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 IMPROVE

2.1 Planning, Governance and Management at UOW

UOW is guided by the values and principles that support its Vision. The following have particular relevance across the key areas of governance and management discussed in this chapter:

- Inclusive and open strategic planning
- Integrity and good faith in decision-making
- Accountability and transparency
- Consultative and timely policy development and implementation
- Foresight, efficiency and prudence in management

UOW accounts for its performance as an institution in its Annual Report to NSW Parliament.¹

2.2 Planning for Quality

PLAN

2.2.1 Planning and the Quality Process

Planning is the essential starting point of UOW's quality cycle of Plan, Act, Review, Improve. The planning process is itself governed by those four quality principles.

The parameters and content of UOW plans are mapped by relevant committees, at planning retreats and by senior management. They are developed in consultation with the University and, where necessary, the external community.

The plans are reviewed annually. A full review of objectives at the end of their three-year cycles identifies areas for improvement and the plans are revised for the next cycle.

The University Council (see 2.2.6 below) is represented on the Strategic Plan Working Party; it examines, reviews and approves all strategic plans, monitors implementation, and receives review reports.

2.2.2 Planning Development 1975–2004

After employing a more diversified planning process in its initial growth phases, UOW brought its plans together in 1992 in the milestone document, *Towards 2000*, the first published, comprehensive University plan.² Achievements against the plan's objectives were detailed in a comprehensive 1994 Progress Report.³

- 1 UOW Annual Report 2003, SM1
- 2 Towards 2000 Strategic Plan, SM2
- 3 Towards 2000 Progress Report

By the 'millennial' target date of *Towards 2000*, UOW had in place a planning process⁴ that included many of today's major elements. The next step was to strengthen the linkages between plans and the planning roles of the units and committees.

During the 2002–2005 planning cycle, UOW undertook a full review⁵ of its major plans and planning structure, to provide a more effective means of managing significant internal and external changes. Internally, UOW was looking to diversify its funding sources further and was already developing proposals for an Innovation Campus and a Medical School. Externally, it needed to manage the impact of the federal government's review of higher education as well as the volatility in the international environment.

2.2.3 Planning Structure 2004–2007

2.2.3.1 Key Features

The current planning structure is designed to support UOW's drive for excellent outcomes, to encourage collaboration and flexibility, and to engage the University and wider communities more fully in its development. It provides for:

- Overview and responsibility from the University Council, senior management and major policy committees.
- An integrated, strategic framework of linked plans (supported by templates, reporting schedules and guidelines⁶).
- Annual reviews of the Plans' progress against objectives and planning alignment issues, with a full review at the end of each three-year planning cycle.
- Budget decisions informed by strategic planning.
- Engagement by staff, students and the wider community (e.g., via web,⁷ committee agendas, discussion forums).
- Cross-fertilisation of ideas and processes across all planning areas.

The Strategic Planning Unit facilitates and tracks communication, development, review and reporting activities. The Unit provides the data for assessing performance against each Plan's objectives. It prepares the reports on progress and improvements for consideration by the Strategic Plan Working Party, the core function policy committees (on Education, Internationalisation, Research and Community Engagement), the faculties and administrative and other units.

2.2.3.2 Alignment of Plans

The 2003–2004 Planning Review provided the basis for the planning model shown below.

4 2002–2005 Strategic Plan and Progress Report, SM3

5 Report on 2003–2004 Planning Review and Outcomes, SM5

6 Review and Reporting Schedule, Performance Indicators, UOW Strategic Plan, 2005–2007, SM4

7 www.uow.edu.au/about/stratplan/; www.uow.edu.au/about/quality

Figure 1.1 UOW Planning Model**KEY**

Setting the overall intention of the University and articulating the Vision, Values and Goals

Plans setting direction in Core Function areas

Similar plans identifying specific actions to achieve the objectives of the Core Function Plans and University goals

The alignment of plans and their integration into operational processes work as a 'cascading' system.

