

Review of Activities

Strategic Planning

The University has consistently adopted a goals-based approach to planning, focused around its mission and values. The Strategic Plan developed in 2001 for the 2001–2005 period strives for a whole-of-institution focus with specific detail on critical areas of activity such as teaching and learning, and research.

The Strategic Plan 2001–2005 has become gradually more detailed and inclusive with each annual review resulting in the need for a major review in 2004. The tone for the planning of the Strategic Plan 2005–2010 was set by Council, which developed a detailed environmental analysis and stipulated that consultation with key stakeholder groups be part of the planning

process. At various stages throughout the process, the University's senior management team provided input and critique, fine tuning each draft until the final version was developed and presented to Council for approval at its December meeting.

As an organisation, the University will express the following four characteristics across all aspects of its operation:

- human scale
- engagement
- pursuit of international excellence
- innovation

The Strategic Plan 2005–2010 reflects both a process and a determination to articulate clearly defined priorities, indicators of success, and benchmarks within a framework of eight key groups or themes critical to the University's development over the next five years. They are:

- the University;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Students;
- Staff;
- Learning and teaching;
- Research;
- Engagement; and
- Internationalisation.

The Strategic Plan takes its place alongside several other high level planning documents including the Master Plan for the University's physical development and the Development Control Plan for Sippy Downs. These documents have a clear commitment to operational and environmental sustainability, and an acknowledgment of the University's role as a major catalyst and hub for regional economic, social and cultural development.



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Review of Activities

Strategic Plan 2001–2005

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To ensure the academic and career outcomes of graduates are positive, new programs are developed in close consultation with industry practitioners, and are based on areas of current demand and emerging growth.

The University has strong research links within the region further ensuring it fulfils its philosophy to engage, serve and enhance the community.

Since opening in 1996, the University of the Sunshine Coast's growth – in student numbers, programs and research activities – has exceeded expectations.

Mission

The University of the Sunshine Coast's mission is to be the major catalyst for the innovative and sustainable economic, cultural and educational advancement of the region, through the pursuit of international standards in teaching and research.

Values

The following values underpin the University's everyday operations in pursuit of its Mission:

- A commitment to advance, disseminate and preserve knowledge through innovative and effective teaching and research.
- A commitment to foster freedom of inquiry and expression.
- A commitment to the process of lifelong learning.

- A commitment to engage in and respond to the community's intellectual, cultural and economic needs.
- A commitment to adopt consultative processes and ethical behaviour in all activities.
- A commitment to engender respect among students, staff and Council of the University for their diverse roles and contributions.
- A commitment to fairness, openness, honesty, trust and effective communication as fundamental expectations of students, staff and all associated with the University.
- A commitment to develop the University and its surrounds as an environmentally sensitive exemplar.

Each of the five goals and the series of strategic priorities outlined in the *University's Strategic Plan 2001–2005* will be addressed in this report.



Consumer research conducted in 2004 indicated the University was known for its supportive staff and human scale.

Review of Activities

GOAL 1: Teaching-Research

Advancing the teaching-research nexus in distinctive ways directly related to Sunshine Coast regional development and connectivity with universities and regions internationally.

Background

Teaching and research at the University is based on producing graduates for areas of current demand and emerging growth on the Sunshine Coast. The University's academic programs have been developed in close consultation with industry practitioners, and much of the research carried out at the University relates to the activities of the region. In this way the University fulfils its mission to be the major catalyst for the innovative and sustainable economic, cultural and educational advancement of the region.

In 2004 the University's priorities in teaching and research were:

- evaluation of teaching and courses;
- the implementation of the accreditation system;
- student assessment;
- new academic policies;
- committee operations at faculty level;
- existing area plans and new three-year plans;
- academic development;
- changes in the external operating environment;
- internal communication regarding teaching and research;
- the incorporation of graduate attributes into programs and courses;
- e-Learning, accreditation of new undergraduate, postgraduate and research programs;
- consolidation of research institutes and centres;
- academic administration; and
- grants and higher degree by research administration.

Teaching-Research Nexus

In 2004 the University renewed its original commitment to the teaching-research nexus. The University understands the teaching-research nexus as the variety of ways in which research and scholarship shape and inform teaching, and teaching shapes and informs research.

