

# Growth and development

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

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## Promote governance principles that underpin good decision making

### Council activities

Following reconstitution of the University Council in December 2005, various induction activities for Council members were undertaken in 2006. These included a retreat held over one-and-a-half days in Noosa in July. The agenda included interactive sessions on governance; issues within the higher education sector; developments at the University; and academic challenges facing the University (page 9).

During the year, Council:

- approved a Statement on University Governance outlining the University's corporate governance framework including structures, statutes, rules, plans, policies and practices
- continued compliance with the National Governance Protocols, particularly those relating to Council and controlled entities
- attended presentations by relevant members of staff and consultants on
  - a comprehensive review of the campus Master Plan
  - the 2006 Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit
  - the University's 10-year celebrations
  - developments in the International Relations area, and
  - the Sports Stadium to be located within the Health and Sport Precinct (page 36)

## Support sustainable growth to a student population of at least 8,000 EFTSL within 10 years, comprising Commonwealth-funded growth, growth in fee-paying students and growth in international students

### Rapid growth

Student numbers have increased rapidly over the 10 years since the University opened in 1996. In 2006, student numbers grew to 4,760, an increase of 11.21 percent (480 students) on 2005.

In first semester 2006, the University recorded its largest-ever intake of more than 1,900 new on campus students. Second semester showed the biggest mid-year intake with more than 700 new on campus students. International on campus students grew to 414 in 2006, 14.36 percent more than in 2005. Postgraduate programs continued to diversify, resulting in an increase of 40.8 percent over 2005.

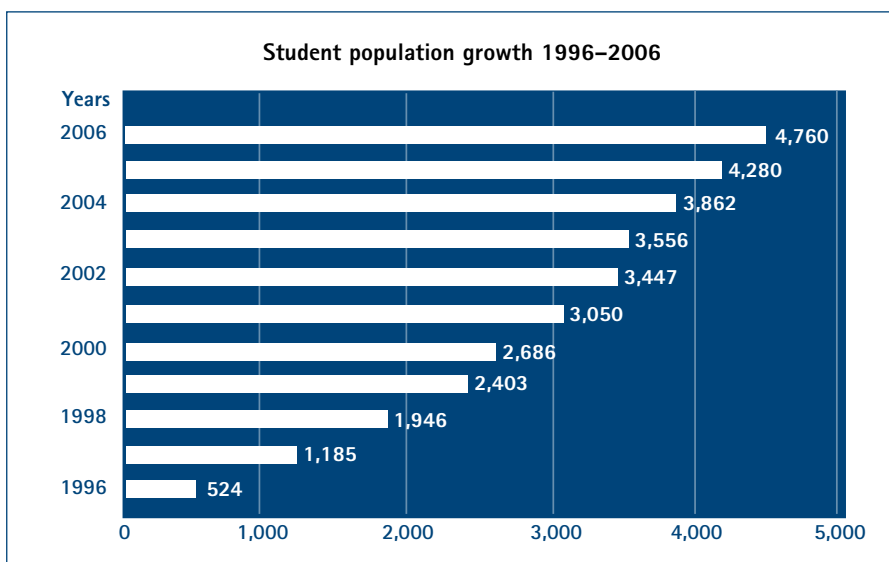
First-preference applications to the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) for first semester study at USC were up by almost 30 percent on 2005. Figures released in December 2006 for first-round QTAC applications for first semester

2007 showed USC recorded the greatest percentage increase by far in the number of first preferences of any university in Queensland, with a 19 percent rise over the same time in 2005.

The introduction of new programs in 2006 increased the total number of programs offered by the University to more than 115, incorporating 360 courses. Many new programs, such as those in nutrition and dietetics, nursing science, and justice and legal studies, were developed to meet growing demand. This stimulated University growth while meeting the needs of students, industry and the Sunshine Coast region. QTAC first-round application information for first semester 2007 confirmed this. The Bachelor of Nursing Science (replacing a joint program with Central Queensland University), Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics, Bachelor of Justice and Legal Studies, and Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)/Bachelor of Human Services attracted numerous preferences, as did existing accredited programs such as the Bachelor of Regional and Urban Planning and Bachelor of Business (Accounting).

### Supporting growth

A review of the University's Master Plan, undertaken in 2006 and conducted every five years, supported growth and development on the USC campus and in surrounding areas throughout the next five years and beyond.





Guida Moseley Brown Architects (formerly Mitchell/Giurgola and Thorpe Architects), the University's Master Planner since 1994, headed the review team. This ensured continuity and ongoing alignment of the Master Plan with the University's Strategic Plan. As part of the review process, consultants focused on four main areas of concern—traffic and parking, environment, waste and water, and landscaping.

