INVITEES:

1. Ross Chambers (Sponsor)
2. Ros Brennan-Kemmis
3. Jeannie Herbert
4. Heather Cavanagh
5. Liz Smith
6. David Bedwell
7. Jenny Kent
8. Alice Ferguson
9. Simon Thomson
10. Ninetta Santoro (Chair)

Apologies: Joy Wallace, Ben Bradley

Discussion

1. Review of Indigenous Pathway and Transition Programs Report

Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Steering Committee Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation 1:</strong> The Manager of ISS takes urgent responsibility for organizing a staff professional development workshop designed to focus on team-building and building more effective communication within the overall ISS team. It is suggested that it could be useful to adapt the Djirruwang Program’s philosophy of ‘cultural respect’ as the guiding principle for this activity that should be designed to enable ISS staff to focus on a range of internal and external communication issues relevant to delivering an efficient and effective service appropriate to supporting the diverse needs of Indigenous students seeking to access and successfully engage in a wide range of university courses. It is suggested that this workshop be outsourced to an external consultant who specializes in such activities.</td>
<td>The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. Responsibility: Simon Thomson</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 2:</strong> The Manager of ISS takes responsibility for building a more sustainable model for the future delivery of support services to Indigenous students by establishing a collaborative activity that will enable all ISS staff to come together to engage in a problem-solving and value-adding consultation designed to focus on ways of enhancing the quality of the services provided for the benefit of all Indigenous students seeking to use them. As the focus should be very clearly on ‘value-adding’ it is suggested that ISS staff use this as an opportunity to clarify their understandings, as individuals and as a collective service provider, of what KAP’s role actually is within the broader provision of Indigenous student services; how effectively it achieves that role; and how that role might be enhanced to increase its value to the client group – Indigenous students seeking entry to CSU courses. Given that Indigenous students who had previously participated in KAP commented favorably on the value of this program in terms of preparing them for university life and the focus of the program has shifted to skills assessment, this consultation should explore other options the various elements of ISS</td>
<td>The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. Responsibility: Simon Thomson</td>
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to create stronger connections between:
- their separate internal operations providing a more collaborative and holistic model of service delivery that caters for the diverse needs of all Indigenous students; and
- the ISS operation, in particular KAP, and the faculties/schools to ensure on-going collaborative engagement in relation to the:
  - design, development and implementation (and future reviews) of the assessment programs;
  - student selection interviews; and
  - provision of accurate course information for interested Indigenous students.

**Recommendation 3:**
Subsequent to the implementation of Recommendations 1 & 2, the Manager of ISS establishes a working party to review all promotional materials. This working party should identify the different markets to be targeted and ensure the accuracy of their message to those various individuals/groups. Due to possible legal implications in producing any informative materials intended for public use, it is recommended that the working party work closely with the CSU marketing team and relevant academic staff where necessary, to ensure all promotional materials clearly articulate, in aspirational language, the total ISS service including the specific role of KAP in terms of providing an alternative entry pathway for those who have suffered previous educational disadvantage or failed to achieve entry through the ATAR process. The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. Responsibility: Simon Thomson

**Recommendation 4:**
Following the production of new promotional materials, the ISS Manager:
- organizes a professional development activity for all ISS staff to be become informed about contents of new materials and the critical messages they contain; and
- establishes a representative team of ISS staff who will schedule and conduct a series of promotional events on each CSU campus as well as regional careers expos and other similar activities held in the CSU catchment area. The focus of such events will be to promote the ISS (and KAP) role within the overall context of Indigenous education in this university. Such events should aim to engage:
  - CSU Heads of Schools and their academic staff to demonstrate the value of the services ISS offers, establish vital connections between those delivering academic programs and those delivering student support with a view to identifying potential future collaborative development of assessment tools and to encourage academics to refer those Indigenous students in need of academic support, to the various campus facilities;
  - To identify academic staff who have an interest in being involved and contributing to KAP programs, including the current development of the Darrambal, because close consultation with the faculties is the only way to ensure the development of appropriate

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. Responsibility: Simon Thomson
- assessment tools, the correct way of conducting assessment tasks and the contribution of accurate information sessions with students during KAP programs;
- CSU Indigenous students to demonstrate value of ISS and foster an interest in using the facilities amongst Indigenous students;
- Staff and Indigenous students in schools to promote the services of ISS and encourage Indigenous students to aspire to university studies; and
- TAFE staff, students and Indigenous community members attending expos, etc. to highlight the value of KAP as a means of alternative entry into university studies and the importance of the ISS role in supporting Indigenous students.