Achievements

Learning and Teaching

In 2004, the University:

- commenced updating the Academic Rules to accommodate rapid changes in program provision;
- implemented the Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching Policy and related procedures;
- implemented the new Program Accreditation and Course Approval Policy and related procedures;
- piloted a common instrument for gathering and responding to student feedback on courses;
- commenced developing a new student assessment policy;
- reviewed the terms of reference and operations for a range of academic committees;
- consolidated the roles of Faculty Learning and Teaching Coordinators and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees;

- implemented the final stages of the *Learning and Teaching Management Plan 2002-2004*;
- extended the provision of academic development opportunities, introducing workshops for lecturers;
- made initial preparations for the advent of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and the Carrick Institute;
- improved internal communication about learning and teaching matters;
- incorporated graduate attributes into all undergraduate programs and courses;
- completed initial implementation of the new learning management system: Blackboard; and
- accredited a range of new programs, including three new combined Education degree programs (refer page 7 for more detail).

Research and Research Training

In 2004, the University:

- received its first Discovery Grant from the Australian research Council (ARC) (refer to page 14 for more detail);
- commenced a review of the Higher Degree by Research Rules and Bachelor Honours Rules to accommodate changes in the research and research training environment;



The University has the highest proportion of academic staff with Doctoral or Masters degrees of any Queensland institution and the fifth highest in Australia.

Review of Activities

- made system improvements in the management of grants and higher degree by research candidature;
- commenced development of a new Consultancy and Outside Work Policy;
- commenced the update and revision of the Intellectual Property Policy;
- evaluated the implementation of the University's original Research and Research Training Plan and developed a new plan for the period 2005–2007;
- again extended the provision of academic development opportunities for researchers, supervisors and research students;
- consolidated the use of the instrument for gathering and responding to research student feedback;
- developed the grants and research ethics modules of the research management database;
- improved capture and communication of research and research training performance data;
- drafted a statement of Research Graduate Attributes giving priority to enterprise and an understanding of the commercialisation of research outcomes;
- held workshops relating to the draft statement for research students; and
- accredited a new higher degree by research program.

Advancing the Teaching–Research Nexus

In 2004 the University:

- drafted a statement entitled Advancing the Teaching–Research Nexus;
- consulted on this draft at the level of faculties, the Learning and Teaching Management Committee, the Research Management Committee and the Academic Board;
- commenced re-drafting the statement in the light of feedback received; and
- determined to process this re-drafted statement through the appropriate committees and present it for approval at the June 2005 meeting of the University Council.



ARC Grant awarded

The University of the Sunshine Coast received its first Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council (ARC). The \$150,000 research grant is a major step forward for the University.

USC Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Thomas, said the grant is significant, as it establishes key research opportunities for the University in the future.

"ARC grants are extremely competitive in the national higher education sector. Receiving one is a coveted award for any university, particularly a regional one. ARC is the key funding body in Australia and fosters the highest standards of research in all discipline areas.

Dr Julie Matthews, USC Senior Lecturer in Social and Community Studies, led the team's application to ARC.

"There is only a 20 percent success rate in applications for ARC grants, so we were delighted to learn we had received one," Dr Matthews said.

Dr Matthews' background is in social justice in education and much of her work so far has focused on minority students and problems of racism and sexism. The ARC grant, titled Schooling, Globalisation and Refugees in Queensland, will make a difference to young lives across the state.

"It focuses on refugee students in Queensland's public education system – students who have come to be regarded as 'illegals' and 'queue jumpers'," Dr Matthews said.

"Most of these children are fleeing the destruction of their homes and communities due to war, so it is ironic that they have come to represent the evils of the world."

The project looks at how education institutions address these issues of identity and citizenship.

Review of Activities

GOAL 2: Students

Preparing students to become informed, critical, reflective, creative, ethical, responsible and entrepreneurial graduates of international standing, capable of securing good opportunities for career advancement.

Background

The University is the primary provider of higher education in the region and, as such, has made a strong commitment to:

- increasing the community's access to higher education;
- providing a supportive environment; and
- preparing students for their chosen career.

