



The University of Sydney

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Strategic Directions
2006–2010

“ambition inspired by achievement”

Our purpose

The university of today is an integral part of a progressive and open society. We contribute to and support progress and freedom and in turn our work is enabled by those qualities in society. This must remain true however the University evolves in the future.

The core purpose of the University of Sydney is our fundamental moral commitment to intellectual discovery and development, responsible social commentary and the promotion of cultural and economic well being. To this end, we combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense to serve the needs of the community while preserving academic freedom. What we choose to research and teach is ultimately determined by that purpose.

Intellectual discovery may be uncomfortable and raise challenges as well as provide solutions. Our social commentary may be a critique of existing practice – constructive but confronting. We seek *sustainable* economic development, and this means our contributions may not entirely align with the short-term goals of some as we strive to balance divergent views and timeframes for an optimal institutional outcome.

We must seek a balance between fostering an environment in which each individual is encouraged to resolve these issues personally and one in which there develops a collective institutional commitment to the University's core purpose. The University must not be afraid to champion excellence, yet we must provide opportunity for all students. In defining our aims, we must live within our means yet focus on absolute quality. Our purpose is to challenge and develop our students as influential future citizens yet also to equip them for immediate useful employment. Our spirit must be romantic and humanitarian, yet our actions must be practical.

Within the context of our defined purpose, we should be determined to run the business operations of the University as efficiently as possible. To broaden the University's resource base, we will attract external funding, but internal savings made through efficiencies in our methods of operation, including reform of academic processes, will be just as effective.

We need to take risks, invest in capital development initiatives, and engender a sense of pride in belonging. Whether or not they are involved in the core activities of research and teaching, it is important that all staff know they are making a genuine and valued contribution to the core purpose of the institution.

Established over 150 years ago as the first university in Australia, the University of Sydney was founded, in the words of its original charter, "to promote liberal education and useful knowledge...for the benefit of all". The University of Sydney respects and honours the original owners of the land of the original Camperdown campus, the Cadigal people of the Eora Nation, who for tens of thousands of years transmitted knowledge to generations of indigenous Australians. The University today is the proud inheritor of those traditions.

Professor Gavin Brown
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The University of Sydney – ambition inspired by achievement

The next decade is one of challenge and opportunity, in which we will build on our position as Australia's premier university and leader in Australian higher education.

Our aspiration is to achieve:

- ? Clear leadership as Australia's premier university in research, teaching and learning and the student experience
- ? Acknowledgment and ranking as one of the top five universities in the region, and
- ? Recognition and ranking in the top forty universities around the world

For us, this aspiration is known as 1:5:40.

We will achieve this aspiration through leadership which embraces reform in the four core areas of:

- ? Research and innovation
- ? Learning and teaching
- ? Student experience, and
- ? Community engagement and outreach

This leadership will be supported by best practice, excellence and world-class standards in:

- ? Alumni engagement and philanthropy
- ? Capability
- ? Infrastructure and services, and
- ? Financial performance

While leadership should be reflected in rankings, it will more significantly, be evident in meaningful relationships with leading universities of the world.

Our Values

- ? Responsibility and service through leadership in the Community
- ? Quality and sustainability in meeting the needs of our Stakeholders
- ? Merit, equity and diversity in our Student body
- ? Integrity, professionalism and collegiality in our Staff
- ? Life-long relationship and friendship with our Alumni

These values must inform our ambition.

We will dedicate our individual talents and the available resources of the University to uphold and advance:

- ? Freedom to pursue critical and open inquiry in a responsible manner
- ? Recognition of the importance of ideas and ideals
- ? Tolerance, honesty, respect, and ethical behaviour, and
- ? Understanding the needs of those we serve.

University structure and organisation

An effective organisational structure is the basis of the modern university's ability to achieve its core purpose. With over 47,000 students and 6,000 staff, the University of Sydney has developed an organisational structure which has three academic colleges and five central portfolios. Overseeing and supporting management is the Senate, which ensures that governance and stewardship is at the highest levels. Supporting Senate is the Academic Board which, through its charter of independence, ensures academic and scholarly standards are world class.

Our core purposes of research and innovation, learning and teaching, student experience and community engagement and outreach are delivered through;

- ? The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS)
- ? The College of Health Sciences (CHS), and
- ? The College of Sciences and Technology (CST).

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is the most comprehensive grouping of these disciplines in Australia, comprising the Faculties of Arts, Economics and Business, Education and Social Work, Law, Sydney College of the Arts, and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. The College's research, teaching, artistic creation and community engagement cultivate human aspiration, and inspire creativity and prompt social conscience, to promote political and economic progress and cultural enrichment. Among its graduates are leaders in all spheres of public and private endeavour, nationally and internationally.

