

Regional engagement

Goal: to engage in productive partnerships to further the region's interests and the University's strategic priorities.

Regional engagement strategy

The Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Advisory Committee was established in October 2005. Members advise the Vice-Chancellor on developing a Regional Engagement Plan and on coordinating regional engagement activities. The resulting plan for 2007-2009 was endorsed by the Planning and Resources Committee in September 2006 and approved by University Council in October 2006.

The plan has two areas of strategic focus:

- reaching in to the University to further enhance responsiveness to regional needs in the areas of:
 - regional catalyst strategies
 - policy and governance
 - marketing and dialogue
 - research and innovation
 - teaching and learning
 - internationalisation
- reaching out to partners with regional interests on specific matters of critical importance, as identified through regional consultation and with reference to state and national priorities and policies

Position descriptions were developed for the new positions of Director of Regional Engagement and Professor of Regional Engagement within the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, as well as Regional Engagement Coordinators within each faculty. This means that, for the first time, designated officers centrally and within the faculties have clear roles in developing and coordinating regional engagement initiatives.

Inform and lead discussion and decision making about alternative futures for the region

State of the Region Conference

The Faculty of Business, in conjunction with the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) and with support from companies KPMG, Investa and Parsons Brinckerhoff, examined the environmental, economic and social future of the Sunshine Coast at the second annual State of the Region conference held at the University in October 2006.

The conference had the theme 'What if ... scenarios for the Sunshine Coast' and attracted more than 100 participants to discuss issues like water supply, population growth and changing tourism trends. It addressed best and worst-case scenarios for the region and involved many of the Sunshine Coast's key leaders and decision-makers.

Fraser Island Research Conference

Better environmental management on Fraser Island was the topic of a conference held at the University in September 2006. Organised by the Fraser Island Scientific Area Committee for the Minister of Environment and the Fraser Island Defender's Organisation, the conference was entitled 'True grit: maintaining the integrity of Fraser Island', and included presentations on topics such as fire, the Island's dingo population, feral plants and animals, tourism impacts, cultural heritage, natural resources, and hydrology and climate change.

USC academics spoke on topics such as submarine groundwater discharge from Fraser Island, the microbiology of the mined sand dunes, lake pollution, invasive ants, dingo diets, and the use of information and communication technologies to monitor flora, fauna, tourists and the environment while promoting the Island's indigenous culture and history.

Advance the sustainability of the region through concentrated research effort, teaching programs, scholarly activities, strategic partnerships, consultancies, and educational initiatives

Climate change training

The University signed an agreement with Climate Risk Pty Ltd (Australia/UK) and CLIMsystems Ltd of New Zealand to provide the first accredited climate change training for business and government professionals in Australia (page 33).

Non-native tree clearing

University staff and the principal of Buderim Mountain State School met in late 2006 to discuss problems related to the clearing of non-native trees at the school (such as increased risk of sunburn among students) and to explore the benefits and challenges of leaving remaining introduced species, while introducing more native flora.

Mountain Creek design initiative

USC Computer-Based Art and Design Senior Lecturer Kevin Todd was artist-in-residence for a Queensland Education Department-funded project that resulted in the creation of a sculpture at Mountain Creek State High School. Mr Todd trained 12 students in art and design each week from February to May, to create the eye-catching low relief sculpture, which features text and mathematical symbols. The sculpture, which allowed the students to express their personal journeys through school, was installed on an exterior wall of a new building at the school.

OECD Regional Steering Committee

The relationship that developed between USC and the University of Southern Queensland (USQ Wide Bay) during the OECD Project self-evaluation process (page 19) helped identify key priorities for University-region engagement. These were incorporated into the University's Regional Engagement Plan. Areas under discussion include the regional labour market, educational pathways, economic initiatives (eg business diversification, knowledge economy), infrastructure development, and inter-Council cooperation.

AIS accreditation

In 2006 USC became the first university in Australia to be accredited with the National Sport Science Quality Assurance program, a program of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). Elite athletes and members of the general community can access sport science and health tests at the Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) accredited exercise physiology laboratory, with results conforming to the requirements of the National Sport Sciences Accreditation Committee and the National Sport Science Quality Assurance program.

