

User Guide to CSU Strategic Planning

Introduction

The Charles Sturt University Strategy 2007-2011 (the University Strategy) is the key “*Statement of Intent*” for the University. It identifies and provides the University’s direction in the four key areas of Course, Research, Learning & Teaching and Institutional Development. High level *Indicators of Performance* are included for each area to provide a range of qualitative and quantitative measures by which the University can assess its progress.

The University Strategy is underpinned by a framework consisting of:-

- a University Plan for each key area of:-
 - Course;
 - Research;
 - Learning & Teaching; and
 - Institutional Development.

AND

- Enabling Plans in the areas of:-
 - Capital Development;
 - Information Architecture;
 - Finance and Budget; and
 - Workforce.

The University Strategy, the University Plans and the Enabling Plans provide the framework for operational planning in each organisational unit in the University. These Operational Plans are the means by which the University maintains and improves its operations and introduces initiatives in a consistent and coordinated manner. Each organisational unit (Faculty, Division, School, or Section) has the opportunity to identify those parts of the University Strategy to which it can contribute, the nature and extent of this depending upon the unit’s function. While the activities of a particular unit may be relatively narrow in focus, they should demonstrably contribute to the University’s performance, either directly or indirectly. Operational Plans are expected to identify planned outcomes in the form of targets or key deliverables to allow performance evaluation.

The Operational Plans, while developed with some level of independence, are expected to integrate into a consistent aspiration (and hence achievement) against objectives in University wide plans. Key to this is the role of Senior Executive Committee members, in directing the activities within their respective portfolios and in developing and implementing University wide plans. SEC members are assisted in this by a common format for the Operational Plans of Faculties and Divisions, the assessment of risks across various risk categories in Risk Registers and the mapping of staff requirements in Workforce Plans.

The Planning, Budget and Review Cycle

The University conducts an annual Planning, Budget and Review Cycle which aims to bring about continuous improvement of processes and services, through rigorous evaluation of performance and ongoing renewal. Related activities mandate the development of Operational Plans, conducted to a schedule coordinated by the Office of Planning and Audit. The Planning, Budget and Review Cycle monitors progress against current Operational Plans, identifies future priorities and initiatives, and formulates the budget accordingly. This is achieved by members of the *Senior Executive Committee* meeting independently with the direct reports within their portfolio, sharing knowledge of outcomes and aspirations, and collectively deciding upon potential future initiatives. Future income streams are then projected, capital requirements estimated and the budget for the subsequent year drafted and developed. Explicit consideration is given to the management of change. The annual Planning, Budget and Review Cycle culminates with managers briefing the *Planning and Budget Committee* on key issues facing each unit, proposed strategies for dealing with these and possible implications for the University. This information is taken into account when the Vice-Chancellor formulates the priorities to be addressed in subsequent years and in the further development of University wide plans.

The planning, budget and review process is supported by the various University committees, such as *Academic Senate* (and its sub committees) and other committees of the Vice-Chancellor. Amongst these are the *Institutional Development Committee* (IDC), *University Course Planning Committee* (UCPC) and the *Information and Learning Systems Committee* (ILSC). The University Strategy guides the work of these committees and in turn the committees provide advice on priorities and initiatives considered during the planning and review process. The Planning, Budget and Review Cycle is developed with regard to the schedule of meetings of the relevant committees.

Performance Evaluation and Management

Responsibility and accountability for achieving planned outcomes is achieved through the Performance Management process, applied to individuals and covering all levels of the organisation, e.g. Faculty, Division, School, and Section. This process is conducted within the broader context of staff induction, support and ongoing development. Each staff member is therefore able to identify how their work contributes to their organisational unit and how the unit contributes to institutional performance, in addition to an appreciation of their level of performance and avenues for professional development. The Vice-Chancellor is accountable to University Council for institutional performance, as gauged by the *Performance Indicators* in the University Strategy.

The Charles Sturt University Planning and Review Cycle is depicted in Figure 1 below.

Planning, Budget and Review Cycle

