

Review of operations

Growth and development

“AUQA commends USC for its rigorous program approval process that involves wide stakeholder input.”

Australian Universities Quality Agency report



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Planning for growth... the University's Master Plan guides ongoing campus development. The Plan's focus is on environmental sensitivity and symmetry between the campus centre and the surrounding open space.

Goal: to promote growth to enhance quality and efficiency, whilst retaining important benefits of human scale

Promote governance principles that underpin good decision-making

Compliance with the National Governance Protocols <www.dest.gov.au> guides the University's commitment to effective and efficient leadership through its Council and the University Executive. Council and committee membership and activities are outlined on pages 6–10.

Support for good decision-making this year included resource efficiencies (e.g. by restructuring USC International to achieve business improvements following a self-review) and improvements to:

- risk management framework and processes (page 9);
- financial reporting, operational planning and operational budgeting processes (page 9);
- strategic planning e.g. the International Plan and USC's e-learning strategy position; and
- planning data e.g. via the Attrition Project, online student surveys and human resources data collection.

Moves to progress USC's growing research and research training profile (pages 32–37) ranged from:

- identification of two major research themes, Research Futures and research groups' position and strategy, to
- completion of a Research Supervision Agreement and a Graduate Centre.

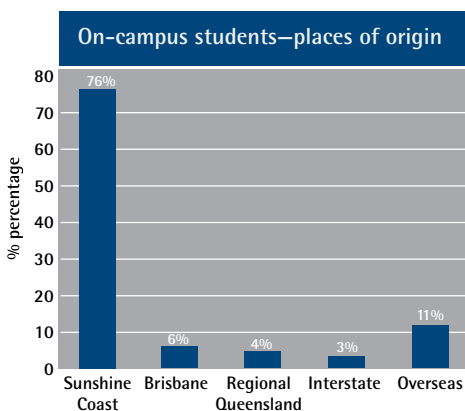
Growth and development

Support sustainable growth to a student population of at least 8000 EFTSL within 10 years, comprising Commonwealth-funded growth, growth in fee-paying students and growth in international students

Student body

Enrolments continued the double-digit growth trend of recent years, with record intakes of more than 2,300 and 1,000 new students in first and second semesters respectively. Enrolments for the year totalled 5,246—10 percent more than in 2006. Fee-paying students represented more than 20 percent of the total.

Most on-campus students came from the Sunshine Coast, with a minority drawn from Brisbane, regional Queensland and interstate.



Undergraduate students

First-preference applications to the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) evidenced steadily increasing demand. The University attracted 17 percent more first-preference applications in 2007 than in the previous year. This result was achieved despite a 1.5 percent State-wide decrease in first preferences at universities.

The result could be due in part to the introduction of new, workplace-relevant degree programs, particularly those in nursing science, nutrition and dietetics, social work, justice and legal studies, property and asset management and early childhood education.



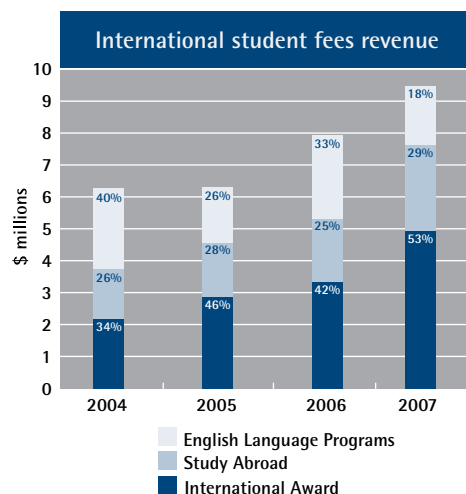
Shaping up for second semester... student Nelly Dotter helps out at mid-year Orientation by introducing Alexander Isaak of Germany (left) and Sergio Rodriguez of Spain to USC's Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE). The three-day Orientation event marked a record mid-year student intake of almost 1,000 new students.

International students

The on-campus student body included an increasing number of international students. International student numbers grew by 27 percent between 2006 and 2007. The percentage of international students that make up the on-campus student body has remained stable, with 11 percent of students this year, compared with 10 percent in each of the previous two years. These represented 44 countries, with most (75 percent) being from Canada, the US, Germany, France, Sweden and Japan.

