

# Review of operations

## *Student support*

*“AUQA commends USC for its provision of student support services that are highly regarded by students...”*

*Australian Universities Quality Agency report*



*Student Central... USC Student Administration staff member Jodie Roberts (left) with USC student Tenille Rutherford.*

50

**Goal: to set standards in student support which will help attract, support and retain students**

*Establish, in partnership with other parties where appropriate, a range of amenities to attract and support both domestic and international students*

Comprehensive Orientation activities (page 24) helped prepare students for University life, and follow-up support continued throughout the year. This focused on advice and counselling (study, career and personal), mentoring, peer support, student activities and welfare services.

### **New support systems**

The Faculty of Business launched an Employability Program (page 29) with modules focusing on career planning and professional development; teamwork in the workplace; public speaking; and maximising influence in the workplace. Workshops covered resumes, selection criteria and interview skills.

Sport and recreation initiatives included *RecPlus*, a new weekly subscription-based sport and recreation newsletter; a daily *Recharge* hour of free lunchtime sport, including weekly *Rez Shield* challenges for residential students; and twice-weekly

bootcamp training sessions for Australian University Games participants. Other offerings included weekly tribal drumming lessons culminating in a student group performance at the *Festuri* multicultural celebration on campus.

Of note was the first Orphans Christmas Lunch for students and staff who were home alone at Christmas. Many international students attended and guests donated items towards hampers for Global Care, to assist local families in need over the holiday period.

Other highlights this year included the following.

- The University received a \$3.22 million grant under the Federal Government's Workplace Productivity Program (page 18) to upgrade major administrative systems, to launch online progressively from late 2008.
- The University, Maroochy Shire Council and Allegro Networks won joint funding from the Federal Government's Clever

Networks program to upgrade internet connections to AARNet. This will increase USC's Internet capacity by up to 20 times by 2009 (page 43).

- The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences commissioned Information Technology Services to set up a Faculty-funded counselling studio in the School of Social Sciences.
- Research higher degree students relocated to the new Graduate Centre in Building B (page 36).
- Expanded health programs included vaccination clinics for the *Gardasil* cervical cancer vaccine and the *Fluvax* program.
- The careerconnection team (pages 25, 28, 31) added an industry liaison coordinator position to expand Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and graduate employment opportunities. An integral component of the role will be expansion of the Employability Program developed in the Faculty of Business and piloted in 2007.

## Student support

### Scholarships and bursaries

In 2007, awards worth more than \$1 million rewarded and advanced student performance. They included more than 85 community and business-funded awards totalling more than \$150,000—a step closer to the USC Building Excellence Campaign (page 18) goal of raising \$1 million in community funds for scholarships, bursaries and prizes.

This year, community-funded award winners included the following.

- Charma Minter, first-year Bachelor of Science (Environmental Science), won the fifth *Sunshine Coast Daily* Kathleen McArthur Memorial Scholarship valued at \$3,500. This Scholarship commemorates a local conservationist, artist, author, educator and activist who died in 2000 aged 84, having helped found the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and establish Cooloola National Park.
- Arlo Goozee, first-year Bachelor of Business (Accounting), won the Poole and Partners Scholarship valued at \$3,500.
- University of the Third Age bursaries worth \$750 each went to second-year students Renee Anderson (Bachelor of Communications), Kim Gussy (Bachelor of Health) and Danielle Tracey (Bachelor of Business).
- Fourteen students from 11 local high schools won Headstart (pages 24, 26) awards worth \$375 each. They collected 15 Kirk Foundation Scholarships and two USC Indigenous Scholarships.

### Assist students in achieving the best possible academic outcomes

Mechanisms for encouraging student performance and maximising the learning experience ranged from study-skills tuition (including two new enabling courses—page 25) to opportunities for personal consultations with Student Services advisers.

Embedded academic skills initiatives were introduced in all faculties. These focused on scientific language instruction, essay writing and referencing. Integration of skills components in courses has been shown to boost writing and study skills.

