"AUQA commends USC for embedding its graduate attributes within curriculum design, development and delivery…"

Australian Universities Quality Agency report

New programs… one of Australia's most qualified psychology professors, Professor Mary Katsikitis, joined the University to head-up a new psychology clinic and to establish a suite of psychology programs.

Goal: to provide an increasingly comprehensive range of programs that position students for success in the global economy and which are aligned to the University's priorities

Increase the number of disciplines and programs, including postgraduate coursework programs

More government-funded places

The University received 165 of 200 extra Commonwealth-supported undergraduate places announced for Queensland in 2008. National allocations totalled 2,300—and USC received the fourth-highest number, behind the University of Western Australia, the University of Adelaide and the University of Wollongong. Awarded on a competitive basis, these new 165 places will pipeline out to 436 places by 2011.

The allocation recognises steadily-increasing demand for, and relevance of, USC programs, since the places aim to boost enrolments in areas showing workplace skill shortages and student demand. These include engineering, science, teaching, nursing and the health professions.

USC's extra places relate to new degree programs in engineering, psychology, occupational therapy and paramedic science; and a new Graduate Diploma in Special Education.

New Commonwealth-funded places

Engineering	50
Occupational therapy	30
Paramedic science	20
Psychology	50
Special education	15

University of the Sunshine Coast

Learning and teaching

New programs

The following were delivered for the first time in 2007.

- Bachelor of Business (Property and Asset Management)
- Bachelor of Coastal Studies (Honours)
- Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)/ Bachelor of Human Services
- Bachelor of Justice and Legal Studies
- Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Bachelor of Science (Environment and Health)
- Bachelor of Social Work
- Bachelor of Software Engineering
- Graduate Certificate in Communication
- Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing for Youth
- Graduate Certificate in Early Phase of Learning
- Graduate Certificate in Journalism
- Graduate Certificate in Mathematics Education
- Graduate Certificate in Science Education (Chemistry)
- Graduate Certificate in Science Education (Physics)
- Graduate Certificate in Vocational Education and Training
- Graduate Diploma in Climate Change Adaptation
- Graduate Diploma in Communication
- Graduate Diploma in Environmental Change Management
- Graduate Diploma in Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Graduate Diploma in Journalism
- Graduate Diploma in Public Relations
- Master of Climate Change Adaptation
- Master of Environmental Change Management
- Master of Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Master of Midwifery
- Master of Mental Health Nursing
- Master of Professional Accounting
- Master of Professional Learning

Communication student Mary Garden... writing a book about her father, pioneer aviator Oscar Garden—the fourth person to fly solo from England to Australia, in a 1930 journey he began with only 39 hours of flying experience. Ms Garden's work this year included research in New Zealand (where Oscar lived after emigrating from Scotland in 1921), funded by a $2,250 Regional Arts Development Fund grant from Caloundra City Council.

The following new programs were accredited during 2007.

- Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Science (Sport Management)
- Bachelor of Design
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Arts (Special Education and Psychology)
- Bachelor of Engineering (Construction Management)
- Bachelor of Engineering (Water and Sustainable Resource Management)
- Bachelor of Exercise Science
- Bachelor of Nutrition
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy
- Bachelor of Paramedic Science
- Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)
- Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) (Honours)
- Graduate Certificate in Professional Learning (TESOL)
- Graduate Certificate in Special Education
- Graduate Diploma in Special Education
- Master of Climate Change Adaptation by Research
- Master of Environmental Change Management by Research
- Master of Integrated Coastal Zone Management by Research
- Master of Mental Health Nursing
- Master of Psychology (Clinical)
- Master of Social Work by Research
- Master of Wetlands Management by Research

Enhance and promote the unique core courses

Core course developments

The University offers three core courses—*Communication and Thought; Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship*; and *Environment, Technology and Sustainability*. In 2007, core course coordinators continued to implement improvements and attend regular team meetings with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Communication and Thought remains popular and *Environment, Technology and Sustainability*, launched in 2006 in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education, has begun to build a solid reputation with students. *Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship* introduced some major improvements and the course was included in the development of a new minor in entrepreneurship being coordinated by the Innovation Centre.