CHASE Sport and Health Clinic

The University opened the CHASE Sport and Health Clinic in February 2006, providing unique facilities to the community, amateur and professional athletes, health practitioners, and sporting groups. CHASE professionals include a sports dietitian, sports psychologist, sports physiotherapist, massage therapist, sports medicine practitioner and sport and exercise scientists. The Clinic also provides Sunshine Coast health professionals with access to AIS-quality laboratory testing facilities.

Business Enterprise Day

More than 220 business students from Sunshine Coast high schools attended a Business Enterprise Day on the University campus in August. Sponsored by the Faculty of Business and the Business Educators' Association of Queensland, the event was designed to give the students (who were setting up and operating 'small businesses' as part of their school work) a greater understanding of 'entrepreneurship at work'. Representatives from successful Sunshine Coast businesses attended to provide key business insights.

School Grants Scheme

As part of its Power of Ten celebrations, the University launched a School Grants Scheme offering \$10,000 to fund education projects at local primary and high schools. Seven schools received grants for initiatives aligned with areas within the University, enabling University staff to support the schools' projects.



- In 2006, four conversational language courses helped students and members of the local community learn French, Indonesian, Japanese and Mandarin. More than 120 people enrolled in Interact Language Courses and 35 international students, including Romain Roy and Pauline Fontaine (with French teacher Geraldine Pettit, right) participated as native speakers. The popularity of the courses, combined with positive interactions between USC staff, international students, and members of the community, has ensured courses will continue in 2007. Interact teachers and native speakers are also involved in language days for high school students.

Healthy Schools—Healthy Futures

The University participated in a one-day workshop on school health promotion programs at Nambour State High School in June. The University, in conjunction with CHASE, the Queensland Cancer Fund and Queensland Health (who make up the Healthy Schools Reference Group), presented workshops and seminars on skin cancer prevention, school gardening programs, school breakfasts, physical activities and anti-bullying programs.

Keep PACE

Established in 2004, Keep PACE (Program for Advancing Community Education) expands each year to offer wide-ranging free information sessions and workshops for students, parents and the community. In 2006, personal career counselling sessions were held at both the Sippy Downs campus and the USC Noosa Centre, and 18 Keep PACE sessions attracted 685 participants.

Professional learning in education

Education staff in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education held the saMY (Scaffolding Action in the Middle Years) professional learning program for teachers and administrators in May 2006. Education staff also held educational forums,

a Re-Entry to Teaching Program for teachers who had been out of the classroom, and the Let Me Learn: Making a Measurable Difference conference in August.

USC Noosa Centre

USC relocated its Noosa Centre from Sunshine Beach to purpose-built facilities at Noosa Junction in late 2006 and increased the number of courses to be offered at the Centre from first semester 2007.

Fifty-three first-year students studied undergraduate business programs in Noosa during 2006. In 2007, the Centre will offer 12 courses as part of three first-year programs—the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business and Graduate Diploma in Education.

Produce graduates who contribute to the achievement of regional economic, social, cultural and environmental priorities

Programs in regional priority areas

New programs in 2006 addressed areas of importance to the region, such as justice and legal studies and nursing. More than 30 new degrees, developed to address skills shortages in the market and generate graduate employment, will be available from 2007 (page 22).

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Enterprisers initiative

Three USC students won places in the Cambridge-MIT Enterprisers program in the United Kingdom in 2006. Timothy Boulenger, Talina Christensen and Tomas Passeggi were selected from 116 applicants to participate in the program, which is part of the 'Enterprisers' initiative that will be held for the first time in Australia by the University's Innovation Centre in early 2007. The initiative aims to encourage, generate and support a new wave of commercial, community or not-for-profit operations on the Sunshine Coast.

Students in Free Enterprise

In 2006, USC business students and members of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) joined a group of Sunshine Coast-based breast cancer survivors, Dragons Abreast, to help raise money and increase awareness about breast cancer. The students helped Dragons Abreast achieve its business goals by honing members' business skills, including tips on marketing and how to write business and marketing plans.

