Terms of Reference - Working Party to develop an orientation program for students entering CSU from TAFE

Background

CSU is committed to widening the participation and success of its students. In order to better support increased participation and success, the Transition Project is currently investigating ways of enhancing support for particular cohorts of students.

Increasingly, students are admitted to CSU on the basis of TAFE qualifications (around 16-17% annually) and this number is likely to increase given a focus on enhanced partnerships with TAFE and the development of pathway programs. In addition to gaining entry to CSU on the basis of TAFE qualifications, many students enter with considerable credit (up to 8 subjects) in an undergraduate degree.

While the retention rate of TAFE entry students aligns with the rest of the CSU cohort, progress rates are below average (the % of completed subjects that have been undertaken successfully, calculated in terms of EFTSL). Student progress is important not only in the context of a positive student experience, but also as a future indicator in negotiated compacts with the Government.

Many students, lecturers and learning support staff have also expressed the need for additional support and information for students coming from TAFE to scaffold the transition from a competency based environment to the University setting, particularly those students entering CSU with a credit package that provides them with entry into the second year of a CSU degree.

For these reasons, the development of a targeted orientation program for students coming to CSU from TAFE has been included as a deliverable of the Transition project. A Working Party has been established to achieve this deliverable.

Membership and Governance

The Working Party shall be chaired by Ms Ros Brennan-Kemmis, Head of School - School of Education, with representative members from the Division of Student Services (Simon Thomson), Division of Library Services (Lisa Griffin), Division or Learning Teaching Services (Jill Harris), Faculty of Arts (Bill Anscombe), Division of Marketing (Angela Hampton), Faculty of Education (Roy Sanders), Faculty of Science (Andrea Bishop) and Faculty of Business (Zelma Bone), Alison Lord (Project Manager - Building workforce capacity for early childhood education for inland and Indigenous Australia). The Director, Transition, (Liz Smith) will act as Executive Officer to the Working Party, who will report to the Transition Steering Committee.
Deliverables

1. The Working Party should investigate the specific needs of students commencing at CSU based on a TAFE qualification. Evidence sources might include but not be limited to: student and lecturer feedback, the CSU credit precedence database, literature across the sector, and TAFE and CSU courses documentation.

2. The Working Party should analyse the various TAFE pathways and credit packages available to establish the potential gaps and differences in skills and expectations between University and TAFE.

3. Based on the information gathered, the Working Party should develop an orientation program for TAFE students commencing at CSU. Development of the program should consider:
   a. Intended learning outcomes
   b. Most appropriate and sustainable mode/location of program delivery
   c. Resources required for
      i. program development, and
      ii. program implementation
   d. How best to target and inform appropriate students of the program’s availability and whether it will be an optional or compulsory program
   e. Methods of evaluating the program and evidence of success

   Note: the use of enabling funding and infrastructure should be considered in the development of this program

Timeline

A proposal addressing the above issues should be developed for consideration by the Steering Committee by 30th June, 2010 for full implementation for students commencing in Session 1, 2011.