The University Strategic Plan⁸ sets the institutional Vision and Goals. Revised in 2004, the Vision now identifies the qualities—excellence, leadership and innovation—which distinguish UOW's activities and the statement of Values and Principles is more focussed (see Introduction, 1.1.2). The Plan articulates seven major goals under the Vision. They are not significantly different in intent from the goals of the 2002–2005 strategic plan, but the topic areas (e.g., research, students) are more clearly delineated and they are directly linked to the objectives at the next planning levels.

The planning review established a new category for the next level of plans—the Core Function Strategic Plans.⁹ The existing plans for Learning and Teaching and Internationalisation were reviewed and revised during 2003–2004. The Research Strategic Plan was developed from an earlier Research Management Plan and the Community Engagement Plan is a new plan, drawing long-established aims and activities into one document. The four Core Function Plans translate the institutional goals into specific objectives and strategies. Their annual review reports are reference points for both UOW's planning and budget processes and its Annual Report to Parliament.

8 UOW Strategic Plan 2005–2007, SM 4

9 UOW Core Function Strategic Plans 2005–2007, SM4

The Faculty and Professional Unit Plan templates¹⁰ were reviewed in 2004 to achieve better alignment with higher-level plans. Operating under both the University Strategic and relevant Core Function Plans, their annual performance reports are analysed and cross-referenced to provide essential information for monitoring and improvement. They inform the annual reviews of Core Function Plan performance and the budget allocation process.

Two new categories of planning—the Campus Management Plans and the Facilitating Plans—are currently being aligned to the other plans in the model.

2.2.3.3 Flexibility to Support Innovation

The revised planning model reflects UOW's allegiance to the flexible strategic approach outlined in Chapter 1. The interlinked model allows the University to adjust strategies quickly along the line to better achieve goals and objectives.

UOW's reviewing bodies (the Core Function committees, and the Strategic Plan Working Party) assess the achievement of the outcomes using the performance indicators and appropriate benchmarking. In this way, they have the flexibility to modify both strategies and indicators in their annual review cycles.

Flexibility of action is also key to the success of the Strategic Projects which are developed annually to facilitate specific outcomes of strategic importance. The Strategic Projects¹¹ are aligned with the Strategic Plan and are reviewed twice a year: at a designated planning session attended by the Senior Executive, Deans and Directors and at UOW's annual Planning Conference. They are revised as necessary and overseen by a designated member of the Executive. The Projects expedite UOW's achievement of the planning priorities; they are mechanisms for taking advantage of new opportunities.

2.2.4 Planning and Budget

UOW's planning and budget cycles are being progressively synchronised as a result of the recent planning review. The formal budget process, outlined below (2.3.4), is guided by the University Strategic Plan. Decisions on overall strategic funding take into account the Faculty and Unit Plans and review reports. From 2005, a report on the annual performance reviews for the Core Function Plans will be referred to the Vice-Chancellor's Planning and Development Committee in July for consideration in budget allocations. UOW earmarks strategic funding for mission-critical developments that are linked to its Vision and its planning priorities.

2.2.5 Governance and Planning

The University Council approves and monitors the progress of UOW's planning priorities. It is supported and informed by its prime advisory body on academic matters—the Academic Senate. Together, they act to fulfill UOW's Vision and Goals and to ensure that

10 Faculty and Unit Plan templates 2004 and Sample Unit Plan: Library, SM6

11 Strategic Projects 2004–2005, SM7

University governance exemplifies the UOW's governing principles of integrity, consultative practice, foresight, efficiency, accountability and transparency (see 2.1 above).

2.2.6 University Council

2.2.6.1 Role and Responsibility

UOW is a statutory body established under the *University of Wollongong Act 1989*.¹² The Act establishes the University Council as the governing body responsible for overseeing and guiding the University's strategic direction and development.

Council makes institutional policy decisions and ensures compliance with relevant legislative requirements. Its functions are specified in the 1989 Act and in the University Council Handbook.¹³ Council has also adopted a Statement of Primary Responsibilities¹⁴ and recent amendments to the Act have specified additional functions and a list of the members' duties and membership requirements.¹⁵

2.2.6.2 Membership

The UOW Council is comparatively compact by the sector's standards. Council's 18 members reflect a variety of internal and external viewpoints¹⁶ and take an active interest in the University, its environment and its development.