Learning and teaching

Foster and support inter-disciplinary and inter-faculty initiatives

Expanding entry options: TPP and IFP

The University launched its Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP) program in second semester 2006 with 66 enrolments. About 40 went on to enrol in USC undergraduate programs and others are understood to have applied for places at other Queensland universities.

This year, 75 of the 143 TPP students in first semester subsequently enrolled in USC degree programs, while 155 students were enrolled in TPP in Semester 2, 2007.

The University offered its first International Foundation Pathway (IFP) program in first semester this year. Both pathways were developed in 2006 to provide:

- alternative entry to most USC degree programs; and
- previews of university life for people contemplating degree study.

TPP assists domestic students with insufficient qualifications with entry via the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). It answers regional needs: for example, in 2007 more than half (52 percent) of USC undergraduates were the first members of their families to attend university.

TPP also caters for international students seeking to meet academic entry criteria, while IFP is designed for international students who need to meet English language entry requirements.

One program, two degrees

A combined program blends requirements for two complementary degrees. Benefits include completion in less time than if the degrees were taken separately, and expanded career opportunities.

USC increased its combined program offerings in 2007, with the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)/Bachelor of Human Services available for the first time.

A helping hand… Environmental Science student Jane Quinn gained the confidence to start a degree program after enrolling in the University's Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP). "TPP was a great experience, it gave me the basic knowledge I needed to begin a degree and provided me with an insight into what to expect from university," she said.

Enhance the quality of student transition on entering and exiting University programs

Entering university

A host of Orientation initiatives at various locations welcomed new students at the start of first and second semesters. Other events throughout the year publicised study and career options, thus helping prospective students make informed study and career choices. Initiatives included the following.

- A pre-Orientation *Financial Support for Students* session in January advised first-year students on managing the expense of full-time study. Topics included study costs, budgeting, cost-saving tips, USC student services, financial support, government assistance, Centrelink benefits, bursaries and scholarships.
- An Orientation event on 13 February for Headstart students (page 26) broke new ground by including parents. The program included an official welcome, discussions on academic skills, meetings with USC staff, a campus tour and information relevant to parents; for example key terminology, important dates and ways to support their children.

- A record crowd of 1,200 students attended Orientation Day at the Sippy Downs campus on 15 February. Activities included the Official Welcome, faculty events, information sessions on topics ranging from Library services to essay writing, and a free barbecue lunch. Newcomers toured the campus and Sunshine Coast localities.
- An associated two-day Orientation program for 176 first-year students at the USC Noosa Centre included the Vice-Chancellor's welcome, tutorials and information sessions at Noosa; and a bus trip to Sippy Downs for site visits, faculty events and a free barbecue lunch.
- On 11 July, USC welcomed a record mid-year intake of almost 1,000 new students with a three-day Orientation program featuring information sessions, sporting events, campus tours, market stalls and free lunches.
- Many of these students also attended a weekend Orientation Camp at USC's Dilli Village Environmental Education Facility on Fraser Island, where activities included bushwalking, swimming, fishing and bird-watching.
- On 1 November, a careers information event at Sunshine Plaza featured a chance to discuss study and careers options individually, followed by four half-hour seminars.

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Learning and teaching

Topics included: *Career planning* (USC staff); *Performance-enhancing nutrition* (nutritionist Dr Fiona Pelly); *The science of football* (sports biomechanist Dr Mark Sayers, trainer to the Wallabies and the All Blacks); and *Engineering your career* (senior lecturer Dr Richard White).

- The year closed with the USC Options Evening and a free barbecue on 29 December. Activities included campus tours; one-on-one consultations with academics and admissions staff; and talks on topics such as support services, scholarships and overseas study.

