
- Membership/attendance at major business/regional groups
- Professional and skills enrichment and training programs for community leaders/managers
- Workplace learning programs (e.g. Univative Illawarra and the Higher Education Workplace Skills Olympiad)
- Data-base of University/community collaboration (eg Board memberships) as reference source for further interaction
- Conferences, competitions, major events
- Publication of internationally recognised research and technology.
- University Press

2.2 **Encourage sound environmental management and sustainability by providing models of good practice, and supportive scholarship and research.**

- Buildings & Grounds Energy Smart Business Partner Agreement
- Campus East energy conservation activities
- Green Team, Campus East
- Publication of outcomes of research applied to community environmental issues.

**Objective 3: Strengthen incentives and resources for educational growth and development**

3.1 **Provide educational resources, facilities and programs for the benefit of the community.**

- Science Centre & Planetarium
- Travelling Science Shows
- Public Lectures

3.2 **Actively support higher levels of educational aspiration and achievement in schools by providing advice, training and outreach.**

- Overseas practice teaching
- Staff exchange and conjoint appointments
- Professional development for teachers,
- Application of University scholarship and research to school learning and mentoring programs
- Special access opportunities for regional students, eg Wollongong University College Scholarships
- Enrichment programs/events for school students
3.3 Improve access to higher education by developing scholarship programs, in conjunction with community and business support.

- Partnerships with organisations to provide scholarships in the form of financial aid to enable students to enter University who otherwise may not have due to financial difficulties
- Partnerships with organisations to assist students with a disability enter University
- Partnerships with organisations to provide work experience opportunities for scholarship students.

3.4 Continue to improve access to higher education in neighbouring regions by promoting the Shoalhaven Campus and regional Education Centres.

- Community liaison activities and events
- Targeted educational programs
- Membership of regional committees

3.5 Improve community participation in life-long learning by providing access to University programs.

- Promote access to University programs for mature age study, retraining and enrichment.
- Wollongong Science Centre & Planetarium
- Scholarships

Objective 4: Take an active role in community social and cultural development and well-being.

4.1 Contribute to the cultural development of the region by facilitating access to the arts in the community and on campus.

- Partnerships with regional art galleries, theatres, arts advisory boards
- Cross-cultural exhibitions and performances at community venues
- Public lectures and articles
- Community days on campus
- University Art and other collections
- Performance spaces
- Public Concerts and exhibitions

4.2 Encourage community involvement in sport and recreation by providing facilities and promoting events from regional to international level.

- Sporting and recreational facilities
- Attraction of international teams and events to campus and community
- Contribution to national and international sporting events

4.3 Continue to promote community health and fitness through research activities and outreach programs.

- Training and rehabilitation services and facilities
- Physiotherapy and related health services
- Olympic pool
- Research projects on community health
- Interactive University/community health projects
4.4 Add to the community’s awareness and understanding of other cultures by providing access to events, discussions and programs.

- Visiting artists program
- Joint exhibitions
- Public lectures and articles
- Awards
- Community Links Program
- UniCentre Adventure Leadership Program
- Special events and initiatives (eg: International Week)
- Clubs & Societies
- EEO Office initiatives in promoting awareness of diversity

4.5 Support a wider appreciation for Australian Indigenous cultures by promoting University activities and partnerships

- Indigenous education strategy
- Review of UOW Reconciliation Statement
- Aboriginal Education Centre Resource Collection
- Aboriginal studies within core curricula
- Indigenous Scholarships
- The GATE (Generating Advantage Through Employment) Aboriginal employment program
- The WOW (Work Opportunities at the University of Wollongong for Aboriginal Women) program
- UOW Art Collection which includes the largest number of indigenous artworks from the region
- Faculty of Creative Arts workshops for local indigenous artists.