Postgraduate students

Postgraduate enrolments (page 35) reached nearly 1,000 this year. Postgraduate student numbers, as a percentage of all enrolments in award programs, have doubled since 2003, with one in five students now enrolled in a postgraduate program.



Growth and development

Infrastructure supporting growth

Physical growth milestones for 2007 included the:

- official opening of an award-winning building;
- completion of two state-of-the-art buildings;
- construction start on another;
- redevelopment of premises for the Innovation Centre Business Accelerator;
- establishment of a Graduate Centre (page 36); and
- expansion of the Dilli Village educational facility on Fraser Island.

In May, Queensland Minister for Education, Training and the Arts Rod Welford opened the \$12 million Science Building (Building H). Completed in 2006 as the first of its kind in the region, it won the 2007 Master Builders Project of the Year award. The building is part of an ongoing program aimed at matching campus development with growth in degree

programs. Facilities include a state-of-the-art nursing laboratory complete with replicated hospital ward (page 41).

Completions in 2007 included the Chancellery (Building C), nominated for an environmental award (page 62), and the \$10 million Indoor Sports Stadium (page 41), opened in July by Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training Julie Bishop. Funding for the Stadium included \$5 million from the Federal Government's Voluntary Student Unionism Transition Fund and \$2.9 million from the Queensland Government.

An immediate start was announced on an adjoining five-level \$13.8 million Health and Sport Centre, scheduled for completion in 2008. Funding includes a Federal Government pledge of \$3.5 million over the next two years and assistance from a \$3.5 million public fundraising campaign (page 18).

The Centre will boost research, teaching and community health initiatives. It will house a new school of Health and Sport Sciences, testing and research laboratories, including a simulated unit and a dietetics lab, a fitness centre and staff offices. It will facilitate new programs in physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychology, boost research in areas such as disease prevention and control, and deliver training for allied health professionals.

The auditorium in the Innovation Centre building was redeveloped to extend premises for the Innovation Centre Business Accelerator (page 5). The \$3.6 million renovation, supported by a Queensland Government grant, involved adding a new floor to create a sub-dividable auditorium plus office space for technology- and knowledge-based businesses.



Ongoing development... construction of the USC Sport and Health Centre began in 2007, adjacent to the University's new Indoor Sports Stadium.

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Getting a Headstart... Monique Palmer and Julie Rosser attended the on-campus Headstart program information session for high school students and their parents.

Pursue more public and private resources to increase development opportunities and reduce risk

Public and private resources contributed to growth in USC facilities, service provision, and campus and program development.

Public resources

USC ranked first among Queensland's seven universities (and 15th among 38 universities nationally) with a \$1.51 million grant from the Federal Government's 2007 Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. The grant is triple the amount awarded USC in the previous year's round and will help significantly in developing the overall educational package offered to USC students. The University has been steadily developing new professional degrees during the past three years and this trend is expected to continue. Outcomes will include improved employment outcome scores and reduced attrition rates.

A Carrick Institute grant of \$219,877 went to a consortium of seven universities led by USC. It supported research aimed at reducing the numbers of students dropping out of higher education throughout Australia (page 29). A second Carrick grant of \$149,573 funded a study of offshore education, conducted by education researchers from USC, University of Western Australia and Curtin University of Technology.

USC also shone via involvement in three of 11 projects awarded nationally through the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund (CASR) by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The three grants total \$1.8 million, as follows:

- \$336,134 for a graduate engineering project to enhance career opportunities in engineering, building and construction, and water management (led by USC, partnered by Sunshine Coast industry groups and educational institutions);
- \$535,763 to identify and redress regional skills shortages, particularly in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett regions (led by USC, partnered by University of Southern Queensland); and

Expanding Library resources

The improved value of the Australian dollar against the US and other currencies increased the University Library's spending power, particularly for monographs purchased from international vendors. It also prompted slight reductions in journal and database subscription prices for 2007. As a result, expanded Library holdings boosted resources for students, lecturers and researchers. The Library has now grown sufficiently for USC to extend borrowing rights to members of the community (page 39).

Establishment of a herbarium collection in the Library was an acquisition of particular interest. Hundreds of regional plant specimens were catalogued and physically located in a climate-controlled room; and during 2008, the collection will be digitised to provide virtual access to the materials.