**Recommendation 5:**
That the DVC (Academic) give serious consideration to the issues raised in this review, in particular around concerns that unrealistic expectations are being placed on ISS to deliver academic assessment, academic advice and counseling and academic support in the form of a tutoring service, when it is not an academic entity.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. Further, the Committee stressed the importance of immediate clarification of the role of the ISS for its staff, students and the university community.

**Responsibility:** Simon Thomson

**Recommendation 6:**
That there is a need for consultation between ISS and the broader CSU Students Services team to identify specific accountability needs in terms of service provision. For example, processes in place, other than student services support, to ensure all KAP entrants to CSU courses are being monitored and supported to cope.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

**Responsibility:** Simon Thomson

**Recommendation 7:**
Review team suggests that the introduction of a no drug and alcohol policy for students participating in residential skills assessment programs could be an effective strategy to address issues around personal and cultural safety for all students. Creating a drug and alcohol free environment for such events would enable all participants to engage more deeply with the process and develop a greater appreciation of their potential for self-empowerment through self-control.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

**Responsibility:** Simon Thomson

**Recommendation 8:**
That all Heads of Schools/Disciplines take urgent responsibility for establishing a working party of academic staff to undertake a mapping activity of their past and current pathways programs for Indigenous students. A critical component of the exercise will be to identify those initiatives that have worked/are working and to indicate why they were/are considered to be successful. Once this mapping exercise has been completed a copy should be circulated to all academic staff for consideration prior to a staff meeting where the purpose of the meeting will be to look beyond the scope of their current pathways programs and, using a blue-skies scenario, identify possible options for expansion. Knowing what

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

**Responsibility:** Ninetta Santoro
works gives people a platform from which to launch their ideas. Encourage people to see this as a challenge and be bold and innovative in their thinking, looking for synergies within and beyond their own school/discipline, that could be used to really expand the pathway opportunities for Indigenous students. The Ideas paper that will be the outcome of this whole staff activity will be forwarded to Faculty Deans to provide a starting point for the activity outlined in Recommendation 9:

That all Faculty Deans meet to determine a suitable date and venue, prior to the end of 2010, when they will convene a collaborative workshop with all Heads of Schools, to engage in an aspirational planning session using collaborative problem solving to identify innovative, approaches to achieving the CSU target to increase Indigenous enrolments to at least 3% of its student enrolments by 2015. The development of new pathway programs designed especially to enable Indigenous students to access CSU courses will be an important element in achieving these targets. Given that the goal is to achieve the target over the next 5 years, the outcome of this meeting would need to reflect short term goals (utilizing initiatives that are currently working or have worked in the past) and longer term goals that will focus on annual expansion through additional new initiatives that will enable on-going growth over the 5 year period.

The outcome of this workshop would be an overarching (or a series of) Faculty Operational Plan/s that would reflect the collaborative nature of the exercise in using a whole-of-institution approach to achieving the CSU target for growth of Indigenous enrolment, over the period 2011-2015. This could be a 5 year plan or a series of annual plans. The purpose of the exercise is to:

- acknowledge the importance of achieving this target if CSU is going to be able to demonstrate to the Wiradjuri Nation and to Indigenous Australians throughout the nation, that it does have a genuine commitment to Indigenous education for Indigenous peoples;
- demonstrate a willingness to find different ways of enabling Indigenous peoples to access and successfully engage in university education;
- use a blue-skies scenario to encourage participants to “think big” and rise to the challenge of making CSU the “preferred” university for all Indigenous school leavers west of the mountains;
- discover the power of genuine engagement through collaboration as a means of finding solutions to problems, so that the value of this practice can be taken back and used in the follow-up workshops that Heads of Schools will need to conduct with their academic staff to develop the next layer of operational plans. In cascading such experience, Heads of Schools need to be quite explicit in articulating the process and its purpose so that staff will, in turn, be empowered to use collaborative learning as an effective means of engaging with increasing numbers of Indigenous students; and
- produce documentation that will then be used by Heads of

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.
Responsibility: Ninetta Santoro
Schools/Disciplines and their staff to develop the School/Discipline Operational Plans.