In 2004, 3,862 students enrolled in programs offered by the University, an increase of 8.6 percent on the previous year. Of the first year students, 75 percent were permanent residents of the Sunshine Coast, 40 percent were the first in their family to attend university and Indigenous student numbers increased by 11.76 percent.

Achievements

The University recognised that preparing graduates capable of securing good opportunities for career advancement required support throughout their time at university:

- In 2004, a First Year Experience Project, funded by the Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP), was established and a First Year Experience Officer appointed to coordinate the Project. The Project's goal is to assist first year undergraduate students with the transition to University, improving the first year experience and retention rates.
- A First Year Experience Reference Group was established consisting of staff, students and Student Guild representatives. Two issues given priority by this Group were the presentations made to staff to raise awareness of first year experience, and the review and redevelopment of Orientation Week activities to meet the needs of first year students.

- An Enrolment Working Party was formed to improve procedures. POSTBillPay was introduced onto the student Intranet (SOLAR), current students were trained as 'enrolment buddies' to assist students with SOLAR enrolments and an improved version of the Enrolment Guide was produced and made available online.
- Computer Skills Workshops were run on a weekly basis throughout the semester, to allow for ongoing acquisition of ICT skills.
- Academic skills workshops were run before, during and after Orientation Week in each semester of 2004 and Academic Skills Advisers collaborated with teaching staff to embed the skills into courses through tutorials, lectures and parallel workshops. An additional Academic Skills Adviser was employed to provide one-on-one academic skills support for students. This position was funded by the Student Guild.
- The University's new Information Commons was opened in May as part of the celebration of Australian Library and Information Week. The Commons, conveniently located beside the entrance to the Library, houses 76 new computers with DVD, CD-ROM and floppy disk facilities and eight express workstations for quick email and printing resources.
- Forty-four Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships and 20 Commonwealth Education Scholarships were made available for the first time in Semester 1, 2004. A \$15,000 South Sea Islander Scholarship from the South Sea Islander Community Foundation was awarded. A total of 138 scholarships and bursaries were awarded, with a value of \$333,779.
- An updated procedure for evaluating student feedback was developed and included information relating to the role of graduate attributes in courses. A pilot study of the process resulted in an improved form being produced for use throughout the University from 2005.
- A statement of Graduate Attributes adopted by Council in 2003 was embedded into the University's accredited undergraduate programs and courses in 2004. The Attributes outline the combination of knowledge, skills and values required in graduates of the University.

Graduate Attributes

The University strives to enable its graduates:

To understand:

- To have relevant, discipline-based knowledge, skills and values
- To be able to apply and evaluate knowledge

To think

- To value and respect reason
- To be able to reason competently

To learn

- To be self-aware, independent learners
- To be able to collect, organise, analyse, evaluate and use information in a range of contexts

To interact

- To be able to interrelate and collaborate
- To value and respect difference and diversity

To communicate

- To speak, listen and write competently
- To be competent users of information and communication technologies

To initiate

- To be constructive and creative
- To be enterprising

To value

- To have self-respect and a sense of personal agency
- To have a sense of personal and social responsibility
- To understand and apply ethical professional practices