Increasing enrolments

The University proactively continued to pursue growth, including increases in student numbers, throughout 2007. A range of new programs was offered for the first time (page 23); alternative entry pathways aided prospective students in gaining entry to USC (pages 24, 25–26); and support services grew to meet increased demand (pages 50–57). Other initiatives publicising program, study and career options included the following.

- More than 3,000 people visited the campus for the University's annual Courses for Careers Day. The diverse open day program included campus tours, talks

on topics ranging from degree choices to job prospects, hands-on scientific experiments, and an exhibition in the USC Gallery of entries in the Education Minister's Awards for Excellence in Art.

- USC led a travelling University Showcase visiting 20 Sunshine Coast high schools. Exhibitors included seven Queensland universities, the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE and the Australian Defence Force.
- Information sessions and interactive workshops explored issues and outlined options for mature-age students aged more than 21 years. These included advice and encouragement from current mature-age students and graduates.
- Campus visits for school students from Palm Island and the Torres Strait fostered interest in Indigenous undergraduate enrolment. Buranga Centre staff (page 54) hosted campus tours and information sessions on support services such as peer mentoring and the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme.
- An information session for high school students and their parents explained the Headstart program (page 26), which creates a seamless transition from school to university. Headstart students have access to about 50 USC courses, and attend lectures, tutorials and laboratory work as a way of facilitating entry to USC. This year's AUQA report (page 10) commended the program as an initiative (1) admitting secondary school students to undergraduate courses and (2) encouraging engagement with the University.

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- \$893,400 to develop quality chemistry, physics and environmental science courses for use in science enabling programs at regional universities (led by Charles Darwin University, partnered by USC).

A fourth CASR grant of \$369,000 will augment a \$22,000 DASSH (Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) grant dedicated to devising online Indonesian language courses using multimedia and real-time audio-conferencing. The Regional Universities Indonesian Language Project aims to update Indonesian language teaching and learning nationally, and will share across institutions new on-campus and in-country programs from first-year to fourth-year levels.

The consortium includes USC, the University of New England, Charles Darwin University and the University of Tasmania. Other contributors include the University of Mataram in Lombok, Indonesia and a national reference group representing Australian universities.

USC's request for \$3.22 million to upgrade information technology software was one of 36 projects (chosen from 100 submissions) awarded a total of \$68 million over the next three years under the Federal Government's Workplace Productivity Program. Upgrades will launch progressively online from late 2008. The approval letter noted that the funds were intended to help universities strengthen capacity to manage and implement workplace change.

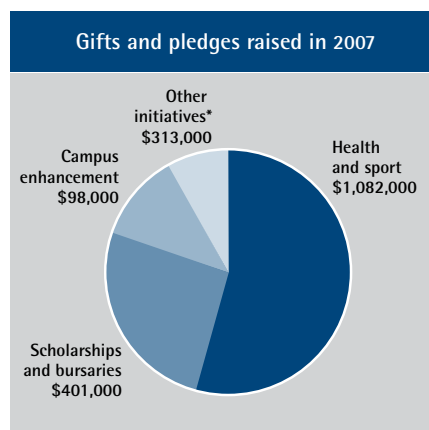
Private sector funding

The University of the Sunshine Coast Foundation (page 10) helps identify, prioritise and raise funds for key initiatives.

This year the Foundation continued the Building Excellence campaign with the aim of raising \$5 million by the end of 2008 for investment in health and sport, student scholarships and campus enhancement projects. Priorities included:

- \$3.5 million toward the Health and Sport Centre (page 16);
- \$1 million to provide long-term student scholarships and bursaries (page 53); and
- \$500,000 for campus enhancement projects such as beautification of the Art Gallery courtyard (page 38).

In 2007 the campaign attracted \$1.89 million in donations, pledges, sponsorships, grants and in-kind support, bringing the total raised towards the campaign to \$2.7 million.



* Other initiatives include support for the herbarium (page 17), software and artwork.

Develop the University's performance evaluations to provide evidence for external reviews and inter-institutional benchmarking

Performance evaluations

This year's report on the University's first AUQA audit (page 10) concluded one of the most significant external audits of USC and its performance in a national field of 39 universities.