The College of Health Sciences is the leading provider of education and research in the health sciences in Australia. Through our Faculties of Dentistry, Health Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy, the College offers a vast range of basic and advanced education in major health care disciplines, its graduates providing more than one third of all new entrants to the health system in New South Wales. The College's outstanding record of attracting government and external funding for health research achievement reflects the national and international standing of the academic staff. Many leading health and medical research institutes and foundations have close relations with the University and work in partnership to support our research.

The College of Sciences and Technology provides innovative world-class research and teaching in the biological, physical and technical fields, enabling our staff and graduates to enrich the quality of life and contribute to sustainable wealth creation. Through our Faculties of Architecture, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Engineering, Science and Veterinary Sciences, the College is a leader in attracting highly talented graduate and undergraduate students and staff, prestigious Federation Fellows and competitive research funding.

Within the three Colleges, the University has 18 faculties, each headed by a Dean who is responsible for working with Heads of Schools, programs and centres, to achieve University aspirations. Deans foster collaborative leadership through the Committee of Deans and the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee.

Five specialised academic and professional units lead university-wide development and support the colleges and faculties by providing management services and ensuring strategic alignment, consistent standards, and an emphasis on quality and financial sustainability. They are:

- ? The Research and Innovation portfolio
- ? The Academic and International portfolio
- ? University Relations
- ? The Infrastructure portfolio, and
- ? Financial Services.

Our performance in all areas will be devoted to **continuous improvement**, benchmarked against the best universities and organisations in the world. Our ambition is to enhance our performance in all areas of endeavour and ensure that, by any measure, the outstanding quality of the University of Sydney is recognised internationally.

Research and innovation – creativity and discovery

The University of Sydney is a leader in conducting research and delivering innovation that improves the cultural, social and economic well-being of Australia, our region, and the world. Our research aims to achieve both fundamental advances in knowledge and to contribute to the development and commercial application of that knowledge. Our reputation is directly linked to the quality of our research achievement.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Conduct research in a culture that inspires discovery and innovation
- ? Create a vibrant research environment which attracts and retains the best researchers and values and rewards their contributions
- ? Attract outstanding research students and train the next generation of researchers to the best international standards
- ? Invest in world-class research infrastructure and administrative support structures that are recognised as best practice, and
- ? Promote high-impact collaboration with other leading universities in Australia and worldwide
- ? Stimulate knowledge transfer and commercialisation
- ? Integrate the activities of the various research institutes, centres and foundations into the core research endeavours of the University.

By 2010, we will enhance our research achievement through an increased focus on interdisciplinary capability, international research linkages and collaboration, and proactive engagement with industry.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Improved research intensity, reflected in research active staff and our national share of externally funded research fellowships**
- 2. Growth in research income from national and international sources**
- 3. Greater productivity of research publications in number and quality**
- 4. Continuous improvement in national and international research collaboration**
- 5. Increased higher degree research load and improved higher degree research completions**
- 6. Improved performance in Commercialisation, reflected in invention disclosures, patents, licenses and industrial research contracts and consultancies**

Learning and teaching – creative learning, quality teaching

As a large, comprehensive, public institution, the University of Sydney provides a liberal undergraduate education and preparation for the full suite of professional qualifications and postgraduate study. We intend to sustain steady growth in the ratio of postgraduate to undergraduate students and continue to attract substantial numbers of high quality local and international students.

A distinctive feature of study at the University of Sydney is its insistence on research-led teaching, both in content and delivery. Flexible modes of delivery, in keeping with innovation in information and communication technologies and student expectations, will ensure excellent learning experiences and outcomes.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Continue to attract the best students and to provide them with incentives and support through bursaries and scholarships
- ? Provide quality environments that encourage independent learning, peer interaction, effective skill development and a sense of enjoyment in learning
- ? Offer academically challenging and professionally relevant programs
- ? Continue to adapt and respond to student feedback and employer and community needs
- ? Support articulation of our undergraduate programs with graduate-entry professional programs
- ? Cultivate cultural diversity through curriculum development, and
- ? Recognise and reward teaching excellence.