New Council members are offered a program of induction, including a briefing by the Chancellor, a detailed information session conducted by the Council Secretary and a comprehensive information package.¹⁷ This consultative pattern continues throughout their terms; they are able to raise matters with the Secretary to Council and discuss them with the Chancellor. Each member is invited to undertake professional development through in-house information sessions, external training courses or conferences as required.

Council receives reports from the Vice-Chancellor on current and emerging issues at each formal meeting, along with regular presentations from executive and senior management during the year. Council members are involved in the annual Council review processes.

2.2.6.3 Delegation

The Act provides for Council to delegate all but the power of delegation. Council's delegations¹⁸ essentially empower the levels in UOW's organisational structure to act to achieve the University's goals and objectives.

Council has established a number of its own committees to provide high-level institutional scrutiny: the Administrative Committee, the Audit Management and Review Committee, the Ceremonial and Honorary Awards Committee, the Council Nominations Committee, and the Council Committees of Appeal.¹⁹ The Academic Senate has delegated authority

¹² University of Wollongong Act 1989, incorporating 2004 amendments, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/uowa1989316/

¹³ University Council Handbook, SM8

¹⁴ Council Statement of Primary Responsibilities, SM 9

¹⁵ UOW Act 1989—sec 9, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/uowa1989316/s9.html

¹⁶ Council Membership Register

¹⁷ Council Induction materials

¹⁸ Delegations Policy, www.uow.edu.au/admin/personnel/policy/delegations01.html

¹⁹ Council Committees Terms of Reference, SM10

for specified academic matters and provides regular reports to Council concerning its activities (see 2.2.7). The University Executive and its managers carry delegations into operational areas and report against their performance.

2.2.6.4 Assessment of Performance

Council conducted its inaugural self-evaluation, via a survey and subsequent discussion, between November 2003 and February 2004.²⁰ As a result, Council initiated strategies for improvement, which included information sessions for members on topics such as 'Understanding Financial Reports', 'OH&S Reporting Requirements' and 'The Wollongong Innovation Campus'. The Council website²¹ was also improved to provide more detailed information about Council members and their role and responsibilities.

The Chancellor will initiate the next annual Council self-evaluation process in February 2005. His own role in chairing Council meetings is reviewed through the anonymous Council evaluation survey sent to Council members as part of the annual evaluation.

2.2.7 Academic Senate

2.2.7.1 Role and Function

Academic Senate advises the University Council and the Vice-Chancellor on academic matters and issues affecting UOW. Senate is also the chief forum for the discussion and dissemination of information within UOW's academic community. It regularly reviews its composition and terms of reference with these two roles in mind and has, consequently, chosen to retain a comparatively broad composition of 85 members.²²

Senate is involved in all aspects of academic governance—policy development, decision-making and the full cycle of quality assurance.

In accordance with Council authority (as delegated in its terms of reference²³), Senate recommends or approves courses and university-wide academic policy; reviews performance; and approves action for improvement with the support of its committee network.²⁴ The Senate committees investigate these matters in detail and report back with recommendations for Senate's consideration. The Standing Committee is Senate's effective executive committee; it performs the key quality assurance role for academic programs. The Core Function Policy Committees—University Education Committee (UEC), University Internationalisation Committee (UIC), University Research Committee (URC)—report to Senate on progress under their respective Plans. Senate's other major committees are the Academic Review Committee, the Academic Staff Development Committee and the Student Awards Committee.

20 Council Evaluation Survey, SM11

21 www.uow.edu.au/governance/councilmembers.html

22 www.uow.edu.au/governance/academicsenate.html

23 Academic Senate Terms of Reference, SM10

24 Senate Committee Terms of Reference, SM10

2.2.7.2 Assessment of Performance

A review of Senate's terms of reference in 2003–2004 involved consultation with both members and the wider academic community. The resulting revisions, approved by Council in June 2004, reflect developments in Senate's role and responsibility, such as its place as a key forum for discussion of issues from the internal and external environment.