### Community-funded awards include...

- Co-op Bookshop Textbook Bursaries
- Dillon Folker Stephens Bursary
- Lambert Innovation Prize
- Catherine King Bursary
- Darcy and Heather Stevens Rural Bursary
- Zonta Club of Caloundra Equity Bursary
- Judy Henzell Bursary
- Sunshine Coast Sports Medicine Clinic Bursary
- Keith and Rebecca Grisman Bursary
- Millennium Masonic Lodge Bursaries
- DHF Mitchell Bursary for People with Learning Disabilities
- ANZ Bank Scholarship
- Neuendorf Group Scholarship



*Top performer... multiple bursary and scholarship holder and Bachelor of Arts graduate Cate Morriss, winner of the 2007 Chancellor's Medal, sets an example for grandsons Samuel (left) and Jack. The Medal is USC's highest student award. It recognises excellence in academic performance, University governance, community service and student welfare.*

### Library

Academic skills advisers from Student Services maintained Library 'drop-in' sessions introduced in 2007.

Library staff continued to work with Teaching and Research staff and Student Services to foster independent learning, in-line with the University's graduate attributes (page 27).

The Library's Information Literacy Program combines generic tutorials with course-specific tutorials and lectures developed in collaboration with course coordinators. Other Library-based initiatives included:

- establishment of Faculty Librarian positions to facilitate communication and collaboration between the Library and faculties;
- extended summer session opening hours (to include one evening per week); and
- off-campus loans for higher degree by research students.

### IT Services

The IT Service Desks (page 53) provided 800 hours of coverage, assisting students face-to-face and responding to email and phone enquiries.

Information Technology Services (ITS—pages 26–27) staff ran a wide range of tutorials focusing on:

- the use of network resources and specialised teaching venues (for students and staff);
- *Introduction to the USC network* (for all new students at the start of each semester); and
- topics tailored to specific needs of groups such as Indigenous (page 54), postgraduate research and Headstart (page 26) students.

Work continued on the USC Portal, to support online courses and student services. Advances included:

- launching an *Academic skills online* resource page for students;
- upgrading the learning management system;
- improving the system's availability and resilience; and
- stabilising delivery to support anti-plagiarism system services.

## Student support

Other initiatives this year were as follows.

- New instructional technologies included *Respondus* (for creating online assessment), *Course Genie* (for creating online courses), *Breeze* (for delivering web conferencing) and *KeePad* (enabling interactive response from students).
- ITS increased capabilities and outputs of the Media Production Studio. This supported content for studies in nursing, international relations, business, media and communications; and facilitated operations involving Student Services, Capital Programs and Operations (CPO), Education Queensland and local schools.
- *Hang-in-there* was launched as an online self-help tool for students at risk of dropping out. The information resource helps identify issues or circumstances that may be contributing to poor academic progress.

### Support the development of Library resources and IT capacity

In addition to the above, expansion of Library and IT resources kept pace with increasing needs and numbers of students.

#### Library

Library, teaching and research staff collaborated on developing relevant resources, especially electronic books, journals and databases, to maximise access for students; and the improved value of the Australian dollar against other currencies boosted the Library's buying power and consequently its collection (page 17).

In January, management of student printing and copying services passed from Queensland University of Technology to USC Reprographics and Registry. Services also extended to the USC Noosa Centre. Benefits include a wider range of services, longer service hours and cheaper rates.

A first-semester trial enabling wireless access to Library computing facilities proved so successful that the service is now standard for Library users, with plans to extend the wireless network elsewhere on campus.

Physical space on Level Two was extended to provide a quiet study area with additional workstations and power/data outlets for laptops.

#### IT services

Information Technology Services began replacing computers in five computer laboratories and the Information Commons late this year, for completion early in 2008. This reflects the maintenance of consistently high standards in electronic support, as noted in the *Good Universities Guide*.

Cooperative projects involved helping Library staff to deliver the Coast Research Database project (page 33), supporting electronic publication of the University's research outcomes; and working with CPO on:

- commissioning Lecture Theatre Seven, the University's most technologically-sophisticated lecture theatre, plus a dozen additional 'Smart' tutorial rooms; and
- delivering services to the USC Noosa Centre, including a network connection linking the Centre and the Sippy Downs campus.