By 2010, we will have achieved a vibrant and well resourced learning environment which has aligned our student profile with our strategic direction. Physical infrastructure and technical support will be appropriate to our learning and teaching priorities.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Continuous improvement in quality learning, reflected in outstanding student performance, and in retention, progression and completion rates**
- 2. Improved student performance, reflected in higher graduate employment rates and starting salaries**
- 3. Recognition of excellence in teaching through improved student assessment of teaching quality across all disciplines**
- 4. Quality assurance, reflected in sustained and improved performance against quality criteria as set by the Academic Board**
- 5. Continuous improvement in research-led learning and teaching, reflected in an increased proportion of teaching staff who are research active**
- 6. Continued growth in national and international accreditation of professional and academic programs**
- 7. Maintained or improving student staff ratios**
- 8. Ensuring that outstanding potential students are not discouraged by lack of means**

The student experience – partnership for learning

The University of Sydney aims to offer all of its students a rich and comprehensive experience of University life. Our goal is to enable each student to develop their individual interests and talents and to enjoy university life at all levels by delivering the highest quality formal education in a research-intensive environment which values and encourages extra-curricular experiences and opportunities.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Ensure a diverse and talented population of student peers , both undergraduate and postgraduate
- ? Maximise opportunities for students to participate and excel in a broad range of extra curricular activities, including sport, debating, the arts, music, drama and student leadership
- ? Provide academic and professional services to help students manage the academic and personal challenges which may arise
- ? Ensure user-friendly administrative processes and systems which support the management of the entire student life cycle,
- ? Provide an effective program of scholarships and financial assistance
- ? Support affordable accommodation for students with a vibrant college and village life, and
- ? Provide effective language and bridging support for international students .

By 2010 we will have increased further the proportion of undergraduate and postgraduate student recruits who are high achievers, increased the proportion of students who take part in an international and/or industry placement experience, increased the number of Cotutelle research degrees and research student exchanges with leading international universities and we will manage the majority of student administration on line.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Maintained or improving reputation reflected in student demand**
- 2. Quality and diversity of student population**
- 3. Improved equity group participation**
- 4. Improving student satisfaction and continuous improvement in student assessment of student experience**
- 5. Maintained or improving range of sporting, social and cultural opportunities**
- 6. Continuous improvement in effectiveness and accessibility of administrative and student support services**
- 7. Increased value and number of available scholarships and financial assistance programs**
- 8. Improved performance by International students, transcending linguistic or cultural challenges**

Community engagement and outreach– service, leadership and commitment

Community and civic engagement is central to the University of Sydney's continued vitality and relevance. We see universities of the 21st century not only as centres for research and learning, but also as contributing to the cultural, social, economic and political life of the community.

The University of Sydney will distinguish itself as a vital source of intellectual development, creative endeavour and informed social commentary. We will achieve this by building constructive, sustainable relationships with prospective students, schools, business and industry, professions, governments, and directly with community organisations and individual citizens, especially our alumni.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Participate in public debate to inform community opinion and public policy
- ? Lead in educational outreach to the broader community
- ? Engage graduates as ambassadors, advisors, sponsors and donors and through their participation in our cultural, artistic, intellectual and sporting life, as partners in life-long learning and through a culture of volunteerism
- ? Lead in involvement in health, social and personal development programs
- ? Participate in Australia's cultural and sporting life, particularly in first-rate performing and visual arts programs, and
- ? Develop outstanding communication with business and industry partners and professional organisations.

By 2010, we will have more effectively branded and marketed our activities to ensure community perception matches the University's vision and core values, and enhanced our role as a cultural centre serving the city of Sydney, the state and the nation, by developing stronger ties with business and industry, the professions and government.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Continuous improvement in achievement of community practices and standards**
- 2. Improving participation in public debate and in media performance and commentary**
- 3. Increased public participation in community education offerings**
- 4. Improving involvement in cultural, sporting and social development programs**
- 5. Continuous improvement in University reputation**

Alumni engagement and philanthropy – life long relationship and friendship

Our future success will increasingly depend on our ability to engage our alumni, friends, and the business sector, to leverage our national and world-wide reputation and create the additional financial resources necessary to accelerate achievement in research and innovation, and learning and teaching. We need to communicate in clear terms our strengths and successes to alumni and external audiences and convey the important role these groups have in determining our future.

Successful engagement will create a shift in the attitudes of our alumni and the external community in the manner in which they understand and take pride in our achievements and will engender support for the challenges we face as a university.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Develop amongst our students an awareness of life-long association and the importance and benefits to them of continued involvement
- ? Engage alumni in the life of the University through innovative service programs and compelling communications
- ? Commit to ongoing market research to better understand community and alumni attitudes, to inform our communications and assess the effectiveness of our programs
- ? Develop ways to communicate effectively our strategic priorities in order to nurture a culture of philanthropy, and an expectation that gifts and private sector funding will be an increasing and critically important driver of University sustainability, quality and success
- ? Build frameworks, expertise, policies, and program capacity to undertake ambitious and sophisticated alumni relations activities and fundraising campaigns, and
- ? Establish an Alumni Centre on main campus that is the hub of activity and a space that effectively supports all programs engaging alumni with the University.