In 2004, Senate initiated a process of self-review,²⁵ commissioning a consultant to survey staff on its operation and effectiveness. Preliminary results were presented to Senate's November 2004 meeting and the final report is expected for the first meeting of 2005.

2.3 Ensuring Quality—UOW Management and Structures

2.3.1 Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive

As the Chief Executive Officer, the Vice-Chancellor is responsible to Council for the management, financial position and overall strategic direction of UOW. The position is thus a bridge between the planning and the operational aspects of the institution. The Vice-Chancellor's performance is reviewed annually by the Chancellor and the Deputy Chancellor and, every second year, more formally by the Council in accordance with approved criteria.

The Vice-Chancellor is supported by five Senior Executive Officers—the Vice-Principal (Administration), Vice-Principal (International), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Operations) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). They provide advice to the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to their specific portfolios.²⁶

Regular meetings between the Executive and their senior management colleagues provide for a collegial exchange of information about strategic directions, decision-making and operational activities. In this way, issues are communicated and resolved, opportunities identified, and developments coordinated. The Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive meet weekly; the Vice-Principals and Pro Vice-Chancellors meet regularly with the Deans of Faculties and the Directors and Heads of Units responsible to them (see Organisational Chart, Appendix A). The Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive meet with Deans and Directors every two months to canvass issues within a wider forum.

The Strategic Planning Conference at the start of the year and a half-day planning retreat every August/September provide the opportunity for the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive to review the focus of their activities and clarify significant issues for the future, with input from other senior UOW staff.

ACT

²⁵ Academic Senate Evaluation Survey 2004, SM12

²⁶ Senior Executives Roles and Responsibilities, SM13

2.3.2 Major Management Units

2.3.2.1 Role and Structure

UOW's nine faculties, 23 schools and departments and 12 areas of research strength, as well as the professional units, contribute to achieving the University's goals and objectives by promoting the excellence, innovation and leadership of the UOW Vision. All faculties and units (see Appendix B) are called upon to demonstrate the UOW guiding principle of 'foresight, efficiency and prudence in management'.

2.3.2.2 Review of Performance

Over the past four years, UOW has used a 'two-in-one' process, linking its 'organisational' review processes to the reporting required under the planning system. Faculties have been reviewed annually by the University Executive on the basis of their annual planning reports against objectives. Where necessary a more formal, extensive review could be initiated under approved procedures (see 2.4.1). An evaluation of the review process in 2003 led to the development of streamlined faculty review guidelines under a new Quality Review Framework.²⁷

Non-faculty units undertake self-reviews as part of their annual planning sessions and are formally reviewed by the relevant Senior Executive each year via their review reports against their business plans. Professional units also review progress within appropriate measurement frameworks and by benchmarking with other relevant organisations.

2.3.3 Policy Management

UOW policy development is a consultative process. It supports the achievement of planning objectives and aims to ensure compliance with legal requirements. University-wide policies designate who is responsible for updates and review and all policies are published online in the UOW Policy Directory.²⁸

UOW has developed a Communication of Plans and Policies Questionnaire which evaluates levels of awareness and the focus placed on plans and policies in faculty and unit planning activities. The initial evaluation is intended to establish an internal benchmark that will enable trends to be mapped for comparison over future years.

2.3.4 Budget Management

UOW's budget process is set within the framework of the University planning goals and objectives (see 2.2.4 above). It culminates in formal approval by Council in October and implementation is monitored and reviewed throughout the year by the Administrative Committee.

²⁷ UOW Quality Review Framework, SM14

²⁸ www.uow.edu.au/about/policy

All faculties and departments are required to submit budget proposals to the Financial Services Unit and highlight any new proposals for the consideration of the Vice-Chancellor's Planning and Development Committee. The proposed student load for the coming year is considered in the context of faculty plans to calculate each faculty's share of budget for the year.

The Planning and Development Committee monitors the development of the budget and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Operations) leads discussions and consultations with Deans regarding faculty allocations.