Improvements to resources also included:

- email system upgrades to improve performance and user interface, and reduce SPAM;
- better testing of staff and student services, prior to delivery as standard;
- increased numbers of digital cameras, video cameras and voice recorders (decided after analysis of course requirements) available for borrowing from the Library; and

- trials of lecture recording and online delivery systems, resulting in selection of Mediasite as the University's standard service delivery platform in 2008.

### Encourage students to engage with the University (eg through committee involvement and input to decision-making processes)

#### Committee service

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Student Liaison Committee was established in 2007 to provide a forum for student views about University facilities, and a platform for consultation and discussion. Committee members help develop policies and evaluate services. They also inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on emerging student issues.

The University Council (pages 6–7) again included two student members. Each serves a two-year term with opportunities (as Councillors or committee members) to discuss and influence University policy and decision-making.

Student Services also ensured student representation on working parties and committees by working closely with the Student Guild.

#### Canvassing student opinion

The Library's biennial Client Satisfaction Survey collects feedback on Library resources, services and facilities. This facilitates benchmarking with other Australian university libraries, and informs USC management and planning.

Of the 589 questionnaires returned to the 2007 survey, 88 percent were from undergraduate and postgraduate students. Findings included an overall satisfaction rating of 5.33 out of seven—a six percent improvement on the previous survey in 2005, and a score that places the USC Library in the top 50 percent of results from all Australian university libraries. The Library's staff, website, opening hours and prompt reshelving of books and journals rated highly.

### Harnessing student views...

- Orientation survey
- Monitored Enrolment survey
- Student experience survey
- Indigenous Education Week survey
- Disability Services survey
- Academic Skills workshop evaluations

## Student support

### Working together

Student Services provided WIL (pages 28, 50) placements for students undertaking health promotion and community work programs; and ITS again employed five Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology students to deliver Student Help Desk (page 51) services. The initiative benefited all parties. Participants gained valuable work experience and the University gained staff whose qualifications included an understanding of contemporary student needs.

Other opportunities for student-University engagement included:

- event organisation associated with Orientation Week, Harmony Day, World No Tobacco Day, World Mental Health Day and the DrinkSmart responsible drinking program (pages 43–44);
- participation in USC's student ambassador program, which involves conducting presentations to prospective students—particularly in high schools, event organisation for USC recruitment events, and attending careers markets; and
- participation in the National Indigenous Cadetship Program (page 54).

### Encourage students to continue their association with the University on graduation as part of the alumni

Alumni members set an example for students by maintaining contact with and interest in their *alma mater* and by participating in University life.

Highlights of the year included presentation of the third annual Outstanding Alumni of the Year Award to science graduate Dr Craig Hansen, recognised for doctoral and postdoctoral epidemiology research including fieldwork in Soweto, South Africa.

The University kept in touch with graduates via distribution of the quarterly *Community Magazine* and *Connected* e-newsletter, and by offering a full program of alumni events at home and abroad.

This included the launch of the GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade) Native Tree Project (page 11), inviting individual donations of \$250 to plant trees along

Alumni Way, a pathway linking the main campus with the new Health and Sport Centre (page 16).

USC's Foundation Office (pages 10, 18) implemented Raiser's Edge, a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software application designed specifically for fundraising and engagement activities with alumni and other members of the University community.

Interactions on campus included:

- a breakfast preview of plans for the Health and Sport Centre (page 16);
- alumni attendance at University events ranging from a Health and Sport seminar featuring Eddie Jones (page 44) and *Enterprise Tuesdays* (page 39) to USC Gallery exhibitions and unveiling of the sculpture *Pulse*; and
- *Alumni skills—winning that job*, an inaugural half-day careers seminar organised through USC careerconnection (page 25) in cooperation with the USC Alumni Office, the State Government and industry partners including the Juniper Group, the Hyatt Regency Coolom and Matthew Flinders Anglican College.

Alumni reunions included:

- a reception in Brisbane for city-based graduates;
- a function at the USC Gallery for design graduates; and
- dinners in Suva and Kuala Lumpur for postgraduate alumni.

Plans for 2008 include reunions and other events and initiatives such as:

- hosting a morning tea for students during Orientation;
- establishing USC guidelines for alumni networks and calling for expressions of interest from graduates interested in forming USC networks;
- running an entrepreneurship workshop for people who have or are planning to implement business ideas; and
- conducting an inaugural alumni survey by email.