Mentoring: a helping hand for first-years

The University's mentor program again eased the school-university transition for students new to the campus. The initiative individually pairs new students with more experienced, responsible and academically-successful enrolled students. The aim is to help mentees connect with their studies, lecturers, other students and the University in general—particularly in the first few weeks of semester.

Enabling courses for better performance

Two new options expanded the Tertiary Enabling Pathway (TEP)—a range of free, non-credit enabling courses available each semester. *Enabling writing skills* aims to improve academic writing styles. *Enabling computer literacy* develops understanding of personal computers, the USC network and some software packages.

TEP offerings have increased from just one in 2004 to seven this year. They support studies in chemistry, general mathematics, mathematics for physics, statistics, biology, writing skills and computer literacy. Research findings suggest that students who take the courses achieve higher scores than those who do not.

First-year coordinators

An outcome from the First Year Experience project conducted in 2006 was the decision to establish first-year coordinators in each faculty. These appointments were made in 2007 to advance students' transition to university life.

Exiting university

Career and employment planning and support began early in the academic year to help final-year students prepare for life after university.

careerconnection

The careerconnection team continued to nurture USC's partnerships with business and industry by promoting and securing Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and graduate employment opportunities. This year's AUQA report (page 10) commended the WIL program for:

- enhancing students' employment prospects by providing internships; and
- strengthening ties between the University, employers and the community.

Activities this year included:
- active membership of the Australian Collaborative Education Network and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services;
- coordinating the first *Alumni skills—winning that job* seminar (page 53), involving the University's alumni, industry and government;
- regular workshops on career planning, interview skills and writing job applications;
- collaboration with the School of Education in developing a Graduate Certificate in Career Counselling; and
- coordinating two major events for visiting employers promoting their graduate employment programs—participants included the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Defence Force, Blue Care, Education Qld, Brisbane Catholic Education Service and Global Education.

Considering career options

In February, 60 second- and third-year students attended an Accounting Students' Career Forum focusing on work placements and graduate employment. Displays by 24 local businesses and talks by industry and University representatives gave insights into accounting career opportunities such as project work, work experience, practicums, internships and employment.

Four lecture series for business students—*Teamwork for the workplace, Public speaking* (page 44), *Career planning* and *Maximising your influence*—began the same week as part of the Faculty of Business's new Employability Program (pages 19, 50). Lectures ran weekly for three to five weeks. Guest speakers included Sunshine Coast 2006 Businesswoman of the Year Debra Robinson, psychologist Todd Zemek, former Queensland Deputy Premier Joan Sheldon, Global Communications sponsorship consultant Dr Simon T Hay and ABC Coast FM presenter Cam Young.

Develop additional pathways for students inter-sectorally

USC via TAFE

Dual awards represent the main inter-sectoral pathway between TAFE and USC. The mechanism dates from 2003 and involves study for a USC degree in conjunction with a TAFE diploma. In 2007, the University took enrolments in eight dual award programs and investigated high student attrition rates across the board (page 29).

A Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled/Division 2 Nursing)/Bachelor of Nursing Science was established with the Southbank Institute of Technology, for delivery in 2008. The following dual awards were delivered for the first time in 2007.

- Diploma of Laboratory Technology (Biological and Environmental Testing)/Bachelor of Coastal Studies with Southbank Institute of Technology
- Diploma of Conservation and Land Management/Bachelor of Coastal Studies with Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE
- Diploma of Laboratory Technology (Biotechnology/Pathology)/Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Science) with Southbank Institute of Technology
- Diploma of Laboratory Technology/Bachelor of Food Science and Nutrition with Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE

Senior staff from USC and the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE (SCT) strengthened ties (page 42) by discussing future collaborations on dual awards and new opportunities such as shared services, e-learning, articulation, credit and joint marketing opportunities.

Learning and teaching

Headstart for high schools

The AUQA-commended Headstart program (outcomes page 30) again proved effective as a high school-University link.