By 2010, we will have a robust spirit of volunteerism which will propel a unified Alumni Association with a single charter and an extensive cohort of national and international chapters that reflect the diverse interests and affinity of alumni across academic, geographic and cultural boundaries.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Annual increases in income generated from University-wide capital campaigns**
- 2. Continuous improvement in communication and engagement of alumni, friends and affiliated entities**
- 3. Improved coordination and management of Foundations and other fund-raising entities**

Capability – our competitive advantage

The University of Sydney attracts, rewards and retains staff of outstanding quality and international standing who contribute to our reputation nationally, regionally and internationally.

As we move towards a future requiring the University to be self-sustaining, our staff will face and meet the challenge of continuous improvement and increasing responsibility and accountability, attaining higher levels of performance and service delivery, better compliance with legal, policy and best practice requirements and improved transparency. Our academic and administrative managers and human resources professionals share responsibility for enhancing the capability of our staff and helping them to meet this challenge.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Create staff development programs which support leadership in teaching, world-class research and best practice organisational professionalism and performance
- ? Create a culture in which responsibility for learning and development is shared between staff and managers, and which helps staff to transform both their performance and their career, and
- ? Create a robust performance management and development system which appropriately recognises and supports early career academic and general staff and ensures that the University is maximising the effective contribution of all staff.

By 2010, we will have increased staff capability in core performance areas, introduced an intellectual capital management strategy with best practice metrics and reporting, transformed the human resources services delivery model with enhanced online accessibility, and integrated staff learning and development University-wide.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Improved recruitment and retention of top performing academic and general staff**
- 2. Continuous improvement in staff quality and learning capacity**
- 3. Better staff performance measurement and performance reward, and**
- 4. Continuous improvement in leadership and managerial practice**
- 5. Flexible and innovative retention strategies for outstanding staff**

Infrastructure and services – our platform for success

Infrastructure and services are key partners in supporting the University's endeavours in research and innovation, learning and teaching and community outreach. The University is one of the largest in Australia, with 16 campuses as well as many teaching and research facilities throughout Australia.

New teaching delivery methods and the changing needs of research bring new challenges in ensuring a "best fit" between our strategic directions, our physical and cultural heritage and the future development of infrastructure and information communications technology.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Develop an infrastructure strategy to support University goals
- ? Improve integration between physical and ICT assets and usage
- ? Ensure service performance, satisfaction and outcomes
- ? Design a blueprint for transformation strategy
- ? Align infrastructure governance, quality and management processes
- ? Improve capital planning and investment
- ? Improve enterprise architecture and integration
- ? Ensure infrastructure systems development and lifecycle management
- ? Enhance ICT applications and services
- ? Progress infrastructure decision making processes to best practice levels,
- ? Develop and train staff in core operations and services to best practice levels, and
- ? Determine the most effective number, arrangement and location of campuses to enable the University to meet its research, teaching and reputational goals.

By 2010, we will have improved our capital investment strategy and performance, evaluated our current and future infrastructure capability and capacity, identified existing infrastructure gaps and priorities, and created an enhanced accountability framework for infrastructure capability and performance.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Continuous improvement in the use of assets through management of demand, occupancy, utilisation and costs**
- 2. Improvement in capital planning and investment**
- 3. Continuous improvement in client satisfaction with quality and efficiency of facilities and service delivery**
- 4. Continuous improvement in environmental performance and sustainability**

Financial performance – best practice standards

To ensure that our resources are devoted to achieving our core purpose, the University will strive to become a world-class organisation with an uncompromising focus on service delivery, administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

An emphasis on best practice standards in policy, procedure and processes will ensure that performance in the key functions of student services, human resources, university relations and marketing, information technology, administration and financial management is continuously improving.

To ensure organisational performance at the highest level, we will benchmark our effectiveness against world class peers and industry, and thereby benefit from the broadest possible base of initiatives and opportunities.

Our priorities are to:

- ? Ensure financial sustainability, by implementing effective organisational performance improvement strategies
- ? Achieve world class shared service operations
- ? Eliminate resource-consuming duplication and overlaps
- ? Implement quality standards and principles, and
- ? Develop best practice approaches to structures, processes, and procedures.

By 2010, we will implement shared service operations across all support services, achieve recognition as a best practice quality site in support services, and achieve an operating margin of 15% on revenue.

Standards of performance and benchmarks

- 1. Increased operating margin**
- 2. Higher revenue growth rate**
- 3. Greater revenue diversity**
- 4. Better employee benefits costs to revenue ratio**
- 5. Improved core-to-support cost ratio**
- 6. Continuous improvement in best-practice financial disciplines and fiscal stewardship**