Plans to encourage students to join alumni groups after graduation include:

- advertising the alumni program in the 2009 Student Diary;

- emailing individual welcomes to graduates after completion of studies;
- inviting alumni to be part of the WIL program (page 25) as employers; and
- inviting alumni to speak to final-year students on the benefits of ongoing associations with the University.

### Provide for the particular needs of equity groups and Indigenous students

#### Federal funding cuts

Substantially-reduced funding from the DEST Higher Education Equity Support Program (HEESP) impacted severely on USC equity initiatives in 2007. This funding reduced by 75 percent—from \$275,083 in 2005 and \$264,935 in 2006 to \$64,962 in 2007.

The University's allocation of new Commonwealth Learning Scholarships (CLS) also reduced. USC received 28 Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships (down from 81 the previous year); and 33 Commonwealth Education Cost Scholarships (down from 60). The variation resulted from changes to postcode indicators of socio-economic disadvantage; yet numbers of students in equity groups at the University remained constant or increased.

USC has one of the highest participation rates of students with disabilities of all Australian universities. Enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased this year by almost 50 percent. The number of scholarship applications to assist with educational and living expenses continued to rise.

To help compensate for drastic reductions in equity funding, USC moved to support students financially by:

- increasing funding for University Equity Bursaries from \$28,000 in 2006 to \$100,000 in 2007;
- increasing funding for student loans;
- broadening loan criteria; and
- coordinating the award of \$17,500 worth of prizes.

## Student support

### Students with disabilities

This year, students with disabilities accounted for 3.80 percent of domestic students. This compares with 4.12 percent the previous year. Costs for supporting students with disabilities, however, have escalated significantly in recent years (from \$45,000 in 2005 to \$112,700 in 2007) as students with increasingly complex needs undertake University study.

Since 2006, USC has engaged additional sign language interpreters for Deaf students and additional participation assistants for students with physical impairments.

### Ongoing assistance

Individual support for these students, organised through Disability Services, again included notetakers, aids and equipment, participation assistants, sign language interpreters and adaptive software.

Disability Services maintained ties with Education Queensland through guidance officers and principals at local schools with special education units.

It also hosted an *Introductory Auslan* community education course in second semester, in response to a national shortage of sign language interpreters and growing numbers of Deaf or hearing-impaired students on campus.

### New facilities

A review of streaming media options resulted in a decision to introduce lecture streaming media next year. Online access to lectures will benefit all students, particularly those with functional challenges.

Student Services upgraded facilities in the Learning Connections Room with specialised equipment and software for use by students registered with Disability Services. Features include a CCTV, two electric height-adjustable desks, five computers and two scanners for use with print-reading software.

### Career options

The University joined forces with STEPS Disability Queensland in a \$30,000 pilot program to benefit graduating students with disabilities and potential employers.

Funded by the State Department of Employment and Workplace Relations,

the program extends the work of STEPS Professional Placement Services and will continue until June 2008. It involves assessing employment goals, breaking down barriers with employers, working around graduates' needs and learning about individuals.

### Indigenous Australian students

Indigenous students this year accounted for 1.5 percent of domestic students. Comparisons stand at between one and 1.5 percent for each of the past four years.

Highlights of the annual afternoon tea for Indigenous graduates included presentation of graduate stoles and certificates of achievement; and acknowledgement of the three Indigenous students achieving the highest Grade Point Averages in second semester of each year, and of this year's NICP recipients.

### New staff, more support

USC partners with Multicultural Affairs Queensland to provide scholarship and tutorial assistance for Australian South Sea Islander students. The University acknowledges and supports the Queensland Government's Recognition of Australian South Sea Islander people as a distinct cultural group, and the significant contributions they have made to the social, cultural and economic development of the State. The University is committed to assisting the Government in addressing areas of need identified by the Islander community, including education and employment. This year a project officer was appointed to increase the group's participation in higher education and to promote the Australian South Sea Islander Community Foundation Scholarship.

USC also appointed an Indigenous Services Officer (Regional Engagement) in second semester. The new position will build on strong existing town-and-gown relationships to boost study and career opportunities for Indigenous students, as part of an integrated strategy for improving outcomes. This involves a continuum approach, from recruitment through to faculty support and graduate career guidance.