It is critical that Faculty and School/Discipline Operational Plans include clear details of:

- actual innovative ideas/strategies for growing enrolments;
- agreed targets in specific courses, within each discipline area and/or school;
- identified leaders and their specific responsibilities;
- schedule for follow-up activities to monitor progress and achievement of targets within specific timelines across the 5 year period; and
- indication of ways in which progressive achievement of outcomes will be recognized and promoted through recruitment and marketing.

While the Deans may wish to invite Chair of Indigenous Studies and/or the acting Director of CIS to be sources of information/advice if required, these people should not take a lead role in the activity.

**Recommendation 10:**
Despite the fact that 25% of CSU students enter via a TAFE pathway, this review highlights the need for CSU to recognize and accept that VET currently provides a very narrow route to higher education. On the basis of their own prior experience of working with Indigenous students in both the TAFE and higher education sectors, the Review team would argue that TAFE institutions and universities offer very different learning experiences and that these do not necessarily facilitate a seamless transition from the practical knowledge applications of the VET sector to the higher education sector’s focus on theoretical understandings. For this reason the Review would like to recommend that the research project to identify the pedagogical and participatory issues around the transition from VET to higher education, being undertaken by Dr Cathy Down of CSU as part of an NCVER grant, might consider the value of taking a particular focus on those issues as they relate to Indigenous students.

**Recommendation 11:**
The Review team recommends that the Bachelor of Education (VET) 8 credit point unit called Written Communication, that all VET sector students articulating into the Bachelor of Education (VET) are required to complete, has a broader application across the university where there is a high rate of articulation from VET to CSU, as it addresses a real need. The unit examines academic writing, library skills, study skills, grammar and text construction in a higher education context. The objective of the unit is to scaffold students so that they develop an understanding of the difference in the requirements around text in a higher education environment and it has been very successful in equipping students to deal with language, information literacy skills and assessment in a higher education context. For the unit to have credibility and sustainability, however, it should only be taught in courses as a core compulsory unit and as an accredited part of the student load.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

Roz Brennan to follow up in her role as Chair of the VET to Higher Education Working Party
**Recommendation 12:**
In view of the considerable disparity between the number of Indigenous students who complete Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, compared to their corresponding non-Indigenous cohort, the Review team would recommend that the Faculties and Schools maintain their efforts in addressing this area of need as a part of their overall strategy for increasing Indigenous enrolments in CSU courses by 3% over the next 5 years.
The Review team recommends that Faculties might consider linking potential partnership agreements, in schools and/or communities, with the development of participatory research activities that enable schools and their Indigenous parents and communities, across all levels P-12, to engage with the process and drive the decision-making and change. In particular, the Review team, through their own experiences in this regard would recommend the value of targeting science and maths projects as a critical strategy in changing teacher expectations of Indigenous student’s achievement and increasing Indigenous student higher education aspirations.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

**Recommendation 13:**
The Review recommends that, as the TVET style courses, appear to offer some potential opportunities for Indigenous students and others to experience learning in a university environment while undertaking their HSC studies, Faculties/Schools should ensure that details of these courses are made available so that they can be promoted as part of the marketing of CSU.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.

**Recommendation 14:**
That CSU, in line with the introduction of the Australian Government’s Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), explore ways in which it might work more collaboratively and productively with schools, NSW DET Aboriginal Education teams in the various regions, Indigenous communities and bodies such as the AECG and the Wiradjuri Council of Elders, to ensure that it creates links between CSU and Indigenous school students which
- engage with young people at their own level;
- involve parents in educational decision-making;
- provide realistic and achievable pathways into higher education which respond to young people’s career and personal goals.