Review of Activities

- The lack of traditional employment opportunities on the Sunshine Coast prompted the University to introduce a new core course entitled *Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship*. The course is designed to give students the key skills they need to establish their own businesses. Students gain an understanding of the techniques related to being constructive, creative and enterprising. Approximately 500 first year students completed the course in its first year of operation.
- The University actively recruited adjunct professors to provide greater breadth and depth to University teaching. Forty-three adjunct professors were employed within the three faculties in 2004.
- Many students were involved in some form of work experience external to the University in 2004. Internally, the Office of Media and Marketing further developed the Ambassador Program, employing five second and third year students. As a direct result of the success of the Ambassador Program, a Writers' Group was established to give students first-hand experience in writing for publications and the media.
- The Students Mean Business Club was established in the Faculty of Business with the help of a \$15,000 Commonwealth Government Grant offered under the National Innovation Awareness Strategy. The Club aims to provide students with an opportunity to participate in seminars and workshops and network with industry and business professionals. Late in 2004, students had the opportunity to present the Club's business plan to a panel of 12 Chief Executive Officers from around Australia as part of the Australian National SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) Competition in Melbourne.
- The Faculty of Business opened the prestigious Masters Club in November.
- The GO (Global Opportunities) Program, launched in 2004, provided 14 overseas travel grants to students wishing to study overseas with one of the University's 68 partner institutions. The number of students travelling overseas increased from six in 2003 to 28 in 2004. These 28 students studied at 21 institutions. An additional 12 students received scholarships from sources other than the University such as UMAP.
- The University held an inaugural five-day International Partners' Conference providing 30 academic and international relations staff from 20 partner institutions with an opportunity to learn about the University's international programs, to explore the region and to promote their home institutions to USC students. Representatives were from the United States, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway and Italy.
- In 2004, a Graduate Employment Officer was employed to provide career services to final year students and graduates. During the year students had the opportunity to engage with employers and industry bodies such as the Defence Force, Department of State Development and Recreation Training Queensland. The online career and employment software package, CareerHub, listed 168 local and graduate jobs. The site was accessed 17,575 times by students and graduates.
- A "Grad Pack" of job search material, and Alumni information was produced for final year students and distributed in December.
- A number of discipline areas recorded satisfactory career outcomes. For example, around 100 percent of graduates in accounting, journalism, marketing and management found full-time employment. Creative writing students and lecturers enjoyed a successful year. Three students received publishing contracts with Melbourne-based publisher Lothian. One student had his book, *The Battle of Long Tan As Told By The Commanders*, launched at the Australian War Memorial in August. Lecturer, Steven Lang, won the Best Unpublished Manuscript of an Emerging Queensland Author award in the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards at the Brisbane Writers' Festival. Senior Lecturer and multi-award winning author, Gary Crew, received a national Environment Award for Children's Literature from the Wilderness Society.



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Review of Activities

GOAL 3: Community

Catalysing economic, social and cultural dimensions of life on the Sunshine Coast, and fostering partnerships that enhance infrastructure, liveability and quality of life.

Background

The population of the Sunshine Coast region is set to double to approximately 500,000 by 2025 with a growth rate of three percent per annum. The University acts as a catalyst for development in this high growth region. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Thomas, has been involved in the planning of a Knowledge Precinct to include the University and its research centres, schools and colleges, a business incubator and a technology park. The Precinct, with a target of 5,000 jobs, is set to redefine the Sunshine Coast's economic profile and the Queensland Government has recognised its potential, approving \$15 million for the construction of new access roads into the area.

Achievements

The Knowledge Precinct

- The concept of a Knowledge Precinct was further strengthened when State Minister for Education and the Arts, Anna Bligh, opened the Queensland Education ICT Learning and Innovation Centre at the University in October 2004. To promote information and communications technology and innovation in schools, Education Queensland chose to locate this new Centre on the third floor of the University's ICT Building.
- The relationship between the University and Education Queensland's new Chancellor State College, located adjacent to the University, is a good example of how partnerships can enhance infrastructure. In the planning stages the University worked closely with the College to create shared facilities and help reduce the impact of development on land surrounding the campus. From the time the College opened at the beginning of 2004, students and parents of the school enjoyed access to the University's

playing fields and car parks, and students are able to walk to and from school across the University's grounds reducing traffic on local roads. Planning in 2004 has focused on the development of shared sporting facilities, including an indoor sports stadium and 50-metre swimming pool.

- The Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast, a wholly owned subsidiary of the University, achieved some impressive milestones in 2004. The incubator doubled in size, becoming one of Australia's largest technology business incubators and welcoming six new companies. The Innovation Centre Incubator is stage one of the technology park proposed for the area.
- In January 2004, Maroochy Economic Development Advisory Board (MEDAB) proposed a \$1million funding package for the establishment of the technology park. The package consists of monies and in-kind support, allocated over the next five years.
- Plans were finalised for stage two of the Technology Park - the Innovation Centre's Accelerator, which will provide an additional 3,000sqm of 'hi-tech' facilities.
- The University continued to engage with the Queensland Government and Maroochy Shire Council to provide feedback to the Office of Urban Management on the Draft South-East Queensland Regional Plan.