UOW's financial system maintains a full audit trail of approved changes to University budgets over the course of the year. Where these involve the commitment of recurrent resources, budgets are adjusted on an ongoing basis to ensure the University's forward financial position can be monitored effectively.

2.3.5 Financial Management

UOW's finances are managed within its budget guidelines and under the overall direction of the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive. The Personnel and Financial Services Division manages the institutional processes and issues deadlines and guidelines for finance officers in faculties and units. A monthly University Finance Officers' Forum facilitates coordination and communication between the central finance department and the faculty and unit finance officers.

UOW has developed a comprehensive range of policies to protect its assets and assure the integrity of its financial operations and information.²⁹ The financial systems are subject to the following checks:

- Each month, the Senior Executives receive a report on financial performance with explanatory notes on issues identified for attention.
- Every two months, the Administrative Committee of Council reviews reports on financial performance, accounts receivable, the performance of UOW's investment portfolio (compared to industry benchmarks), and UOW's commercial activities.
- At year's end, key measures of UOW's financial strength are compared to State and national averages to identify any areas of improvement that should be considered.

UOW accounts are audited by the NSW Audit Office at the end of the year. Each April, the accounts and the results of the audit are reported to the Audit Management and Review Committee and then presented formally to the University Council.

²⁹ <http://staff.uow.edu.au/finance/policies/index.html>

2.3.6 Risk Management

UOW manages major areas of risk as follows:

- General business and operational risks—by the Internal Auditor, who reports to Council's Audit Management and Review Committee and the Vice-Chancellor.
- Risk management of commercial contracts, insurance, freedom of information, privacy and business continuity—by the Legal and Commercial Unit which reports to the Director, Personnel and Financial Services.
- Corruption risks—by the Vice-Principal (Administration) with operational support from the Internal Auditor.
- Occupational health and safety risks—by a unit of Personnel and Financial Services.

All areas are managed using a risk assessment matrix based on Australian/New Zealand Standard 4360:1999 and UOW has been progressively implementing a risk management approach in key areas of its activities. The University Council has also approved a set of commercial activities guidelines for managing inherent risks.³⁰

UOW undertook its third triennial risk assessment in late 2003 (prior assessments were conducted in 2000 and 1997). A strategic project on risk management initiated in 2003 assessed the risks facing the University and developed a response framework which included the development and approval of a three-year Internal Audit Plan³¹ overseen by Council's Audit Management and Review Committee. A Risk Register was also developed which systematically identifies risks, their likelihood and their possible consequences. This register will be updated annually.

Major risk assessments conducted in recent years include:

- A university-wide Strategic Risk Assessment³² undertaken by Ernest & Young in late 2003.
- A risk assessment on the adequacy of corruption prevention measures, undertaken by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 2001, with agreed recommendations for action followed up by the Internal Audit in 2003.³³
- The NSW Workcover Authority audit (with favourable outcome) of UOW's occupational health and safety system in 2003.³⁴
- The audit of UOW's Business Continuity Plan by Deloitte in 2003.³⁵

Early in 2004, the NSW Audit Office evaluated UOW's risk management processes, in conjunction with the annual external audit. In general, the Audit Office was complimentary of UOW's risk management practices but it identified the absence of an overall written risk management policy to steer the University's activities.³⁶ UOW has consequently developed a Risk Management Policy which will be considered by Council's Administrative Committee in early 2005.

30 Guidelines for Commercial Activities <http://staff.uow.edu.au/finance/policies/commercialguidelines.pdf>

31 Strategic Risk Assessment and Internal Audit Plan, December 2003

32 Strategic Risk Assessment Report 2003, SM15

33 Evaluation of UOW Internal Auditor, May 2003

34 Workcover OH&S Audit Corrective Action Request

35 UOW Internal Audit: BCP Review, May 2003

36 Auditor General's Report 2004

2.3.7 Resource Management and Services

2.3.7.1 Capital Management

UOW's Capital Management Plan³⁷ is reviewed annually and submitted to Council for approval at the beginning of each calendar year. A major element—the building refurbishment program—is determined by a five-year rolling Refurbishment Plan which was developed to address issues raised by an external Condition Appraisal Report in September 1998 and to incorporate strategic requirements.