The AUQA audit evidenced the effectiveness of the University's system of regular, rolling reviews as a way of gathering relevant information for benchmarking; and USC's Action Plan, developed this year to implement AUQA recommendations, demonstrates the University's commitment to continuing improvement.

Performance evaluation initiatives this year also included:

- plans for a mid-term Council self-review in early 2008 (page 19)—process noted by AUQA as good practice;
- self-review of Audit and Risk Management Committee members (page 19);
- policy revisions (Quality and Policies, Planning Frameworks);

- refined specifications for evaluative reviews, and for monitoring and reporting performance against plans;
- refined criteria for external membership of review panels and policies;
- revisions to the International Plan and a start on revisions to the Strategic Plan; and
- refined KPIs, measures, benchmarks and reporting schedules for monitoring performance.

An Internal Communications review (together with a trial AUQA audit) led to establishment of a University Portal; and an internal review of Records Management Services resulted in an 18-month implementation plan for establishing systems and processes to support University activities and comply with legislation (page 11).

Other reviews generated improvements to the University's:

- student appeals process (internal/external);
- Education Services for Overseas Students (compliance review); and
- pages on the USC Portal for international students and for Australian students on the Global Opportunities program (page 46).

Measuring international programs

National assessment of USC's international programs included an Australian Education International (AEI) survey of on-shore international students in Australia.

The survey involved 3,612 international students Australia-wide and a control group of 7,046 Australian students; and it included 44 international and 239 Australian students from USC.

Most USC international students (87 percent, compared with 85 percent nationally) reported high satisfaction with their study experiences. Many other USC-related findings exceeded the Total International (TI) respondent scores.

These included:

- high satisfaction with class size, staff commitment and contact (above TI scores for three of four key measures, only one percent below TI for the fourth);

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- friendliness of Australian students (reciprocated by the Australian cohort, page 21);
- respectful treatment by Australian students, academic and administrative staff (91–95 percent, compared with TI scores in the 76–89 percent range); and
- satisfaction with "things to see or do" (91 percent compared with TI score of 75 percent).

Australian respondents to the AEI survey also reported high levels of satisfaction with key aspects of the University (page 21).

AACSB accreditation

In 2004 the Faculty of Business began the process for accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—an international body that sets global benchmarks for performance.

Accreditation requires schools to meet 21 standards. Criteria focus on strategic direction and operations management, continuous improvement, student admission and retention, student support, research output and quality, teaching quality, assurance of learning, and staff management and development.

In 2005 AACSB indicated that it considered USC's Faculty of Business *prima facie* accreditable by accepting the Faculty's plan to meet the standards. In 2006 the Faculty's Annual PreAccreditation Progress Report was accepted. During 2007 it moved further towards achieving the AACSB standards with:

- significant increases in research outputs;
- an increase to 92 percent in the number of staff classified as academically or professionally qualified; and
- good progress towards PhD completions.

The Faculty also continued its course and program mapping processes, its development of the Employability Program (page 29), and other work directly related to enhancing quality in all aspects of Faculty operations.

Key performance indicators

Council self-review outcomes

Council undertakes a self-review every two years, about halfway through the term of a Council, and shortly before the end of a Council term. The process for a mid-term review was discussed in 2007 and the review will take place early in 2008. Members of Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee conducted a self-review this year. Outcomes included minor amendments to committee processes and an increase in the number of members on the Committee.

Growth to 5,000 EFTSL by 2009—Commonwealth-funded, fee-paying and international

Year	Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) ¹	Domestic (other than CGS)	International	EFTSL total
2002	2,314.5	110.3	211.8	2,636.5
2003	2,289.4	135.4	270.0	2,694.7
2004 ²	2,296.9	173.9	506.6	2,977.5
2005	2,576.7	158.0	531.0	3,265.7
2006	3,019.2	162.3	534.8	3,716.2
2007	3,230.0	203.4	670.5	4,103.9
2008 (estimated)	3,862.2	232.6	747.6	4,842.4
2009 (estimated)	4,145.7	245.5	608.6 ³	4,999.7
2010 (estimated)	4,337.2	261.4	656.9	5,255.6

¹ CGS load for 2008–2010 as per DEST Funding Agreement.

² Due to a legislative change in reporting periods, 2004 includes the period 1 September 2003 to 31 December 2004. All other years include a 12-month period only.