International

- The University further strengthened relationships with 20 of its partner universities in United States, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway and Italy through the inaugural International Partners' Conference held in July (refer to Goal 2, page 16).
- A further 18 partnership agreements were signed with universities in the USA, Mexico, Peru, Japan, Korea, Thailand, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Great Britain. There were 297 international students studying on campus and 28 USC students studying overseas as part of the GO Program.

Social and Cultural Dimensions

- In July, the Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) was launched by one of Australia's leading sports identities, Robert de Castella. CHASE was created to increase the understanding and enhancement of sports performance and to develop healthy activity programs in the community. Shortly after opening CHASE received a \$200,000 grant from Ausindustry for research into injury rehabilitation. Staff of the Centre worked with the Australian swimming and cycling teams prior to the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games and ran the *10,000 Steps—Road to Athens Challenge* to stimulate healthy activity in the community.



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Review of Activities

The challenge, to walk 10,000 steps each day, started with the opening of the Olympic Games on August 13 and continued until the close of the Paralympics on September 28 2004.

- The Centre for Multicultural and Community Development (CMCD) implemented the Youth Leadership Development Program, which addressed issues such as education, employment, the legal system and cultural awareness with people aged between 18 and 28 from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan.
- Six hundred and eighty-five graduands were eligible to graduate at the 2004 Graduation Ceremony held on Friday 16 April in the Innovation Centre. Awards of

Honorary Senior Fellow were presented to Bloomhill Cancer Help founder Margaret Gargan, architects Lindsay and Kerry Clare and Everal Compton, who helped establish the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

- A successful fund raising campaign, which culminated in 2004, raised over half a million dollars for the construction of a new Art Gallery which was opened by Joe Natoli, Mayor of Maroochy Shire, in July. The University hosted eight art exhibitions in 2004, including the popular Minister's Awards for Art Excellence which highlighted the work of talented secondary school students from Noosa to Caboolture. The Gallery's program was sponsored by Coastline

BMW. During 2004, visitors to the Gallery increased by 23 percent to 7,295. A call for additional 'friends of the Gallery' resulted in the recruitment of 50 new volunteers.

- In support of life long learning, and to provide an opportunity for people to network, socialise and learn, the University signed an agreement to support U3A (University of the Third Age) for a further five years.
- The University of the Sunshine Coast was one of only nine universities in Australia to receive part of an A\$22.5 million donation from Cassamarca Foundation in Italy in support of Italian studies. Funding will support Italian studies at the University for a further 13 years.



Honorary Senior Fellows, architects Lindsay and Kerry Clare (above) and Bloomhill Cancer Help founder Margaret Gargan (below).



Paralympian and community work graduate Marayke Jonkers.



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Review of Activities

GOAL 4: Environment

Providing exemplary leadership in environmentally sustainable practices.

Background

Under the South-East Queensland Regional Plan 2004, the Sippy Downs area is identified as an Emerging Activity Centre, with the potential to evolve into a Major or Principal Activity Centre by 2026. The plan portrays the area as a "compact and sustainable urban pattern of well-planned communities" with residential areas, employment and transport systems "framed by a regional landscape". The University's location in this high growth area, adjacent to the ecologically sensitive Mooloolah River National Park, requires the University to be a leader in environmental practices, including the need for structural, landscaping and waste management strategies to minimise impact.

Achievements

Fauna and Flora Protection

- Through collaboration between Maroochy Shire Council, the University and a local land developer, fencing was erected along a section of Claymore Road to protect the passage of wildlife between the campus and the Mooloolah River National Park. Road underpasses were built and, in May 2004, the University Environment Advisory Committee recommended that the existing wildlife fence be extended to further direct wildlife into the underpasses. Footprints, spoor and established paths observed in late 2004 indicate regular use of the underpasses. To date, there have been no known fatalities of wildlife on the fenced section of road.
- The University's resident population of eastern grey kangaroos (*Macropus giganteus*) did not diminish in 2004, despite further development of land surrounding the campus. Animal counts conducted during the year confirmed the existence of two mobs, of approximately 25 kangaroos in each, moving safely between the University and the Mooloolah River National Park.