Since 1998, the Buildings and Grounds Division has managed the plan's implementation through significant building refurbishments designed to ensure that facilities meet safety and statutory requirements, remain functional and meet future teaching and research needs. Capital works progress reports are prepared for each meeting of Council's Administrative Committee.

2.3.7.2 Information Technology Infrastructure

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Division manages and supports UOW's critical information technology, telecommunications and data processing infrastructures.

ITS has successfully implemented technology through a period of sustained, strong growth. UOW has a University-wide IT network and email system and major achievements over the past year include:

- successful implementation of a Gigabit Ethernet capability across UOW's main campus, which provides a more reliable and higher speed service;
- successful implementation of a fibre external link to provide a more reliable and higher speed connection to the internet;
- the implementation of wireless network capacity across the Wollongong campus to supplement the hard wire network;
- improvement of UOW email services;
- stabilisation of UOW's core server resources and support structure.

UOW's IT infrastructure was reviewed in 2002 and a new Information Technology Strategic Plan³⁸ was developed. Three-year business plans for each major infrastructure component are reviewed by the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC) which advises the Vice-Chancellor on directions. Improved reliability and security of services and data are priorities. Formal change management processes and reliable data storage strongly support UOW's ability to deliver reliable, scalable, current and sustainable services to meet its needs.

2.3.7.3 The University Library

The UOW Library has adopted 'Quality and Service Excellence' as its guiding principles. It aims to deliver high-quality resources, programs and services, designed in consultation

37 Capital Management Plan 2004–2008, SM16

38 Information Technology Strategic Plan 2004

with clients and stakeholders.³⁹ Its proactive approach to client service is exemplified in the Academic Outreach program.⁴⁰

The Library has a collection of over 650,000 items including at least 21,000 journals (primarily electronic). It provides 24 hour/7day access to electronic resources and a comprehensive, usability-tested website⁴¹ (3,700,000 hits in 2004). Even so, client need for study space and other facilities has not diminished and the Library recorded over 1,000,000 visits to the main building in 2004. The pressure on existing space and strong client feedback have prompted planning for an extension.

Off-campus students receive personal assistance via the Shoalhaven Campus Library and through partnerships with public or TAFE libraries at UOW's other onshore education sites. UOW Dubai Library is supported through access to resources, staff training and sharing of expertise.

The Library's various consultation and feedback mechanisms include client membership of the Library Consultative Committee; Library staff participation in University committees; Library Client Satisfaction Surveys⁴² conducted at least every two years (since 1995); a sophisticated feedback database; and suggestions for purchase mechanisms.

Internal performance review reports, prepared on a biannual basis, have produced significant recent improvements to Library services, such as: acquisition of backsets of recognised scholarly journals to support key research strengths; extended opening hours; and improved core-process turnaround times. Such improvements are evaluated through a range of targeted surveys, plus the major biennial Library Client Satisfaction Survey. The Library has sustained a high level of positive satisfaction over the past three survey cycles. In the 2004 survey, 88% of respondents ranked overall satisfaction as good to excellent, a 14% improvement since 1994. National comparisons, against academic libraries contributing to a national database, place UOW Library in the 'best-in-class' range across all satisfaction categories.

UOW Library's excellence in organisational management and leadership has been recognised in ground-breaking achievements such as an Australian Business Excellence Award and accreditation against the internationally recognised Investors in People Standard (IIP:2000) and the International Customer Service Standard (ICSS:2000-2006). Library benchmarking goes beyond core business processes and includes strategic planning and leading and managing change.

2.3.8 Controlled and Associated Entities

UOW's controlled and associated entities operate under the University's strategic goals and have a particular role in supporting Goal 7: 'Enhanced capacity to take full and timely advantage of business opportunities that will support our Vision and Goals.'

They all have a role in the diversification of funding and most aim to provide both students and staff with the facilities and services that help to maintain their well-being and commitment.