Lead in initiatives designed to foster economic and social development, including the development of the Knowledge Precinct and associated Technology Park, and shared infrastructure such as the Health Precinct, sporting facilities and the proposed Cultural Centre

Knowledge Precinct

In August 2005, the University, Maroochy Shire Council and Education Queensland signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Knowledge Precinct surrounding the University. The Precinct provides a focal point for partnerships aimed at enhancing education, training, business development, employment generation, community infrastructure provision, and research opportunities of benefit to the region.

Key activities include the Business Accelerator, Sports Stadium, Cultural Centre, and the Sippy Downs Township.

Business Accelerator

During 2006, the University sought State Government funding to develop second-stage space for graduates of its small business

incubator, along with related companies and service firms. This second stage space—the Accelerator—was conceptualised as a high-tech facility designed to accommodate 15–20 additional small to medium-sized knowledge-based businesses. The \$3.6 million funding package approved by the Queensland Government will help accelerate the development of Sippy Downs as the knowledge hub of the Sunshine Coast, and will also help retain high-tech and knowledge-based business within the region for sustainable employment. The University was finalising the Deed of Agreement late in 2006.

Sports Stadium

The University began building a \$10 million indoor Sports Stadium in late 2006, due for completion by May 2007. The air-conditioned facility will be used for community and University sporting events and as a 3000-seat auditorium for University ceremonies. It will have spectator seating, multi-purpose rooms, a tutorial room, office, first aid room, officials' room, toilet/change-room amenities and storage rooms.

Funding was provided by the University and the State Government. The Department of Education provided \$2 million and the Department of Sport and Recreation contributed \$900,000.

The stadium announcement coincided with the launch of a \$3.5 million public fundraising campaign to fund construction of a Health and Sport Centre to be built alongside the stadium. The Centre will become the headquarters of the University's Health and Sport Precinct and will facilitate research and delivery of services to benefit the Sunshine Coast community.

Cultural Centre

The University continued to work with Education Queensland to develop cost-effective concepts for shared, mutually beneficial facilities. This generated discussions on the potential for building a Cultural Centre on or adjacent to the campus, as a venue for live performance, lectures and performing arts program development. The Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE has been invited to identify connectivities within their programs. While all discussions have been preliminary, it is expected that a specific needs analysis and sources of funding can be identified in 2007.



- USC students learnt the skills required to contribute to the activities of a key community organisation when they were invited to pitch an advertising campaign to the Fundraising and Marketing Manager for Lifeline Sunshine Coast. The students were required to work with industry professionals on an advertising campaign for a not-for-profit organisation as part of their studies, and presented their final creative ideas as part of their final assessment.
- Lifeline Sunshine Coast Fundraising and Marketing Manager Mark Simon-Green (right) discusses campaign ideas with student Tonielle Krisanski and Lecturer in Communication Mr Stephen Hooper (left).

Provide direct input to regional economic and infrastructure planning, including the proposed Sippy Downs Township

University involvement

The University has contributed to infrastructure planning forums at state and local government levels, including a road network upgrade next to the campus. Development of an interchange connecting Claymore Road, Dixon Road and Sippy Downs Drive to the Sunshine Motorway east of the campus has been particularly successful, with completion expected in early 2008. This will improve traffic flows and provide safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Processes for reviewing the campus Master Plan facilitated interactions between the University, the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC) and Maroochy Shire Council, ensuring all connections with local government were considered. Deliberations fed into the Sippy Downs Town Centre Master Plan.

Planned vehicle and pedestrian movements, open space and landscaping, and stormwater management also strengthened links between the town centre and the campus.

Translink and the University have partnered to develop plans and construct a premier bus interchange on University land during 2007. This interchange will link the University campus directly with the primary campus of Chancellor State College, and relieve considerable congestion and safety concerns.

Enhance relationships with governments and their agencies, other education providers, and public and private partners for the benefit of the region

Governments and their agencies

Smarter Hearts

The Smarter Hearts Cardiac Rehabilitation Program began at USC in September. The program provides structured exercise and education for people who have suffered recent cardiac events, and involved a unique and innovative partnership between the University and the Sunshine Coast Health Service District, Queensland Health.

EPA agreement

The University will increase involvement with the wreck of HMAS Brisbane and stewardship of Mooloolah River National Park following the signing of an agreement between the University and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Thomas AM and EPA Director-General Terry Wall signed the two-part agreement in December to advance cooperation between the University and the EPA on this and further joint projects.