The mobs are maintaining breeding numbers, with up to three generations sighted in a mob at any time.

- The University Environment Advisory Committee commissioned the Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement (iSHaRE) to conduct an ecological footprint study of the University campus.
- A landmark agreement between the University, Lensworth Group and Maroochy Shire Council was struck in 2004 to create a new heathland habitat on campus.

The agreement involved establishing 15 hectares of wallum heath habitat on the campus to compensate for rare habitat being lost on a nearby residential development site. New populations of rare and endangered boronia and acacia species from the development site will be established onto a section of the campus designated in the Campus Master Plan as a 'native landscape rehabilitation area'. Under the agreement, Lensworth will establish five hectares of wetland and 10 hectares of heathland, appoint an ecologist to report to Maroochy Shire Council on progress, and fund one PhD and one Honours student to study the population ecology and genetics of the species currently found on the development site.

- The University worked closely with Chancellor State College during its development in 2003, to create shared facilities and help reduce the development footprint on land surrounding the campus. (Refer page 17 for more detail). Stormwater from the Chancellor State College site is funnelled into the University's stormwater management system to ensure properly filtered water enters the waterways of the Mooloolah River National Park.
- As part of the University's plan to reintroduce indigenous flora to the campus, environmental restoration students planted more than 400 trees around several car parks and a further 600 wallum trees—indigenous to the area—on the eastern side of the main lake in 2004. An investigation into the wetlands, established in 2003, found native self-propagating plant species around the waterways. The propagation of these plants and an increase in the number of visiting and nesting birds, indicates a healthy wetland environment.

- A bird sanctuary created on the island in the University's main lake has become a nesting and visiting ground for 12 species of birds, several of which had not previously been seen on campus.

Flora and Fauna found on Campus

Birds:

Purple Swamp Hens
Lewins Rail
Wood Ducks
Black Fronted Dotterels
Great Egrets
Royal Spoonbills
Little Black Cormorants
Australian Darters
Plumed Whistling Ducks
Pelicans
Black Swans
Pacific Black Ducks

Plants:

Water Primrose
Water Snowflake (lily)
Zola
Princes Feather (bird, butterfly and insect habitat)
Duckweeds (fish and fowl fodder)

Water Management

- Scientific tests conducted on the University's water system of two lakes, two swirl ponds, one landscape pond and an irrigation dam found no gross pollution in 2004. The water quality of the University's lakes was found to be superior to that of most urban lakes. Nor was there pollution entering the Mooloolah River National Park's waterways from the campus.
- A Network Ten Totally Wild segment featured the kangaroos on campus and the University's stormwater management strategies.



Eastern grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*) on campus.

Review of Activities

Public Transport

- In an effort to reduce vehicle traffic around the Sippy Downs area, the University continued to lobby the Queensland Government for enhanced bus services to the campus. Accordingly, the Queensland Government introduced Translink, with integrated ticketing and reduced fares, resulting in increased numbers of students using bus services to campus.
- The University-initiated public transport route, which connects students from Brisbane by rail to Landsborough and then by bus to campus, had approximately 230 students using the service each day. This equated to around 150 fewer cars on campus.
- In December 2004 the Queensland Government initiated a feasibility study into the establishment of a major bus interchange at the University which would greatly reduce the number of cars on campus — approximately 2,500 vehicles per day in 2004 — as well as provide a local service for Sippy Downs residents.

Research

- In February, the Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement (iSHaRE) was launched. iSHaRE is a University-wide research institute with a strong research focus on environment and health. The Institute's mission is to enhance human and environmental well being through research, research training and regional engagement. iSHaRE manages the University's three off-campus research facilities at Fraser Island's Kingfisher Bay and Dilli Village, and at Beerwah.
- The University reopened Dilli Village on World Heritage-listed Fraser Island as an education camp and collaborative research centre in April 2004, after it had been decommissioned by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service earlier in the year. Under an agreement between the University and Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village, Dilli Village is managed by a trained resort employee on behalf of iSHaRE. To improve the environmental quality of the site, Dilli