This year, 111 students from Years 11 and 12 at 27 local high schools completed Headstart courses—a slight increase on the previous year's number of 106. Many of the 400 Headstart students enrolled during the past four years have continued to University; and 41 percent of these have been the first university students in their families.

Support for Headstart students in 2007 included:

- a tailored Orientation program which, for the first time, included parents (page 24); and
- the award of 12 Kirk Foundation scholarships and two USC Indigenous Scholarships, based on academic merit and financial needs (page 51).

Headstart students can access more than 50 USC courses, including seven at the USC Noosa Centre. The most popular relate to psychology, creative writing, communications, languages, science, computer-based art and design, business and health. The students attend lectures, tutorials and laboratory sessions, and undergo assessment. Completion of two Headstart courses and award of a senior certificate from school guarantees entry to most USC degrees—with academic credit for relevant Headstart completions.

Library links

Library resources and public access to those resources have increased in tandem in recent years. The Library figures significantly in the University's commitment to fostering close ties with regional schools; and steady growth in the Library collection has been matched by increasing public access to that collection.

This year the University granted paid borrowing privileges to local residents (page 39). In 2008, local Year 10 students will be eligible for free loans, extending a 2006 initiative granting borrowing rights to local students in Years 11 and 12. Secondary school teachers in the region are also eligible to register for free loans.

University while at high school... Caitlyn Tindale, Francis Wynne and Rachel Kramer (left to right) studied at USC through the Headstart program. Rachel says: "More was expected of me and I enjoyed rising to the challenge. This, as well as the freedom and independence offered by the University course, were the best things about the program."

Increase learner centredness and flexible delivery including e-learning

Flexible delivery

Information Technology Services (ITS) contributed significantly to learning and teaching (pages 51–52). Initiatives ranged from tutorials on using network resources to the introduction of instructional technologies and large-scale installation of new equipment and systems.

Other strategies for developing infrastructure and capacity to support flexible delivery included:

- appointment of key e-learning staff;
- upgrades to the Learning Management System (LMS);
- launch of a business rules project to formalise processes;
- purchase of video-recording software and hardware for lectures (page 52);
- successful wireless internet pilot in the Library (page 52);
- development and adoption of default course content layouts; and
- forming a collegial network of e-learning support staff to facilitate knowledge-sharing across faculties.

Learning and teaching

Accessing lectures online

An institutional review this year of streaming media options expanded flexible delivery options for all students—particularly those with functional challenges such as physical and mental illnesses, sensory impairment and learning disabilities.

From 2008, the Mediasite system will enable online access to lectures. This will provide a visual reference for students who are hearing-impaired or from non-English speaking backgrounds. Users can control the pace that information is presented, and search text of transcripts and slides. Online access also supports notetaking and revision.

Flexible delivery: intensive teaching periods

Faculty	Winter semester courses 4/6/07–13/7/07	Summer semester courses 26/11/07–8/2/08
Arts and Social Sciences	3 undergraduate	14 undergraduate, 6 postgraduate
Business	–	8 undergraduate
Science, Health and Education	3 undergraduate	6 undergraduate, 19 postgraduate

Expanding USC's reach

Students throughout Australia enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Nursing (General Practice) delivered jointly by USC and the Sunshine Coast Division of General Practice; and consultation began on teaching and research requirements at the new Sunshine Coast Hospital due to open in 2014.

Funding teaching, research and development

USC Teaching, Research and Development Grants were awarded as follows.

- *Choice of technology for e-learning*— Kathy Lynch, Teaching and Research Services ($4,976)
- *A teaching strategy to develop conscious learning about the research process*—Jane Gregg, Faculty of Science, Health and Education ($4,886)
- *Promoting learning and creating greater learning gains for first-year students through the use of clickers*— Rebecca Mellifont, Faculty of Science, Health and Education ($4,970)
- *Moving forward by looking backward: an exploration of teaching and learning on the history of nursing and midwifery in Australian nursing/midwifery programs*— Margaret McAllister, Faculty of Science, Health and Education ($4,988)
- *Integrating language and writing support into the teaching of scientific report writing*—Michael Carey, Student Services ($5,000)

Implement the graduate attributes

In 2007 the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education established a national project to examine the role of graduate attributes in Australian universities. USC is contributing to this project and, by extending its review of graduate attributes into 2008, will incorporate best practice into its own approach.