### Boost for Buranga Centre

The Buranga Centre was expanded and relocated to the new Building C (page 62) as part of a commitment to maximising study outcomes and career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The new premises include Indigenous Services staff offices, a 24-hour study/computing facility for students and a student common room. The Centre encourages Indigenous students to participate fully in University life and promotes recognition of Indigenous culture in the University's activities.

### NICP: training for careers

Strong cross-sectoral relationships with local schools, TAFE colleges and community organisations underpin the University's focus on real-life learning to produce career-ready graduates. This includes promoting pathways for Indigenous students to succeed—such as the National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NICP).

This year, two cadets were placed with the Faculty of Science, Health and Education, with a total of 17 students gaining cadetships during the University's two-year contract. The program is part of the Federal Government's Indigenous Economic Development Strategy. It encourages Indigenous full-time undergraduates to complete degrees, matches them with prospective employers and helps them move into relevant employment.

### Supporting Indigenous students

Initiatives promoting higher education for Indigenous people ranged from hosting campus tours for visiting school students from Palm Island and the Torres Strait to a research ethics workshop during Indigenous Education Week. This involved staff, students and members of the community in discussions of Indigenous education issues such as literacy and learning styles.

A survey of Education Week participants rated the workshops, forums, information and venues as excellent. Many said they had gained valuable insights into Indigenous culture and education perspectives, leaving them challenged and inspired.

# Student support

## Key performance indicators

*Improved undergraduate student progress and retention rates, including for equity and Indigenous students*

### Attrition<sup>1</sup>

#### All students

Based on summary data provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) as part of the Institution Assessment Framework Portfolio, USC continues to experience a high attrition rate for commencing bachelor students when compared to both the cohort and sector, as summarised below.

Year	USC	Benchmarking cohort <sup>2</sup>	Sector
2002	38.64%	20.89%	18.64%
2003	38.83%	19.97%	17.68%
2004	36.19%	19.58%	17.40%
2005	34.97%	19.52%	17.34%

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of students who do not enrol in the following year nor complete their program. The 2005 attrition rate compares students enrolled in 2005 and their status in 2006. This is the most recent data available. Attrition rates for 2006 will not be released until the latter part of 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The University no longer belongs to a specific benchmarking cohort group and is one of 13 non-aligned universities. The benchmarking cohort above includes: Southern Cross University, University of Ballarat, University of Canberra, The University of Newcastle, University of Southern Queensland, University of Tasmania and the University of Wollongong.

While the attrition rates remain high when compared to the sector and the benchmarking cohort, the attrition rate has continued to decrease since 2003. Attrition rate calculations compare only students within an institution and do not take into account movement across the sector. The University of the Sunshine Coast continues to act as a feeder institution for students planning to study elsewhere in a program not offered at USC. It is anticipated that as the University continues its development and expansion into professional programs that this factor will no longer be as significant and attrition rates will continue to decrease.

A 2003 survey of 934 first year students conducted by an external consultant early in first semester supported the contention that many students used the University as a feeder institution at that time. The survey found that more than a quarter of students surveyed (26.4 percent) intended to transfer to another university. A survey carried out by the USC Strategic Information and Analysis Unit at the beginning of 2007 found that of the 1,147

respondents, only 13.4% indicated that they did not intend to complete their program at USC. This analysis will be compared with other studies undertaken by the Strategic Information and Analysis Unit to determine if this is an accurate predictor of eventual outcomes. This survey of first year students will be undertaken again at the commencement of 2009.

During 2007, students were able to effect their withdrawal from studies online. As part of this process, students were asked additional questions regarding their reasons for leaving and were invited to make any additional constructive comments. In addition, those students who did not withdraw online were contacted (where possible) in order to gain as much information as possible. This additional qualitative information has proved very valuable, and an initial cohort (those students who withdrew in January, February, March 2007 and provided additional qualitative comments) of 209 students was assessed. Following considered content analysis of students' comments, several major drivers of attrition were identified as follows:

Driver <sup>3</sup>	%
Changing institutions	42.6%
Goal change	30.1%
Distance	24.9%
Work	18.7%

<sup>3</sup> These drivers were not always mutually exclusive and hence a number of drivers may have been attributed to one student.