39 Library Business Plan 2004, SM6; www.library.uow.edu.au/about/news/survey/2004/

40 Academic Outreach, SM17

41 www.library.uow.edu.au/

42 www.library.uow.edu.au/about/news/survey/2004/

UOW's **Controlled Entities** are:

- The Illawarra Technology Corporation Ltd (ITC)⁴³ forms part of UOW's strategy to expand its commercial capabilities and international business relations. ITC's key areas of expertise are:
 - international contract and consulting services;
 - education and training solutions; and
 - student recruitment, admissions, marketing and external relations.
 ITC's activities are quality accredited under ISO Accreditation: Lloyds Register Quality Assurance,⁴⁴ with accreditation for the Wollongong University College under the National ELT Accreditation Scheme Ltd.⁴⁵
- The UniCentre Ltd⁴⁶ provides products, services and facilities to meet the diverse social and cultural needs of the UOW population.
- The University Recreation and Aquatic Centre Ltd (URAC)⁴⁷ provides affordable fitness and recreational options for UOW staff, students and the wider community.
- Enikos Pty Ltd is the vehicle for commercialising software developed at UOW to create, manage and deploy digital items using the MPEG-21 standard.

The controlled entities provide regular reports to the University Council on their activities and budgets. At its August 2004 meeting, Council approved a revised reporting schedule that clarifies and coordinates their reporting.⁴⁸

Controlled entities regularly review their governance structures, principles and procedures. For example:

- Recommendations from an external risk assessment review in 2003 form the basis of ITC's current three-year Audit Plan.
- The UniCentre completed a risk assessment review with an external consultant in 2003 and an Internal Audit program consultancy was developed with KPMG in 2004. The UniCentre Board is currently undertaking a governance charter review.
- URAC's current external Corporate Governance Review is expected to be concluded by February 2005.

UOW's one **Associated Entity**—Impart Corporation⁴⁹—is a provider of online learning solutions and learning technology products. The University obtains and regularly reviews audited accounts for Impart Corporation and provides copies to the NSW Auditor-General. Impart Corporation is the subject of a separate reference in UOW's audited financial statements.

43 ITC 2003 Annual Report, SM 18
 44 www.lrqqa.com
 45 www.neasaustralia.com/
 46 UniCentre 2003 Annual Report, SM 19
 47 URAC 2003 Annual Report, SM 20
 48 Schedule of Reporting Requirements for UOW Controlled Entities
 49 www.impart.com.au/about.shtml

2.3.9 Student Representation

2.3.9.1 Committee Membership

UOW values the student contribution to discussion and decision-making and regards committee participation as one important means of developing graduate attributes. Students are represented⁵⁰ on the University Council, the Academic Senate, the Core Function committees and the faculty committees. They also have positions on the investigation and appeals committees under the Student Discipline Rules and on a range of specific sub-committees and working parties.

2.3.9.2 Student Associations

UOW's two unincorporated student associations—the University of Wollongong Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA)⁵¹ and the Wollongong University Postgraduate Association (WUPA)⁵²—each elect executive members, including their Presidents, annually from among the student body. They are funded from a percentage of each student's compulsory service charge.

The student associations operate under separate constitutions, developed in consultation with the Academic Registrar and approved by the University Council. Each association has also developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University, setting out mutual responsibilities. The WUPA MOU has been approved by Council; the WUSA document is still being finalised.

Both associations use UOW's financial systems to monitor and approve spending and to acquit their finances. They provide detailed budgets to Council and report twice yearly on their performance and on services delivered to students.

REVIEW

2.4 Evaluation and Review

2.4.1 Monitoring Performance

UOW's review procedures, introduced over 20 years ago, were forerunners in the sector and adopted as a model by other universities. They were updated in the interim and their overall effectiveness was re-evaluated during 2002–2003 in the light of changes to UOW planning, such as the introduction of regular faculty reporting against plans. As a result, UOW has developed a new, comprehensive framework and guidelines which sits in the context of the new planning structure.