To ensure that this occurs the Review sees merit in the university allocating a proportion of its HEPPP Participation funding to meet the educational aspiration needs of Indigenous school students in its footprint, particularly in those schools with significant proportions of Indigenous students.

Responsibility: Liz Smith

The Steering Committee endorsed the need for aspiration based projects to be developed for Indigenous students. The schools targeted by the university partnership with the ASPIRE program will pilot aspiration programs for Indigenous students.

**Recommendation 15:**
Within the context of encouraging Indigenous school students’ educational aspirations despite their socio-economic status, the Review team recommend that CSU foster closer relationships with various private sector groups, such as The Aurora Project, to encourage Indigenous students within the CSU catchment area to take advantage of increasing opportunities to access a range of initiatives such as scholarships enabling students to complete secondary school, careers camps, leadership and mentoring.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation.
activities. The personnel establishing many of these initiatives actively align themselves with Indigenous educational networks as a source relevant advice around cultural issues and learning needs.

**Recommendation 16:**
The Review team recommend that the DVC Academic and the DVC Finance & Administration give consideration to the value of allocating an identified Indigenous position to be based in marketing. Not only would this provide an opportunity for an Indigenous person to pursue a career in a field where there is a limited Indigenous presence, but it would also enable CSU to implement a more targeted focus on promoting growth in Indigenous enrolments through developing proactive strategies including the use of multi media as a tool for sharing Indigenous academic success stories throughout the CSU footprint and nationally. This would represent a critical affirmation of the co-operation this university receives from the Wiradjuri nation.

**Recommendation 17:**
In response to a request from the DVC (Academic) the Review team met with the General Manager of the Nura Gili Indigenous Centre at University of New South Wales to explore the possibilities for enhanced communication and possible partnership between CSU and UNSW. Based on the outcomes of that meeting, the Review team would advise that, within the context of this Review and the creation of more effective pathways for Indigenous school students, the Review is unable to progress the idea of a partnership with UNSW further. While there might be some concerns around losing some of our potential students to UNSW, there were also a number of very positive possibilities for both UNSW and CSU in such an agreement. It is now a matter for further discussion between the relevant parties in the university to consider the benefits for CSU and the potential sources of funding.

**Recommendation 18:**
The Review team recommend that CSU Higher Education Partnerships Advisory Board establish a working party to report to the Board on how to effectively support Indigenous secondary students particularly in their final year of schooling to make the transition to higher education.

**Recommendation 19:**
The Review team recommend Gale’s (2010) identified ten characteristics that typify programs that successfully foster higher education participation for disadvantaged students, as set out at the end of the Review findings for TOR 4, to guide action that it considers CSU should take to more actively engage in developing the university aspirations of Indigenous young people in its footprint.

**Recommendation 20:**
Given their concerns regarding the very high attrition rates for
Indigenous students undertaking studies through Distance education, the Review team requests that the DVC (Academic) meet with Chair of Indigenous Studies and the group of Faculty Deans to discuss a possible intervention using participative research to involve Indigenous students, their families and communities and ISS and relevant learning skills advisers, in finding a solution to the problem/s that Indigenous students are encountering in undertaking their studies through Distance Education mode as set out in the Review findings. Given the CSU target for increasing Indigenous enrolments, it is suggested that this meeting occur before the end of 2010 so that any agreed intervention could commence at the beginning of the 2011 academic year.

Recommendation 21:
That CSU establish Indigenous enabling/foundation courses at CSU, as a means of attempting to address a range of issues associated with:

- high attrition rates of Indigenous students across all courses;
- providing a culturally safe learning environment in which students can develop skills which may help them to achieve the skills and knowledges they require to effectively engage in a university course; and
- expanding the scope of undergraduate programs that Indigenous people could aspire to enrolling in.