USC review of attributes

The review of graduate attributes will include relevant findings from external program reviews conducted in 2007. Similarly, outcomes from the first rounds of Student Feedback on Courses (SFC) will be addressed. However, the University still intends to assess the impacts of graduate attributes and will establish a means of doing this through the review.

In summary, program review and SFC data in graduate attributes reveal that in 2007, more than 4,000 students were surveyed University-wide using the SFC instrument. Of these, 75 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that their courses helped them attain specific graduate attributes.

Through external program reviews conducted during 2007, it was evident that students had a strong awareness of, and were knowledgeable as to the purpose and intent of, the graduate attributes.

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

Learning and teaching

Deliver discipline-based knowledge to position students for their future careers and as a basis for lifelong learning

Learning and Teaching Colloquium

The second annual Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching Colloquium proved its value as a forum for advancing excellence in learning and teaching.

Dr Marcia Devlin, a Senior Lecturer in Higher Education at the University of Melbourne, gave a keynote address on the scholarship of teaching in Australian higher education. Dr Devlin specialises in teaching and learning development and is known nationally for her work on assessment and student finances.

Eleven USC academics presented research related to their teaching practices, and more than 100 participants made the most of opportunities for discussion, reflection and collaboration with colleagues.

Knowledge delivery

USC introduced a significant number of new professional and para-professional programs this year (page 23). While such decisions take account of factors such as national skills shortages (as identified by government) and Commonwealth funding priorities, expansion of offerings is driven by the University's Strategic Plan and a commitment to enabling graduates to find well-paid jobs.

In 2007 USC continued to balance professional programs with options aimed at providing a more general liberal education, for example creative writing.

Recruitment and appointment of adjunct professors (page 59) many of whom are industry professionals, also enhances knowledge delivery by allowing experts in their fields direct teaching contact with students.

Nursing education award

The Australian General Practice Network (APGN) recognised the University's approach to and development of nursing education programs with an award for *Innovation in Education in Support of General Practice.*

The Sunshine Coast Division of APGN worked with USC in 2002 to develop a national model of professional education for nurses. Other divisions nationwide then partnered with the University to deliver a postgraduate Certificate of Nursing endorsed in general practice. According to APGN, the partnership has delivered the most affordable, flexible and accessible postgraduate qualifications available to nurses in Australia.

Ensure that teaching is characterised by a high level of interaction between staff and students

Human scale

The personalised experience of this smaller university contributes significantly to the quality of the student experience. As it grows, USC is committed to retaining this human scale.

A key area appears to be class sizes in tutorials; i.e. only enough participants to facilitate effective staff-student and student-student interaction.

In 2007 an investigation of tutorial class sizes in the context of USC growth provided mixed results. These indicated potential for loss of tutorials, generally-appropriate tutorial class sizes, and a tendency for tutorials to become 'mini lectures'.

Consequently, the Learning and Teaching Management Committee will establish a working group to provide guidelines on the role of tutorials, optimum tutorial sizes, and effective approaches to conducting tutorials.

Student:staff ratios

The most recent data, published by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) in 2005, indicated a ratio of 23.3 students per academic staff member at USC in 2004.

Provide enhanced opportunities for work-related experience whilst studying

Opportunities for workplace learning began in February with a major forum for accounting students and the launch of four lecture series for business students (page 25).

The University's careerconnection team (pages 25, 31) promoted work placements and internships through the increasingly-robust Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiative and managed careers and graduate employment services.