A draft of the revised Master Plan was submitted to University Council in December 2006. A final version will be presented in March 2007.

Initiatives to enhance student services included more Library and information technology facilities and more opportunities for staff to support students.

In 2006, extended Library hours included a 7.30am opening every day during semester and one late night opening each week during Summer Semester. Resources included access to a print collection of more than 100,000 items and online access via electronic databases to more than 26,000 journal and newspaper titles.

The print collection continued its growth rate of about 10,000 items per year, and access to online journal titles increased significantly with the subscription to EBSCO MegaFile, a multi-disciplinary database.

Improved sustainability of information and communication technology systems was a major focus for Information Technology Services (ITS) staff. Outcomes included more flexibility and scalability to support growth in student and staff numbers, and in the number and breadth of courses and programs.

Virtualisation of University servers, implementation of a new storage area network and development of a test environment within a secondary data centre facility provided benefits in the areas of resilience of USC systems and the ability of ITS staff to implement and support new services. The addition of 24-hour on-call support during 2006 complemented the technical development of the University's systems.

Three new staff members joined Student Services in 2006 to meet the needs of a growing student body—a Student Wellbeing Officer, a Student Clubs and Activities Officer and a Student Access Officer, who identifies factors leading to poor academic performance and assists students on monitored enrolment (page 44). Two of these positions were a result of Voluntary Student Unionism funding (page 47). Delivery of academic skills services and transition programs continued, particularly during Orientation, and the careers area expanded to improve access to Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

Construction of a new building was also completed in 2006. The building houses state-of-the-art nursing laboratories to support growing enrolments in nursing programs, and advanced computing, sports science and teaching laboratories. The University also committed to building a \$10 million indoor Sports Stadium as a key part of the Health and Sport Precinct (page 36). New car parks opened in conjunction with the new buildings on campus and work continued on a proposal for a bus interchange (page 52).

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

### Public resources

#### Grants and funding allocations

The University sought a range of public resources in 2006, through applications for various grants and funding allocations. Funds received supported growth in facilities, campus and program development, and service provision. Significant funding included:

#### *Capital Development Pool Funding*

In December 2004, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) approved capital funding of \$2 million for the new science building (Building H). Funding to the value of \$2.112 million is to be received in February 2007.

#### *VSU Transition Funding*

The University has been successful in its application to DEST for \$5 million Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) Transition Funding to assist in the funding of the Sports Stadium (page 36).

#### *Department of Education (Queensland)*

In February 2006, a \$1.5 million Nursing Grant was received to be applied to fixtures and fittings for the new science building (Building H).

In November 2006, \$500,000 of \$2 million in capital funds was received for the Sports Stadium.

#### *Department of Sport and Recreation (Queensland)*

A \$900,000 Major Facilities Program grant was approved in 2006 to assist with the construction of the Sports Stadium (page 36). Almost \$300,000 (\$297,733) of the grant was claimed in 2006.

# Growth and development

## Child safety program funding

In August 2006 the Queensland Department of Child Safety approved a 12-month, \$50,000 funding agreement for the University to develop a specialist child protection stream in undergraduate human services and counselling programs. The curriculum seed funding agreement will help develop a comprehensive teaching program related to child protection and Indigenous communities. These enhanced degrees will boost graduate employment opportunities in a rapidly-expanding area.

## Regional Arts Development Fund grant

Maroochy Shire Council announced a \$5,000 Regional Arts Development Fund grant for the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery to embark on an Indigenous art project. The grant will enhance a larger, ongoing project highlighting the University's significant collection of Western desert paintings. It will also fund employment of a specialist arts writer and gallery educator/teacher to prepare material for production, such as interpretive panels, a brochure/booklet and an education kit for primary and high school students.

## Smart State University Internships Program

A successful application for Queensland Government funding from the Smart State University Internships Program boosted the University's commitment to fostering a supportive environment (emphasising life experience) for students.

The Department of State Development and Trade signed a Financial Assistance Agreement worth \$116,664 (GST exclusive) over three years. This will go towards embedding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) (page 27) in the University, improving student access to industry experience. Activities will include: the appointment of an Internships Officer; establishment of an Internships Steering Committee; development of the WIL Strategy (including a database); ensuring consistency of WIL documentation; and promotion of the WIL Program.

## Success in the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund

The University was one of four Queensland universities recognised in the Federal Government's Learning and Teaching Performance Fund allocations announced in December. The \$500,000 award will fund initiatives to enhance learning and teaching performance University-wide.

## Private sector resources

### Fundraising

The University Foundation (page 13) helps identify and prioritise key initiatives requiring or seeking donor support.