Village was refurbished by the University in 2004. Refurbishments included:

- the water purification system was modernised to reintroduce potable water on site;
 - the existing grease-traps and septic system were decommissioned and new maceration pumps and a rising main installed;
 - weeds were brought under control without the use of chemicals, and the area was re-seeded with native grasses; and
 - debris, including lead paint flakes and water used during repainting, was exported from the island and taken to the University for treatment.
- A joint project, designed to understand and manage the problem of biting midges, involving the University of the Sunshine Coast, Griffith University, FMC (Chemicals) Pty Ltd, the Hervey Bay City Council and community, was awarded a Good Practice Award in the 2004 Dubai Awards. Director of iSHaRE, Associate Professor Ron Neller, chaired the regional research group and iSHaRE was contracted to run a statewide local government forum on biting midge management. The project earned Hervey Bay City Council and its partners a place on the United Nations Habitat Best Practices database.
 - The University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of Wyoming (USA) and the Kruger National Park Service in South Africa created an alliance to support research in globally protected areas. This was a further step towards formalising a Tri-Park Research Group that includes Yellowstone National Park, Fraser Island and Kruger National Park. The agreement will encourage university and partner organisation exchanges, with PhD students and a University of Wyoming GIS expert due to arrive at the University in 2005.
 - A two-year study by Senior Lecturer, Dr Thomas Schlacher into the effects of brown water river plumes, conducted in partnership with Griffith University, won the Coastal ARC Research Award in April 2004.



The Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement (iSHaRE), manages the University's three off-campus research facilities at Fraser Island's Kingfisher Bay and Dilli Village, and at Beerwah.

Review of Activities

GOAL 5: Staff

Attracting and retaining innovative, responsive and flexible staff capable of advancing an open and accountable work environment characterised by mutual respect and interdependence.

Background

The University is one of the largest employers on the Sunshine Coast, currently employing approximately 300 full-time staff. The University's ability to attract and retain staff that contribute to the quality of the students' academic experience and the overall performance of the University is essential for the University's reputation and long-term success. The work of the Office of Human Resources focuses on the University's strategic objectives; providing a range of services to managers and staff to support productivity and high performance; and compliance with employment-related laws, policies and regulations and the minimisation of risk.

Achievements

- The University of the Sunshine Coast has the highest proportion of academic staff with higher degrees (89%) of any

Queensland University and fifth highest in Australia according to statistics produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

- The University application to the Employment of Women Agency for an 'Employer of Choice Award' was successful. The award will be presented in January 2005.
- The number of women in senior positions rose to 46%.
- Staff recruitment doubled from 60 appointments in 2003 to 121 in 2004.
- A Recruitment and Selection Training Program was developed in 2004 to ensure staff were adequately skilled to implement the University's recruitment and selection processes.
- The University's Induction Program was revised in 2004 as a result of consultation with newly appointed staff. Subsequent feedback indicates the revised Program is working well. New staff feel welcome and appreciate the opportunity to learn of the University's mission, values, operations and culture.
- An Employment and Participation Strategy for Indigenous Australians was developed.
- The appointment process for sessional staff was revised and a Staff

Development/Induction Day designed for all sessional staff.

- Information on staff development has been located on the staff Intranet and a staff development calendar, which includes a comprehensive range of internal and external activities, is circulated to staff each month by email.
- A Learning and Teaching Staff Development Reference Group was established to provide advice to the Learning and Teaching Management Committee on the staff development program.
- A series of fortnightly academic workshops was planned and implemented during 2004.
- Eighty-five percent of staff participated in staff development activities, including performance planning and review.
- The University policies and procedures relating to discrimination and harassment were reviewed and contact officers trained.
- The University's Code of Conduct was reviewed after extensive consultation with staff, students and other stakeholders.
- Staff training programs and a manual were developed for Authors and Coordinators maintaining the content on the corporate website.



2004 joint recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Outstanding Teacher award, Dr David McKay (left) and Associate Professor Michael Harker.



Lecturer, Steven Lang, won the Best Unpublished Manuscript of an Emerging Queensland Author award in the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards at the Brisbane Writers' Festival.

Image courtesy of Anthony Phillips.