The University, which works closely with the Queensland Museum in monitoring marine life colonisation of HMAS Brisbane, will coordinate research on behalf of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, and assist with tourism and promotional efforts. USC plans to become a hub for material related to the former warship and will provide expertise in delivering interpretive and education material. The University plans to establish a repository of information about HMAS Brisbane along with interactive links for the tourism industry, schools and the general public.

A team of marine researchers from USC and Queensland Museum completed the first comprehensive assessment of marine life on the wreck in 2006. Research by USC marine scientist Dr Thomas Schlacher and Queensland Museum scientists Dr Monika Schlacher-Hoenlinger, Simon Walker, Dr Jeff Johnson and Professor John Hooper found that the wreck was being colonised rapidly (page 30).



• Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Greg Hill, who started his career as a primary school teacher, took the opportunity to speak with James Nash State High School students during Education Week celebrations. Professor Hill was 'Principal for the Day' at the school, allowing him the opportunity to explore and discuss ways for the University and the school to engage, resulting in the Middle School Excellence Program (page 38).

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Education providers

Principals' breakfast

Principals from schools in the region were invited to the University of the Sunshine Coast campus in August to learn more about USC programs, facilities and school initiatives. This event reflected the University's ongoing commitment to working closely with schools in the region and informing USC's education partners of University developments.

Guidance Officer and Career Adviser Orientation Day

The annual Guidance Officer and Career Adviser Orientation Day familiarises advisers from high schools in the region with the University, its programs and support services.

In 2006, 48 advisers took advantage of the chance to meet staff and share information.

Chalk and Cheese

Guidance officers, career advisers and heads of departments from local secondary education institutions attended the launch of 'Chalk and Cheese' on the University campus in November. The event showcased the University's new science, sporting and nursing laboratories and gave school staff an opportunity to network with University staff in an informal setting.

TAFE collaboration

The University continued to work with the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE (formerly the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE) to address training and educational needs for the region. Senior staff from both institutions met twice in 2006 to discuss potential for collaborations, expressing considerable enthusiasm for the opportunities that exist for students.

Voices on the Coast

This popular annual literary festival is organised jointly by Immanuel Lutheran College and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The 2006 festival, opened by Maroochy Mayor Joe Natoli, attracted about 4,500 school students and carers to the USC campus and included the launch of books by Sunshine Coast locals Heather Gall (illustrator) and Jill Morris (author).

Middle School Excellence Program

Links between the University and schools throughout Cooloola Shire were strengthened by the launch of a Middle School Excellence Program. Developed by the Cooloola Learning and Innovation Initiative, and based at James Nash State High School's ICT Hub, the program will begin with a creative writing course in first term 2007. This will offer talented students in Years 6–9 after-school lessons from USC academics. A mathematics course is planned for second term. The program aims to help overcome the region's problems of limited access and exposure to post-secondary learning.

NAGCAS conference

USC Careers and Employment staff hosted the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS) conference in November. More than 100 careers staff, graduate recruiters and program and policy developers from 36 universities in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom attended the three-day conference about workforce diversity within graduate employment. This raised the University of the Sunshine Coast's international profile and showcased examples of best practice in the industry.

Public and private partners

QUESTnet conference

The University hosted the 2006 QUESTnet conference at the Hyatt Coolool in July for 350 delegates from universities throughout Australia. Themed 'Networking for e-research—communication, collaboration and regional engagement', the conference enabled USC to showcase its campus and technology while celebrating productive partnerships to further the region's interest.

QUESTnet is a management committee of Queensland university IT directors who aim to promote and advance the development and use of information and communications technologies in higher education and research in Queensland.

Northern University Games

USC achieved two firsts—as official partner university and host—at the 2006 Northern University Games, held for the first time on the Sunshine Coast in July. Olympian and Games Patron Raelene Boyle launched the Games, while Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Thomas AM and Maroochy Mayor Joe Natoli presented pennants and trophies to winners at the closing ceremony.

