

Statement of Actions and Expected Outcomes for 2011 – Office of Academic Governance (OAG)

Values

OAG's governance work is intrinsically collaborative, inclusive, reliable and agile. In 2011 OAG will continue to work with the Presiding Officer of Academic Senate and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to improve the agility of core governance processes, to allow them to respond to issues as they arise in a timely way. OAG and the PO of Senate are also investigating ways of making governance work more student-centred, and are involved in an ongoing process of making agendas more focused on the 'why' of decisions, questioning the status quo and allowing Senate to continue to be an agent of change as well as compliance body.

Research

In addition to existing day-to-day operations, in 2011 OAG will support the Research Plan by:

- working together with the Centre for Research and Graduate Training (CRGT) in consolidating CSU's research policies
- implementing new research ethics approval processes via Research Master implementation
- implementing national certification of human ethics approval
- working with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) to consolidate CSU's main research committees.

Student Experience

In addition to existing day-to-day operations, in 2011 OAG will support the Student Experience Plan by:

- working with the CSU Degree project to implement new course approval and review processes in policy and in CASIMS
- continuing to support the various student experience-based projects to improve student experiences with academic regulation-based processes
- consolidating the Learning and Teaching and Academic Programs Committee, to provide a single governance committee for teaching and learning policy and process
- administering consideration of retention and progress data through the main decision-making bodies, including Senate and its relevant committees, as requested by AUQA
- membership of the Student Web Experience project
- enabling key course and subject data to feed into new student communication processes, via Student Experience and AUQA-inspired projects
- continuing to refine procedures for variation to the CSU calendar, including implementation of a database management system.

Course Profile Plan

In addition to existing day-to-day operations, in 2011 OAG will support the Course Profile Plan by:

- finalising the CASIMS project so that CSU's course profile is better able to be captured and interrogated. This will also allow for significant strategic work in other areas that rely upon this data, such as the CSU Degree Initiative, flexible learning, education for practice, management of subject and course offerings via the SAL and CAL, and publication of course and subject information via the Handbook, course brochures, and other CSU publications
- continuing to develop and manage the small regional centre model, consolidating the new Parkes University Study Centre, continuing to monitor and develop the centre at Griffith and investigating new Centres, for example at Broken Hill

- in conjunction with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Dean of Studies, continue to develop governance and relationship/contract management mechanisms for VET agreements
- staying abreast of developments in the VET sector to inform discussion at CSU about new pathway models
- maintaining a network of key contacts in the VET sector
- continuing to roll out formal agreements with TAFE Institutes

Material Risks to Achieving Planned Outcomes

- Volume of approvals and work for compliance committees (ethics in human and animal research, radiation safety, biosafety, chemical safety) is growing quickly and is dependent upon goodwill of all staff involved.
- CASIMS struggles to maintain appropriate technical support for maintenance and upgrades.
- A significant proportion of CSU students derive from VET pathways. There are still only limited resources at CSU for setting up and managing these pathways. This issue is under consideration.
- There is ongoing confusion at CSU about the difference between consultative mechanisms such as fora and many committees with only an advisory role, and governance processes such as Senate and its committees. The latter are set up to act as formal, statutory avenues for consultation and discussion, but are often swamped by the volume of the former types of mechanism, which confuses staff and weakens governance processes.

Workforce Planning Actions

OAG has a healthy staff profile, with a good mix of age and experience. It also has high staff satisfaction, with relatively low turnover. The current establishment is more than capable of implementing the new Strategy, although issues remain with classification of positions, which makes it difficult to attract staff with the required skills when vacancies occur. Success to date in recruiting has been based almost completely upon targeting highly-skilled, professional staff needing part-time employment, such as mothers with young children.

CSU Climate survey results most relevant to OAG, and planned actions, are as follows.

Not enough staff employed/manageable workloads/insufficient time etc. – the critical areas in OAG which fall under these categories are compliance committee work and course approvals. Both are in the process of having new IT systems either introduced or improved, which should assist staff greatly. Additionally human ethics has recently been given additional staffing. Work processes continue to be analysed and refined, for example using the outcomes of WPI, to streamline existing procedures.

Senior management, communication etc. – staff of OAG are in regular contact with senior management and most decision-makers at CSU, via their committee work. They are therefore often across most of the major issues of the day, and feel well-informed. As OAG is in the one location, regular meetings are held, and information is shared even in informal meetings.

Cooperation between different sections of CSU – OAG has been actively cultivating links with other sections, and for example has discussed a greater joint role with the Division of Student Administration, in discussions about their current re-structuring. (DSA is a pivotal section for OAG work.) OAG is also increasingly represented on key committees, projects and working parties.