Graduate Diploma in Education student Emma Bell gets up close and personal with a koala... all in a day's work during a six-week placement as an education officer at Taronga Zoo, Sydney, teaching students ranging from kindergarten to secondary school levels.

Learning and teaching
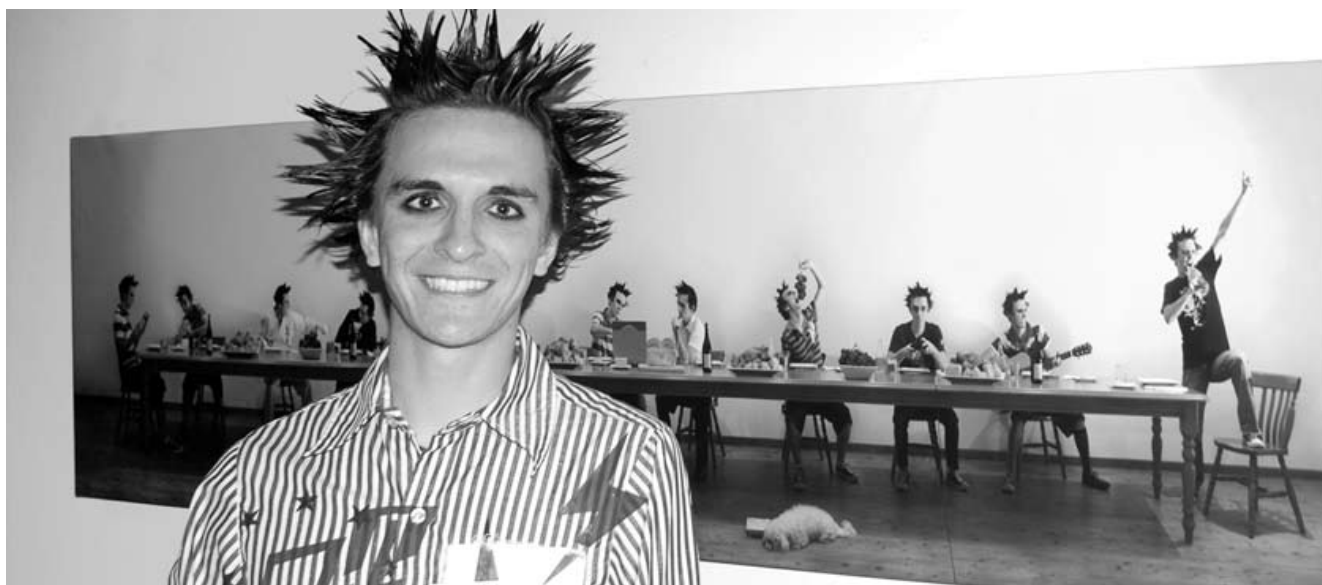
Art and design graduate Luke McClean with his final-year assignment Clone me once, Shame on me... *a 200cm x 50cm canvas print purchased by Caboolture Shire Council following an exhibition at Caboolture Shire Community Arts Centre. Mr McClean's final-year internship at Think Creative in Brisbane landed him a job on graduation.*

Examples of workplace experience this year included the following.

- Fifteen students in disciplines ranging from public health to education helped with coaching for the Active After-school Communities Program, an Australian Sports Commission initiative providing one to two hours of physical activity each week for primary school children. USC's Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) is a registered provider of coaches on the Sunshine Coast.
- USC's Employability Program (pages 19, 50) coordinated summer vacation work placements with potential for future graduate employment. For example, second-year business student Phoebe Brown was one of only 25 Queensland students selected from 500 applicants for work in Brisbane with the world's largest professional services company, Deloitte. She is also a member of USC's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team (page 42).
- Regional businesses continued to access the Export Management project run by international business students. Under the scheme, a client engages a student team (supervised by a lecturer) to assess its operations and export intentions, then conduct export-specific research. Students gain real-world experience; and the client company receives detailed, relevant information for use in evaluating its readiness to export.