Recommendation 22:
In considering the need for university access and preparation programs, the Review recommends CSU note to the range of designated Indigenous preparatory and pathway programs offered by other NSW universities (see Table 12). In particular, the Review considers the complimentary approach to student pathways and access offered by the Nura Gili unit at the University of NSW as one that would be of considerable interest to CSU. The Nura Gili Pathways web page which clearly sets out the links between their access and pathways programs is worth viewing at [http://www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au/programs.htm](http://www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au/programs.htm)

Recommendation 23:
The Review team recommends that the DVC (Academic) use the Discussion Paper prepared by the Chair of Indigenous Studies in addition to the review findings around this TOR, to guide his discussions with the appropriate executive managers to determine the future direction of this issue. There are two critical caveats to this recommendation. Firstly that there is a need to give serious consideration to developing a model that addresses the real needs of all Indigenous students, in particular those studying through the DE mode. Secondly, that existing pathways should continue as many of these are providing relevant and effective alternative options for Indigenous peoples seeking to access CSU courses.

Recommendation 24:
That Liz Smith, Director of Transitions Project, meet with Chair of Indigenous Studies, to discuss possibility of holding a 2-day forum in 2011 for staff and students on the issue: “Creating a quality transition to higher education at CSU for non traditional students”. This forum would involve bringing together ISS, CSU Student Services, CIS and
range of staff involved in student transition—academic and general— who engage directly with 1st year Indigenous students as well as current Indigenous students—1st year and others (e.g. ESL, mature aged, studying by DE, LSES, international disability). The purpose would be to identify issues—barriers and positive experiences—and work in collaborative groups to identify possible solutions and wider applications i.e. making links to activities that students indicate worked for them, planning what needs to be done to achieve improved quality of transitions across CSU.

**Recommendation 25:**
Given the high level of concerns expressed regarding the lack of academic support and/or ITAS tutoring, the Review team considers there is a need for CSU to proactively intervene at the highest level. This is not only an Indigenous issue—it affects all of CSU students, especially those involved in DE. The team suggests that the DVC (Academic) urgently establish a working group consisting of representation from marketing and academic staff—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—to design a program and organize a publicity campaign across the CSU footprint to place our issue—difficulty in accessing suitably qualified and/or experienced people, in various locations, who would be willing to support our students in completing their studies through providing academic or other support such as tutoring, mentoring, etc. Focus on issue that CSU delivering a critical community service educating people to secure the future for regional NSW but can’t do it alone—need help of communities to ensure capacity to continue offering this essential service, etc. Campaign needs to be ready to run at the beginning of the 2011 academic year.

The other part of the initiative would be to establish a database—in student services? In faculties?—that would contain all of the information provided by those willing to register—name, contact details, role in which they could provide support, any restrictions in terms of time, days, etc., relevant qualifications/experience. The database needs to be organized ahead of time so that information can be recorded as soon as it begins to come in.

**Recommendation 26:**
Given that there does appear to be some confusion and concern around the delivery of ITAS services, in a timely manner as required by students, the Review team recommends that the DVC (Academic) commission an urgent audit of all processes that underpin the ISS operation as it would appear that it is these processes that are impacting upon the effectiveness of the delivery of this service. As the issues that have emerged throughout this review have been diverse: who is responsible for promotion; where are the tutors: who is responsible for finding tutors for students; some Indigenous students have never heard of ITAS; some Indigenous students have given up all hope of ever getting a tutor; there is apparently a database yet we appear unable to link students to appropriate tutors; can’t get into the support centres—all locked up when we go there; why can’t people access learning skills advisors through ISS, many students studying in DE mode are not aware of ISS and potential support they might access. Due to this diversity of issues, the Review team recommends that the review of the processes that impact upon the delivery of Indigenous Student

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Services be undertaken by a person who does not work in this area, preferably an academic given that many of the concerns are to do with academic issues, a person who can bring a fresh eye and open mind to evaluating the processes and their effectiveness.