Further collection of data and student comments has continued throughout 2007 and an analysis of students who withdrew in the period 1 April 2007–28 March 2008 will be completed by mid-2008.

### Equity groups

Retention rates for equity groups produced by DEST are no longer summarised as actual rates, but rather as ratios comparing the equity group's performance against the non-equity group's performance. For all equity groups and Indigenous students, the retention ratios have been equal to or greater than the state and national rates for the most recent year of reported data (i.e. 2005 students and their status in 2006).



Second-year Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts student Lee Clarke (left)... the University's first Indigenous cadet. He worked with Associate Professor in Marine Science Thomas Schlacher for 12 weeks, assisting research students with laboratory testing and on field trips.

## Student support

### Key performance indicators

#### Progress rates<sup>4</sup>

##### All students

Based on summary data provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) as part of the Institution Assessment Framework Portfolio, USC continues to experience lower than average progress rates for commencing students when compared to both the cohort and sector, as summarised below.

Year	USC	Benchmarking cohort <sup>5</sup>	Sector
2002	77.73%	82.74%	84.66%
2003	79.37%	83.57%	85.31%
2004	81.70%	84.38%	85.89%
2005	74.34%	84.31%	84.84%
2006	77.27%	83.90%	84.84%

<sup>4</sup> Proportion of units successfully completed in a given year.

<sup>5</sup> The University no longer belongs to a specific benchmarking cohort group and is one of 13 non-aligned universities. The benchmarking cohort above includes: Southern Cross University, University of Ballarat, University of Canberra, The University of Newcastle, University of Southern Queensland, University of Tasmania and the University of Wollongong.

Progress rates for commencing students had continued to improve from 2002 to 2004 in line with the benchmarking cohort and the sector. The years 2004 to 2005 saw a slight decrease in rates for the sector and the cohort, while USC's progress rate decreased sharply in this period. The progress rate from 2005 to 2006 has increased at USC, while the benchmarking cohort experienced a slight drop and the sector remained stable. USC progress rates, while showing some improvement over the past year, are still considerably less than those of the cohort and sector. University initiatives to improve levels of student support and academic progress include the Tertiary Enabling Program (page 25) and the Tertiary Preparation Pathway (page 24).

#### Equity groups

Progress rates for equity groups produced by DEST are no longer summarised as actual rates, but rather as ratios comparing the equity group's performance against the non-equity group's performance. For all equity groups and Indigenous students, the progress ratios have been equal to or greater than the state and national rates for the most recent year of reported data (2006).

#### Increased uptake by students of opportunities to become involved in University decision-making

The University's formal committees (Council and its committees, Academic Board and its committees and the Student Appeals committees) include 10 designated student places. This number has remained unchanged since 2004.

#### Positive and constructive student feedback on infrastructure and services and student feedback on teaching

##### Survey outcomes

- The Student Experience Survey, conducted by the University in Semester 2, was fielded electronically to undergraduate students, with more than 1,200 raw responses. The survey gathered comprehensive information on course experience, as well as information on student status, past history, demographics, opinions on services provided by the University, study habits and practices, University strengths and weaknesses, transport issues, financial support sources, current employment, future intentions and other information. Initial assessment of information was undertaken, with the report to be complete in 2008. The survey will be undertaken annually.
- The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) was designed by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER), based on the Indiana University National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Conducted as a joint effort by the University and ACER in 2007, the data was compiled, processed and weighted by ACER, with detailed tables of data being provided to each of the 20 Australian universities who participated. The information generated is being analysed, to be complete in 2008.
- A Graduate Careers Australia national online survey measured student perceptions of campus careers services, university life and their post-graduation movements. About 100 USC respondents reported considerably higher-than-average use of careerconnection (page 25) and the CareerHub website—a result which compared to or exceeded the national averages for favourable feedback. careerconnection rated "very good/excellent" for provision of careers and interview information, employer information, and careers content delivered within courses.