The Quality Review Framework (see 2.3.2.2 above), approved late 2004, simplifies procedures for course, subject and faculty review while recognising the differences in academic cultures.

50 www.uow.edu.au/governance/

51 WUSA Constitution and Regulations, SM21; Memorandum of Understanding, to be finalised

52 WUPA Constitution, Regulations and Memorandum of Understanding, SM22

2.4.2 Benchmarking

UOW employs benchmarking to test the standards of its offerings, policies and procedures. Examples documented throughout the portfolio include: course content and delivery (against professional and discipline standards, other universities); research performance (against sector standards in grant income etc); English language teaching (under National ELT Accreditation Scheme Ltd); Library (under Investors in People Standard (IiP:2000) and the International Customer Service Standard (ICSS:2000–2006)); Career Development (against external educational, government and corporate organizations); OH&S (against industry standards); EEO (against sector and Australian workplace standards). The Quality Review Framework requires benchmarking to be undertaken as part of the review process for courses, subjects and faculties.

2.4.3 Outcomes

Successful outcomes of UOW's consultative planning, governance and management processes are exemplified by:

- Annual, monitored and shared reviews of strategic plans
- Two planning retreats each year to assess institutional performance and set directions
- Self-evaluation by major governing bodies—Council and Academic Senate
- Regular reviews of organisational/management units
- Ongoing policy review and development by Core Function Committees
- Rigorous and regular audit of budget and financial performance
- Annual reviews of professional units (benchmarked against external standards where necessary)
- Comprehensive risk assessment processes
- Ongoing oversight of controlled entities
- Sophisticated reporting tools (see COGNOS Case Study below)

A number of the above reviews involve external assessment by government bodies or major accounting firms.

COGNOS Reporting Tools

UOW launched an integrated data collection and business reporting system in February 2002. The COGNOS⁵³ reporting tools—COGNOS PowerPlay and COGNOS Impromptu—allow users in the faculties and professional units to gather and report on up-to-date information, to monitor trend analysis across time and to drill down from high level data to a transactional data level.

Case Study

⁵³ www.cognos.com/products/;
www.uow.edu.au/admin/personnel/COGNOS/aboutcognos.htm

The COGNOS 'cubes' provide their users with the up-to-date information on financial, human resources, spatial and student data.

In an outstanding example of how UOW prepares its students for the 'real world', the pilot project for the research and testing of the COGNOS system in 2000 was not outsourced but assigned to one of UOW's Administration cadets—a full-time Bachelor of Commerce student. The COGNOS company itself praised the standard of her work and her success in 'transforming the technology to suit different needs'.

The value of the COGNOS cubes is demonstrated in examples of its use throughout this portfolio.

2.4.4 Future Challenges

The UOW planning and organisational review frameworks are emerging from a rigorous review period. They have retained their trademark UOW flexibility and are designed to encourage initiative. During 2005-2007, UOW is aiming to reinforce a number of the initiatives from the last planning cycle, such as the integrated planning model and the Quality Review Framework. It will also focus on achieving a more systematic approach to institutional benchmarking.

IMPROVE

2.5 Priorities for Action

UOW aims to work towards its 2005–2007 strategic goals, and particularly Goal 7, by undertaking the following plan of action:

Current Priorities, 2005

- Strengthen the planning and budget link through a revised consultation schedule and more robust cross-referencing with faculty and unit planning reports.
- Evaluate and implement endorsed recommendations from the 2004 Academic Senate review.
- Monitor the first review cycle for the revised UOW strategic planning structure and identify improvements.
- Extend, support and monitor benchmarking initiatives.
- Raise awareness and monitor the operation of the Quality Review Framework guidelines.

Longer Term Priorities, 2005–2007

- Refine and employ the Communications Strategy to promote awareness and ownership of UOW plans and policies.
- In light of review cycles, adjust planning strategies and implementation, where necessary, to improve alignment with UOW strategic directions.
- Review the Quality Review Framework.
- Review the effectiveness of the Communications Strategy.
- Review (in 2007) the UOW and Core Function Plans for the next cycle.