Advance the Teaching-Research Nexus to ensure that teaching is informed by research

Draft Statement

The Academic Board considered a draft Statement on the Teaching-Research Nexus that was proposed for adoption by Council. This sought to define the Teaching-Research Nexus, locate it within University traditions, explain its strategic importance to USC, and identify specific ways in which it is evidenced in the University's operations.

While Academic Board members were satisfied with most aspects of the draft, they referred it back to the Learning and Teaching Management Committee and the Research Management Committee for further refinement. The standing committees will provide redrafted material to the Academic Board early in 2008.

Research to inform teaching

Three major government grants this year demonstrated USC's steadily-developing research profile in relation to learning and teaching.

- 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 Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. This is triple the amount USC received in 2006 (page 17).

- The University is leading a consortium of seven universities awarded a $219,877 Carrick Institute grant. It will fund research aimed at reducing the numbers of students dropping out of higher education throughout Australia. The three-year study involves 15 academics: three from USC and two each from others in the consortium. These are the Universities of Sydney, South Australia and Southern Queensland; Monash University; Murdoch University; and Griffith University. Their work will build on previous studies of first-year students, by examining retention and attrition for those who leave at later stages. Data suggest that just as many students leave in the second and third years combined as leave in the first year.
- A second Carrick grant of $149,573 will fund a study of offshore education, conducted by researchers from USC, University of Western Australia and Curtin University of Technology.
- The University awarded five Teaching, Research and Development grants totalling nearly $25,000 (page 27).
- The University benefited from three Collaboration and Structural Reform (CASR) Fund grants totalling $1.8 million (two for USC-led projects), and a fourth CASR grant of $369,000 to augment a $22,000 DASSH (Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) grant.

Learning and teaching

Learning by doing...

- business plan for and launch of speed-dating company Switchdate: final-year students Ashley Joel (accounting), and Rian Cope (tourism and management)

- launch of Evok, a design and fit-out service including furnishings, hi-fi and home theatre lifestyle technology for display residential units: Jesse Costello (business; participant in Enterprisers program, page 39)

- internships with APN News and Media publications, *Sunshine Coast Daily* and *Caboolture News* (Nikita Lee and Brad Gardner, two of three finalists for Outstanding Journalism Student from a Regional University award for articles written as interns)

- the Export Management project (international business students— page 29)

- jobs on the University's IT Services Help Desk (page 53)

- placements in USC's Student Services (page 53)

- internship with specialist travel company Fiji Dreaming Pty Ltd, working on a sustainable tourism expedition for 10-20 USC students: Ashley Ansell, final-year student (business; tourism)

- DRUM: *the rhythm of creative minds*, a free public USC Gallery exhibition of design and multi-media works by 30 final-year students trained for careers in web and print design, information graphics, interpretive and multimedia design, packaging, publishing and advertising

Key performance indicators

Graduate satisfaction with educational experience as measured through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

In 2006 and 2007, 69 percent and 79.8 percent of graduates who were Australian citizens or permanent residents responded to the Graduate Destination Survey administered by Graduate Careers Australia. The 2006 response rate was 9.1 percent higher than the 2005 figure of 59.9 percent. Equivalent national response rates for 2006 and 2007 were 62.5 and 62.8 percent respectively.

On the CEQ Overall Satisfaction ratings, graduates consistently gave USC top marks for educational experience, with a 92 percent satisfaction rating in 2007. Many students felt that the University's employment of 'industry experts' as tutors and lecturers provided a valuable learning experience, allowing students to engage in learning that had tangible links to the workplace, rather than purely theoretical. Others identified the depth of knowledge and passion of teaching staff at USC as an advantage.

Positive and constructive student feedback on courses and student feedback on teaching

In 2007, more than 100 academic staff and 55 sessional tutors used the Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) instrument to evaluate teaching and help improve performance.

Student Feedback on Courses (SFC) was implemented fully in 2007 and used to evaluate the quality of more than 220 courses. SFC supports course coordinators, faculties and the University in collecting and responding to student feedback as part of the University's commitment to continuous improvement.