In 2006, the Foundation launched the Building Excellence campaign aimed at raising \$5 million over 18 months for investment in health and sport, student scholarships and campus enhancement. Priorities, chosen after extensive consultation according to impact on the student experience, include:

- \$3.5 million to construct Phase One of the Health and Sport Centre (page 36)
- \$1 million to provide long-term student scholarships and bursaries
- \$500,000 for campus enhancement projects

In 2006, the campaign attracted \$368,000 in donations, sponsorship, grants, and in-kind support. Pledges totalled \$91,100.

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

### Performance evaluations

In 2006, increased staffing levels provided extra resources for:

- evaluating performance
- tracking progress in the achievement of plans against key performance indicators and benchmarks
- gathering information for internal and external quality audits and reviews

The University drew on its internal data collection and performance evaluations in preparing a portfolio of performance for an institutional self-review—a trial quality audit conducted in March 2006.

Findings were incorporated in the performance portfolio compiled for an audit conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The final AUQA report will be released in early 2007.

A panel of external independent auditors led the self-review, evaluating the University's performance against its own purposes, plans, policies and processes. Methods included close examination of University data and interviews with a representative sample of internal and external stakeholders. The review report identified strengths and weaknesses and presented an action plan to address areas for improvement. These included internal communications, research performance, policy development and implementation, integration of planning and budgeting processes, and risk management.

### Strategic Information and Analysis Unit expansion

Strategic Information and Analysis Unit staff numbers increased in line with the University's commitment to improved data and strategic analysis services, and a dedicated research analyst was appointed to develop and execute projects of strategic significance. In 2007 this position will begin projects in the areas of attrition, first-year attitudes and attributes, and student evaluation of programs and services.

## Evaluation of student satisfaction

A total of 655 students who graduated in 2005 were surveyed in 2006 as part of the annual Australian Graduate Survey (previously known as the Graduate Destination Survey). Of these, 452 graduates volunteered information, providing a response rate of 69 percent.

Through the Student Feedback System, feedback is collected and disseminated on courses via Student Feedback on Courses (SFC), and teaching via Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT). Data is made available to relevant staff in accordance with the Program Review and Course Evaluation Policy and the Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching Policy.

While SFT is now well-established, 2006 marked the roll-out of SFC following an earlier pilot (page 28).

## OECD project

The OECD project connects 14 regions worldwide under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with a view to strengthening the contributions of higher education institutions to their regions.

The Sunshine-Fraser Coast Region (the only region in Australia to be evaluated) involved two universities—the University of the Sunshine Coast and the Wide Bay Campus of the University of Southern Queensland. Stakeholders from within the region gathered as a Regional Steering Committee, charged with responsibility for driving the project.

The region delivered a Self Evaluation Report (of which the two lead authors were from USC), before an International Peer Review Team appointed by the OECD visited the region in late 2005. The Peer Review Team met key stakeholders, including students on both campuses, to test the contents of the Self Evaluation Report.

A draft of the Peer Review Team's report was provided to the Regional Steering Committee in 2006. It is highly complimentary of the entrepreneurial agenda of the stakeholders and the capacity and willingness of the two universities to engage in focused and collaborative action with key regional 'players'. With respect to the Sunshine Coast, the Peer Review Team cited the work of the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC) and the University of the Sunshine Coast in developing the Regional Economic Development Strategy, and the Sunshine Coast Knowledge Economy Strategy. The University was recognised as a key partner in supporting economic development while moving towards an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Representatives of each of the 14 participating regions, including USC Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Thomas AM and Professor of Regional Engagement Steve Garlick, met in Copenhagen in October 2006 to discuss OECD project outcomes, and to share 'good practice' examples of higher education and regional engagement. The final OECD project report will be released in Valencia in September 2007.

At the Copenhagen conference, it was agreed that an international benchmarking framework would be established. This would enable project participants, as well as other interested higher education institutions and their regional communities, to evaluate their collective performance in regional engagement over time. The University of the Sunshine Coast and the Sunshine and Fraser Coast Regional Steering Committee are responsible for advancing this international benchmarking agenda.

## AACSB accreditation

In 2004 the Faculty of Business commenced the process of seeking accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—an international body that accredits business schools and sets international benchmarks for performance.

To gain accreditation, business schools are required to meet 21 standards—all with specified criteria—spanning 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 the Faculty prima facie creditable by accepting the Faculty's plan to meet the standards, and in 2006 the Faculty's Annual PreAccreditation Progress Report was accepted, marking a further step along the pathway to accreditation.