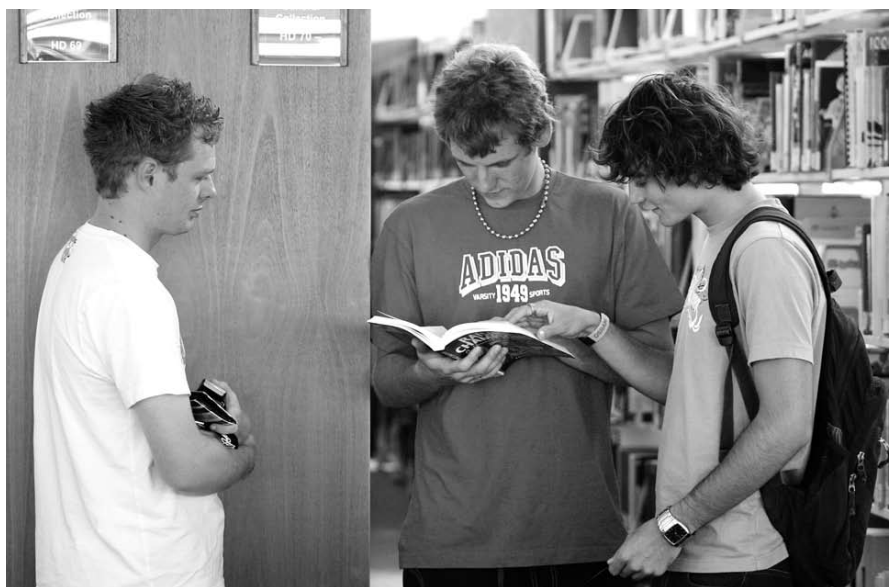
## Student support

### Key performance indicators

- An evaluation of the Orientation Week program drew 594 responses from event participants. Of these, 96 percent recommended the program as a significant activity for new students; and 89 percent rated the program highly as being "informed/very informed". The most popular sessions were the official welcome, faculty welcomes and introduction to Library services sessions.
- Users of Disability Services in 2006 were surveyed on their capacity to access IT, services, facilities and course materials. The sample included people with hearing impairment, vision impairment, learning disabilities, mobility disabilities, and psychiatric and other medical conditions. Eighty percent of respondents found campus buildings and facilities (corridors, doorways, printing and photocopying) accessible; and more than 90 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:
  - course material and other information was available in appropriate formats;
  - USC presented a welcoming environment, with friendly and respectful staff and students; and
  - the Disabilities Services Officer clearly understood and accommodated individual needs such as special exam arrangements, notetaking assistance and assistive equipment.
- More than 60 percent of respondents cited relationship issues, financial difficulties and motivational issues as reasons for unsatisfactory academic performance, in a first-semester survey of 30 students placed on Monitored Enrolment. Most respondents had not accessed any pre-semester, Orientation Week or semester-based transition workshops; and only 50 percent had attended *Academic Writing, Study Skills* or *Introduction to the Library* sessions.
- USC also sought student feedback on its infrastructure and services via *Academic Skills* workshop evaluations (2007 results not yet available) and surveys on Indigenous Education Week.
- Information gathered via the Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) instrument also supports continuous improvement (page 30).

### The year 2008

- The University will upgrade its Internet connection to AARNet with potential for increasing USC's Internet capacity up to 20 times by 2009.
- The University will launch major upgrades to online USC administrative systems, funded by a \$3.22 million grant under the Federal Government's Workplace Productivity Program.
- The University and STEPS Disability Queensland will conclude a joint \$30,000 pilot program designed to benefit graduating students with disabilities, and their potential employers.
- A Respite Room will be constructed enabling students with chronic health issues to access a purpose-equipped respite area.
- The USC Student Guild will partner with Student Services to run health and wellbeing peer support programs, funded by a \$51,700 Commonwealth grant from the Department of Health and Ageing.
- In March, the USC Careers Fair on campus will enable students to meet local and national employers; discuss opportunities for practical industry experience; access career guidance; learn job-search, resume and interview skills; and meet USC careerconnection staff.



Top results... findings for the University's biennial Library client satisfaction survey this year included an overall satisfaction rating of 5.33 out of seven—a six percent improvement on the 2005 survey, and a score that places the Library in the top 50 percent of results from all Australian university libraries.