Increased utilisation of inter-sectoral pathways

The University took enrolments in eight dual award programs (page 25) in 2007, compared with six in 2006. An investigation of the high student attrition rate in all dual award programs suggested improvement to enable better collaboration with institutional partners and access to students. The decision was made to move immediately to an end-on model for existing dual awards and use 2008 to develop better-integrated programs in sport and nursing.

Increased range and uptake of transition programs for students entering and exiting University programs

Entering the University

Orientation

An Orientation Survey assessed the value to students of (1) the Orientation program and (2) various transition programs. Almost all students (98.6 percent) surveyed in first semester 2007 rated the Orientation experience as 'positive'. Twenty-two percent said they felt 'very prepared' to study at USC and 62 percent said they felt 'prepared'. Almost all (96 percent) said they would advise friends to make Orientation attendance a priority.

Headstart

The Headstart program (pages 24, 26, 51) was established in 2003 with 40 participants. By comparison, as at Semester 1, 2007, 71 students were enrolled and 111 completed one or more courses in the program. Between 2003 and 2006, 318 students from 33 regional schools achieved completions. Of these, 65 percent were female, 35 percent were male, and 44 percent were the first in their families to undertake university study.

On average, 33 percent of Headstart students subsequently enrol for USC degrees. They perform exceptionally well with 11 percent achieving High Distinctions, 20 percent Distinctions, 28 percent Credits, 29 percent Pass grades and 12 percent Fail grades.

Learning and teaching

Tertiary Preparation Pathway

The Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP—page 24) launched in second semester 2006. Feedback from TPP students (obtained via the University's Student Feedback on Teaching and Student Feedback on Courses activities) was overwhelmingly positive. Students were very pleased with the quality of teaching and course material, and the opportunity to enter undergraduate programs.

Tertiary enabling courses

TEP courses (page 25) have increased from just one in 2004 to seven this year. A total of 1,012 students enrolled for seven courses in 2007, compared with 434 enrolments for five courses in 2006.

Exiting the University

Initiatives conducted through careerconnection (page 25) again helped prepare students for the workforce, facilitate graduate employment and strengthen the University's ties with local employers and communities. Highlights in 2007 included the continuing success of the WIL program, commended in the AUQA report (page 10); and the new Employability Program (page 29), developed in the Faculty of Business and piloted in 2007.

Take up of e-learning strategies by course coordinators

In 2007 the Blackboard learning management system was made available University-wide and most USC courses were enabled in Blackboard to enhance the learning experience.

Proportion of students undertaking regional, national and international work-related experience

No University-wide mechanism is currently available for collecting these data. The Internships Officer continued work with staff from the University's Strategic Information and Analysis Unit on developing a system for capturing accurate, University-wide data on the take-up of WIL opportunities.

Currently, data on industry partners are maintained at faculty level and not aggregated as University-wide data.

Proportion of courses in which the Teaching-Research Nexus is clearly evident

These data will be collected following (1) Council's adoption of the Statement on the Teaching-Research Nexus (page 29) and (2) establishment of appropriate data collection methods.

Advances in the Learning and Teaching Futures process included submission to the Learning and Teaching Management Committee of quantitative and qualitative criteria for identifying and developing:

- flagship program areas; and
- areas of learning and teaching strength.

The year 2008

- Mediasite, a system for lecture recording and online delivery, will be the standard IT service delivery platform following extensive trials of various systems in 2007.
- Local Year 10 students will be able to register for free Library loans, extending a 2006 initiative granting borrowing rights to local students in Years 11 and 12 and to secondary school teachers in the region.
- ITS will complete a major upgrade that began in 2007, replacing computers in five computer laboratories and the Information Commons.
- The University will offer an extra 165 Commonwealth-supported undergraduate places. These represent the lion's share of 200 such places allocated to Queensland universities, reflecting increasing demand for USC programs.