Tangible accreditation-related outcomes achieved during 2006 include:

- development of a workload allocation document that specifies not just the basis for workload allocation but also performance expectations and output measures in all three areas of academic work—teaching, research, service
- specification of research expectations of academic staff, with reference to both quality and quantity of research-based outputs
- development and implementation of a systematic and ongoing course and program mapping process, which the University's AACSB mentor reported to AACSB as one that "may well be a model for American schools to follow ... assessment and assurance of learning are taken quite seriously at USC, and I believe that FOB (the Faculty of Business) is well ahead of the curve in regard to this"
- development of specific programs designed to support students—the employability program for undergraduate students and the academic skills orientation program for postgraduate students

# Growth and development

## Key performance indicators

### ■ Council self-review outcomes

No Council self-reviews were scheduled for 2006. Reviews are held every two years, approximately halfway through the term of a Council, and shortly before the end of a Council term. A mid-term review will be undertaken in 2007.

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

Year	Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS)	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 <sup>1</sup>	2,296.9	173.9	506.6	2,977.5
2005	2,576.7	158.0	531.0	3,265.7
2006	3,019.8	162.8	534.4	3,716.9
2007 (estimated)	3,464.0	178.9	556.0	4,198.9
2008 (estimated)	3,845.0	198.3	602.9	4,646.1
2009 (estimated)	4,005.0	221.4	653.9	4,880.3
2010 (estimated)	4,112.0	249.2	710.0	5,071.2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

### ■ Increased revenue from public and private sources

Public funding		2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	% increase
Commonwealth Government financial assistance	HECS—Commonwealth payments	11,670	13,438	15.15%
	Commonwealth Loan Programmes (PELS)	553	645	16.64%
	DEST—Teaching and Learning Operating Grant	20,018	25,646	28.11%
	Capital Development Pool	2,094	2,122	1.34%
	Commonwealth Scholarships	600	1,079	79.8%
	DEST—Research	954	943	-1.15%
	Australian Research Council—Linkages	-	52	100.00%
	Australian Research Council—Discovery	51	72	41.18%
	Other Commonwealth Government financial assistance	255	127	-50.20%
	Consultancy and contract research—Commonwealth	169	210	24.26%
	<b>36,364</b>	<b>44,334</b>	<b>21.92%</b>	
State Government financial assistance	Department of Sport and Recreation Queensland	-	900	100.00%
	Queensland Education	-	3,500	100.00%
	Other State departments	8	156	1850.00%
	Consultancy and contract research—State Government	101	321	217.82%
		<b>109</b>	<b>4,877</b>	<b>4374.31%</b>
Local Government financial assistance	Consultancy and contract research—Local Government	116	74	-36.21%
	Sunshine Coast councils	26	7	-73.08%
		<b>142</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>-42.96%</b>
Private funding				
	Consultancy and contract research—Other	501	631	25.95%
	Donations and bequests	263	175	-33.46%
	Scholarships and sponsorships	83	119	43.37%
		<b>847</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>9.21%</b>

## ■ Positive outcomes from internal and external reviews

### Faculty reviews

As part of its quality assurance processes, the University conducts regular external reviews of each of its faculties, usually every five years. The Faculty of Business was reviewed in 2004 and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in 2005. The Faculty of Science, Health and Education was reviewed in 2006.

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences review recommendations were implemented in 2006, and included the establishment the School of Social Sciences and the School of Communication within the Faculty. Implementation of recommendations from the Faculty of Science, Health and Education review was well advanced in late 2006.

### Program reviews

In accordance with the Program Review and Course Evaluation Policy, the University also conducts regular external reviews of each of its programs, usually every seven years. The Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Business were reviewed in late 2006. The review reports will be available in the first part of 2007 for immediate implementation.

### Institute and centre reviews

The University has been repositioning itself to meet new challenges presented by the Research Quality Framework (RQF). In line with a need for more focused areas of research priority, it was decided following an external review in 2005 to discontinue the University research centre SCRIBE (Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise). Staff associated with the Institute of Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement (iSHaRE) decided to follow a similar path.

Both University research centres—the Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) and the Centre for Multicultural and Community Development—were externally reviewed in late 2006, with recommendations expected in early 2007.

### ICT capability

Key developments in 2006 that have delivered greater ICT system resilience include:

- introduction of a storage network, server virtualisation, and a test environment delivering greater systems flexibility and capability to implement new services
- commencement of 24-hour on-call support for core infrastructure
- a managed desktop delivering a new standard computing environment for teaching and staff use, as well as for remote assistance
- redesign of the corporate website to enhance content and design, and improve 'behind the scenes' technology to improve troubleshooting and maintenance

The University also worked closely with Maroochy Shire Council on the Suncoast Broadband Aggregation Project, which seeks to deliver benefits to the region through the delivery of access to broadband Internet services (page 38).