**Recommendation 27:**
Given the need to increase the number of Indigenous academics in CSU and the concerns expressed regarding the substantial turnover of Indigenous academics within the university, the Review team recommends that the Faculty Deans and the DVCs meet to discuss and develop a range of proactive approaches to overcoming this problem. Consideration needs to be given to recruitment, opportunities to encourage existing staff to acquire postgraduate qualifications, identifying successful graduates and a strategy for encouraging them to return to CSU after some work experience in their discipline area, incentives to encourage retention of Indigenous staff, how effectively is our practice demonstrating a valuing of Indigenous staff and their knowledges, how effectively is current organizational structure creating a sense of ‘belonging’ for Indigenous staff, how effectively does CSU enable and encourage on-going community engagement for Indigenous staff, etc.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation

**Recommendation 28:**
That Heads of School require lecturing staff to report incidents of racist behaviour in classes and in other arenas, e.g. such as the online forums, to their supervisors with an explanation as to how it was dealt with. The Review team recommend that every incident be dealt with as it occurs. Making racist comments is not acceptable behaviour in an education setting and that reality must be made explicit from the beginning. Just as there are protocols in place to govern behaviour in undertaking research tasks so there should be protocols in place to govern behaviour in learning environments. Discriminatory behaviour is a certain turn-off for Indigenous students and often an underlying cause of people abandoning their studies. While the Review team acknowledges the work that has been done by many staff and students to create culturally responsive environments across the university, visual symbols alone do not build an inclusive learning environment or create quality learning experiences.

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation

**Recommendation 29:**
Given that concerns were expressed that some Indigenous students are not identifying as Indigenous, the Review team would point out that this is a matter of personal choice but the underlying factors that influence such decision-making are complex. Does CSU make Indigenous students feel proud to be Indigenous within the university environment? Obviously not everyone. The Review team recommend that CSU executive give serious consideration to how they currently demonstrate that this university values Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems. What are the messages that are being put out there by staff and students on the ground? How are management showing leadership in ensuring that the right message is getting out there? The CSU vision doesn’t mention people although the IES vision indicates it “will be culturally inclusive” and will engage in the advancement of social justice and human rights for Indigenous Australians”. The visible symbols are only the first part of the message – the real message emerges out of

The Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation
what people do - how they treat one another. The Review panel would suggest that management map what is being done on each campus to actually demonstrate that the university values Indigenous peoples? How and when does CSU acknowledge Indigenous achievement within local, regional, state and national settings? How is CSU engaging with Indigenous communities – within the CSU footprint to begin. What research projects reflect the Indigenous voice or do they reflect what researchers think Indigenous communities really need? There is no doubt that there are people here with very deep commitment but sometimes it is hard to overcome the lifelong effect of white privilege. If CSU is going to achieve its 2015 target it needs every student who is Indigenous to be identifying. They are more likely to do that when they know that they are valued for who they are and for the knowledge they bring to the learning experiences in which they participate here at CSU.

In addition, there is a need to ensure that the private information that people enter on their initial admissions form, where they tick the identity box, remains a part of their record for as long as their records are kept. People should not have to repeat filling in this sort of information every year.

Finally, within the context of Indigenous identity, it became very obvious to the Review team, during the process of interviewing and meeting people, that there is a separation of the Indigenous presence across the university. Each group, CIS, ISS, Indigenous Employment Strategy and the Djirruwang Program operates as a separate entity and there would appear to be little or no interaction. Indigenous lecturers seem to operate within the silos of their school or discipline. There is nothing that brings everybody together, no unifying presence. While such a situation may have no impact upon those who have a strong sense of their own identity, it can contribute to a splintering of the sense of communal identity which is often important to Indigenous students who function more effectively in learning environments where they feel culturally safe, where they can establish the connections, the relationships that are so important to the sense of ‘belonging’ that is so important to enabling them to engage with the knowledge and the learning process. The Review team recommend that the DVC Academic consider the current model that is driving Indigenous education in CSU with a view to addressing this critical issue by implementing an alternative model that provides strong academic leadership and management across all areas of Indigenous endeavour throughout the university, a positive role model and has the capacity to draw the disparate groups together to create the sense of group identity that can be very important to students seeking to engage in what could almost be termed an alien environment. This person would need to be located within the executive management structure of the university and would be responsible for providing strategic management and direction to all Indigenous operations across CSU – the unifying presence. A concept overview, based on what happens in many other Australian universities, will be provided to the DVC (Academic).