Participate in regional governance through close links with local government

SCORE and the Education Executive

Along with the CEO of the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC), the three regional Mayors and key regional development stakeholders, the USC Vice-Chancellor is a member of the Sunshine Coast Organisation for Regional Enterprise (SCORE), focusing on the design and implementation of regional development strategies covering the entire Sunshine Coast.

The Education Executive is a SCORE committee. It advances education and training activities across the region, especially those related to promulgation of a knowledge-based economy. The Vice-Chancellor is a key member of this committee.

The Vice-Chancellor's committee memberships, along with regular meetings with Council Mayors and CEOs, demonstrates a long-term commitment to partnerships designed to enhance regional governance and regional development activities.

Suncoast Broadband project

In 2006 the University worked closely with government and community partners as part of the Suncoast Broadband community partnership project to obtain cheaper, faster and more flexible broadband services on the Sunshine Coast. The project, which began in 2005, is co-funded by Maroochy, Noosa and Caloundra Councils through SunROC in partnership with the Queensland and Federal Governments.

Key performance indicators

■ Increased number and range of projects with a regional partner or client and increased number and range of regional involvements by staff

Development of the Regional Engagement Plan (page 34) included collecting data from staff about their regional engagement activities. Data gathered from each faculty included information about the number and range of projects undertaken with regional partners or clients (and the number and range of regional involvements by staff), but inconsistencies between faculties in collecting and reporting data made comparisons difficult. Presenting this information in a meaningful format will be a priority task for the Director of Regional Engagement in 2007.

■ Increased proportion of undergraduate students from the region who enrol at USC

To date, analysis has occurred only on offers made to (rather than enrolments by) applicants from the Sunshine Coast region. As the University does not offer programs in all discipline areas or Fields of Education (FOE), it is useful to compare the percentage of offers made to programs which have similar FOEs. This shows the University's success in attracting students from the region in a competitive market.

The percentage of USC offers to students from the Sunshine Coast region has increased during each admissions period since 2002 (from 31 percent in 2002 to 36 percent in 2006). A more relevant comparison is for offers to students from the region when comparing like Fields of Education (ie like programs). This shows an increase from 54 percent in 2002 to 58 percent in 2006.

Commencing in 2007, additional analysis will be undertaken on enrolled students.

Summary of offers by admission period¹

Admissions period	Offers to other Queensland universities	Offers to USC	Total offers from region	Percentage of offers from region to USC	Percentage of offers from region to USC (similar FOE)
2002–2003	2,330	1,045	3,375	31%	54%
2003–2004	2,289	1,085	3,374	32%	55%
2004–2005	2,467	1,195	3,662	33%	55%
2005–2006	2,610	1,487	4,097	36%	58%

¹ Includes offers to Queensland universities only (excludes TAFE). Offers to USC programs do not include TAFE dual award programs or the Central Queensland University dual nursing program.

■ Increased proportion of USC graduates employed or establishing businesses within the region

The achievement of comparable response rates for 2005 and 2006 yielded fairly similar levels of graduate employment on the Sunshine Coast, with 61 percent and 60 percent of graduates employed full-time in this region in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

A proportion of students who are in part-time employment are in fact seeking full-time work, and may be employed in the same position as when undertaking study. This may account for the much greater percentage when comparing full-time to part-time work.

In 2006, an overall response rate of 69 percent was achieved, making the data far more reliable and comparable with the 2005 data than those collected in 2004. These reflected a substantially lower (less than 50 percent) response rate.

Summary of graduate employment in the region¹

Employed in region ²	Employed full-time	% of FT	Employed part-time	% of PT	Total employed	% of TOTAL ³
2004	59	51%	41	67%	100	57%
2005	106	61%	74	82%	180	68%
2006	133	60%	60	82%	193	66%

¹ The Strategic Information and Analysis Unit commenced management of the Graduate Destination Survey in 2004. Prior to this, summary data was produced in a hard copy form in tables, which does not allow for ease of aggregation of data. Trend analysis for this Performance Indicator commences from 2004.

² Data is based on responses to the Australian Graduate Survey (previously the Graduate Destination Survey). Data is included if student indicated as part of their response to the survey that they were employed or self employed (FT or PT) on the Sunshine Coast as at 30 April of each year.

³ Respondents employed in the region as a percentage of employed respondents who reported that they were permanent Australian residents.