³ The decline in estimated international student EFTSL in 2009 is due to the University exiting the delivery of transnational programs in Malaysia, China and Fiji.



Official opening... The Chancellery (Building C) was officially opened by the Governor of Queensland, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, at a function to install John Dobson OAM as the University's new Chancellor. Pictured left to right: Mr Tim Fairfax AM, Professor Greg Hill, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Professor Paul Thomas AM, John Dobson OAM.

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Increased revenue from public and private sources

	Public funding	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	% increase
Commonwealth Government financial assistance	HECS—Commonwealth payments	13,438	15,176	13%
	Commonwealth Loan Programmes (FEE-HELP)	645	843	31%
	DEST—Teaching and Learning Operating Grant	25,646	33,019	29%
	Capital Development Pool	2,122	0	-100%
	Commonwealth Scholarships	1,079	1,294	20%
	DEST—Research	943	1,073	14%
	Australian Research Council—Linkages	52	53	2%
	Australian Research Council—Discovery	72	73	1%
	Other Commonwealth Government financial assistance	127	5,523	4,249%
		44,124	57,054	29%
State Government financial assistance	Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry	186	1,228	560%
	Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation	900	0	-100%
	Department of Education, Training and the Arts	3,500	123	-96%
	Other Queensland State Departments	192	338	76%
		4,778	1,689	-65%
Other financial assistance	Local Government financial assistance	81	77	-5%
		81	77	-5%
	Private funding			
	Consultancy and contract research—Other	1,005	1,760	75%
	Donations and bequests	175	528	202%
	Scholarships and sponsorships	119	182	53%

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Outcomes from internal and external reviews

National benchmarking

- As an experiment, DEST this year analysed public-domain data (i.e. its higher education statistics collection for 2006) to benchmark international student programs. The following data positions USC nationally for 2006.
 - At USC, international students accounted for 10 percent of onshore enrolments, compared with a median of 16.3 percent for 39 Australian universities including Bond and Notre Dame.
 - International student fees at USC represented 11.8 percent of all revenue, compared with a median of 12.6 percent for 38 Australian universities including Bond.
- USC exceeded several Total International (TI—page 18) and Total Australian (TA—see below) respondent scores in the Australian Education International (AEI) survey of on-shore international students in Australia. Findings for the Australian control group, 92 percent of which expressed satisfaction with their courses, included:
 - 80 percent agreement on friendliness of international students (TA score 62 percent); and
 - 90–96 percent agreement on being treated with respect by international students, academic and administrative staff (TA score 80–93 percent).

External reviews

- The University's first AUQA audit report (page 10), released in February, concluded one of the most significant external audits of USC and its performance in a national field of 39 universities. Outcomes included 11 AUQA commendations for significant achievements; and USC's development of an Action Plan to implement AUQA recommendations for improvement.
- Programs are reviewed regularly, usually every seven years. This year, the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Social Science were reviewed. Outcomes stemming from the Bachelor of Science Review included four commendations, eight affirmations and 20 recommendations. The Bachelor of Social Science Review included 16 recommendations. Reviews of the Bachelor degrees in Arts and Business, conducted in late 2006, yielded reports this year. Outcomes included the introduction of program leaders and workload models to enhance the overall coordination in planning, implementing, reviewing and improving all matters related to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Business.

Internal reviews

Numerous performance evaluations (page 18) generated positive outcomes. These included:

- establishment of a University Portal;
- launch of an 18-month implementation plan to boost compliance and efficiency in Records Management;
- improvements to the student appeals process; and
- acceptance of a Faculty of Business plan to meet standards for accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—an international body that sets global benchmarks for performance. The accreditation process began in 2004.

The year 2008

- The University will launch a suite of psychology programs and open a psychology clinic on campus in response to regional demand for mental health services.
- More than a dozen new, topical degrees will cater for contemporary needs and individual preferences.
- A \$3.22 million grant from the Federal Government's Workplace Productivity Program will support a major upgrade of the University's information technology software.
- The Library will expand virtual access to resources by digitising a herbarium collection of regional plant specimens, established and catalogued in 2007.
- The University of the Sunshine Coast Foundation will continue the Building Excellence campaign, with a target of \$5 million for investment in health and sport, student scholarships and campus enhancement.