

COURSE PLAN

The Course Plan primarily supports Key Objective 1 of CSU's *University Strategy 2007-2011*:

Provide distinctive educational programs for the professions that prepare students for work and citizenship.

The indicators linked to this Objective and current performance against them are:

- An increased proportion of first preferences through the NSW University Admissions Centre:
 - For 2008 the number of first preferences fell slightly relative to 2007 but the proportion increased slightly because of an overall decrease in applications to universities in NSW.
- An increase in the number of applications for distance education places:
 - 2008 saw a decrease in applications relative to 2007 (continuing a trend from 2005). There was an increase in the rate of conversion from application to enrolment with the result that enrolment remained stable.

Decrease in applications is linked to plateauing of still high demand for teacher education and continuing low demand (by historic standards) for business and undergraduate IT courses. Competition from Open Universities Australia (OUA) in business, undergraduate IT and general studies remains very strong. CSU is losing market share in these fields.

CSU remains strong and the national leader in professional courses by distance education (DE), especially nursing, teacher education and early childhood, policing, accounting, Library Science, social work and psychology. CSU's industry based IT masters courses also remain strong.

The extension of DE offerings to professional fields which were previously only available on campus is proving successful in maintaining CSU's position. New DE fields include: graphic design; communication; environmental management; nutrition and food. Further additions to the DE profile and planned, including rehabilitation therapies and speech pathology.

- An increase in the proportion of total load from international and domestic fee-paying courses.
 - The proportion of total load has declined for the following reasons:
 - The increase in CSU's number of government funded places meant that the proportion of other load declined. This has been exaggerated by a decline in the amount of other load.

- Softening in demand for post graduate business courses.
- The impact of CSU's International Education Strategy (IES). This has seen the discontinuation of some activities which were considered poorly aligned with CSU's *University Strategy*. International load is expected to increase from 2009 as new programs better aligned with CSU's *University Strategy* come into effect.
- Transfer of feepaying load to government funded load. Changes to Commonwealth funding rules have made it possible and desirable to offer government supported places in programs which were previously feepaying only. This has proved attractive to students.
- Comments
 - The impact of a decline in feepaying load has been offset to date by increases in fees.
 - The police recruit program (the largest single source of feepaying load) remains strong and has exceeded forecast numbers.
 - The IT Masters programs continue to experience good demand.
 - There are signs of improvements in demand for postgraduate business programs.

Overall commentary

CSU is performing well domestically in maintaining enrolments in an environment of strong competition and declining or static demand. A focus on the professions, including the major public sector professions (health, education, human services, law enforcement) remains most important for success.

The University is maintaining and consolidating a good position in communication; agriculture and environment; post graduate IT; exercise science; and library and information science. Repositioning of the business courses in response to changes in demand and competition is a high priority as is the introduction of new undergraduate IT courses with better industry alignment.

Successful implementation of the new International Education Strategy will reduce current over-reliance on government funding and improve CSU's national and international standing.

There is limited scope for increasing demand and enrolments on campus, although the introduction of dentistry and oral health as well as an improvement in rural conditions and outreach programs to Western regions of NSW will have some impact.

Growth in domestic enrolments is most likely to come from extending CSU's leadership in provision of professional courses in DE mode and by growth in continuing professional development programs for the professions.

There has been good growth in Indigenous student numbers. This can be expected to increase as CSU implements its recently approved Indigenous Education Strategy.

MAJOR INITIATIVES UNDER THE COURSE PLAN

(1) Enhance the quality and scope of CSU's profile of professional courses

- Introduction of veterinary science and dentistry/oral health.
- Paraprofessional program in rehabilitation therapies (2009). This is a major initiative which is expected to increase demand and address non-metropolitan workforce needs.
- Establishment of CSU's ambulance programs as principal entry pathway to Ambulance Service. (Negotiations proceeding well for 2009/10 expansion of current programs.)
- Extension of early childhood programs and development of new children's services programs to support major Commonwealth strategies.
- Introduction of new "industry" IT programs at undergraduate level.
- Development of "graduate entry" professional programs to respond to new patterns of professional preparation
- Expansion of professional doctorate programs.

(2) Strengthen alignment of course characteristics with *University Strategy 2007-2011*

- The CSU Degree Initiative is a major review of CSU degree requirements and structures. It is led by Professor Ben Bradley, Deputy Presiding Officer of Academic Senate. Recommendations are expected to be considered by Senate by the end of 2008 for implementation from 2009.
- Senate has agreed that, in addition to meeting specific professional or disciplinary requirements, all CSU undergraduate degrees should:
 - Offer graduates the opportunity for international experience;
 - Prepare graduates for citizenship;
 - Ensure intercultural competence; an understanding of the culture and history of Indigenous communities; and of sustainability in financial, social and environmental senses;

- Have an internationalized curriculum;
- Have a strong focus on professional ethics;
- Include practice based learning;
- Provide graduates with the ‘employability skills’ of effective communication; analytical skills and critical and reflective judgement; problem solving; team work; and work planning.

Redesign of curriculum to accommodate these will be challenging as the curriculum of many courses is already crowded with professional requirements.

There has been strong engagement within the University with the CSU Degree Initiative.

(3) Improve demand from well qualified students

- Further development and promotion of CSU’s TAFE articulation pathways (currently over 20% of commencing students at CSU enter on the basis of a VET qualification);
- Introduction of scholarship program to attract students to science based courses (2007) and honours programs (2009);
- Development of scholarship and accommodation arrangements to strengthen enrolments;
- International Education Strategy which emphasizes:
 - Extension of scope of Ontario programs;
 - Increased on campus enrolments through articulation with offshore partners; promotion of areas of excellence at CSU (eg communication; environmental studies; wine science); coursework masters enrolments; international collaborative programs.
- Open CSU: this project aims to enhance the marketing of and access to CSU’s distance education programs in ways which will compete more effectively with OUA. It will provide open access pathways to CSU degrees.

(4) Enhance access to CSU’s Professional Courses

- Introduction of CSU’s Indigenous Education Strategy, including strengthening links with Indigenous communities in CSU’s campus locations and Western NSW.

- Targeting rural and remote communities, especially through equity scholarships, bridging and enabling programs and TAFE collaboration (programs in Griffith and Deniliquin; CSU/Riverina Institute/Griffith City Council Agreement).
- Student experience project under CSU's Service Alignment program.