

# WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

## GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

### Strategic Context

The Western 2015-2020 Strategy vision is dependent on the performance, dedication, professionalism innovation and capabilities of staff.

The Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan aligns with Goal 6 of the University Strategic Plan which is a commitment to a dynamic and innovative culture. Fostering a culture of inclusion and diversity is crucial to achieving this goal. In today's competitive global environment the most successful universities will be those that fully utilise the talents and capabilities of all staff.

The benefits of diversity and inclusion are well documented with research citing improved productivity, innovation and creativity in those organisations that recognise and harness their diversity as an asset. Furthermore, organizations which have a higher proportion of women at board and top management level are the organisations that perform the best<sup>1</sup>. Western recognises that building social inclusion leads to improved student outcomes and greater innovations in learning, teaching and research.

Western has been a leading Employer of Choice for Gender Equality for over a decade. The University has one of the highest levels of women in senior leadership positions and a long standing reputation for fairness and equity in the workplace. This marks out the university as a national benchmark for best practice.

However, while the University has made great progress in creating a fair, flexible and equitable workplace, our current workforce data indicates that we continue, like many institutions around the world, to under-utilise the talents of women particularly at senior levels and in the STEM disciplines. and there is a significant gender pay equity gap due to the under representation of women in these areas. There is also a gender pay gap because of occupational segregation, i.e. the large numbers of female professional staff employed at the HEW 5 and 6 levels.

To secure the Western vision, to attract and retain the best possible staff, to continue to be a leading *Employer of Choice for Gender Equality* the University will endeavour to promote and embed an organisational culture in which female staff participate equally at all levels. This will require us to challenge those beliefs and attitudes, the unconscious biases that undermine our progress towards gender equality.

The leadership team at Western is committed to gender equality and the Senior Executive and Board of Trustees will lead the gender equity debate by example.

A Vice Chancellor's Gender Equality Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan. This Committee will monitor and report on the progress of implementation to the Executive Committee and provide an annual report to all university staff.

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<sup>1</sup> "Women Matter" study McKinsey & Co

## Strategy Framework

The Western Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan 2015-2020 provides a framework to assist the university to develop and implement effective strategies around workplace culture, leadership and employment practices to improve gender equality across the whole organisation.

## What we want to achieve

Securing success by:

- Being a role model for educating the next generation of students, academic, educators, researchers and whole community
- Attracting and retaining the best talent possible
- Utilising the skills and talents of all staff, contributing to excellence in research, teaching, administration
- Being innovative, agile and flexible
- Being a leading gender equality organisation

## The priority focus areas for the strategy are

- Leadership accountability for the promotion and support of an organisational culture and a working environment that is inclusive and fair to both women and men
- Improving the representation of women in leadership and management positions with a focus on the STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) Disciplines
- Developing and retaining a gender diverse workforce
- Reducing gender pay equity gaps
- Building a flexible workplace which enables staff to balance work and life responsibilities

### GOAL 1:

## **Leadership accountability for the promotion and support of an organisational culture and a working environment that is inclusive and fair to both women and men**

Aligned with the University's commitment to a dynamic and innovative culture that secures success, the University will be a leading advocate for gender equality, promoting the benefits of an inclusive culture in all aspects of the University's operations.

The Vice Chancellor, Executive and Senior Management team will champion social inclusion and gender equality by articulating a clear consistent business case and rationale for gender diversity, explaining the alignment with the broader vision and strategy of the university and building a heightened awareness of gender equality in decision making.

#### Strategies

- 1.1. The Vice Chancellor's Gender Equality Committee will oversee, monitor and promote the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan
- 1.2. Promote the University's image and reputation as an inclusive organisation that supports and values diversity
- 1.3. The Vice Chancellor and senior leadership team will support gender diversity internally and externally by participating in forums and conferences and making statements on the issue and providing role models for inclusion within their areas of responsibility
- 1.4. Implement unconscious bias training for managers to equip them with the skills to recognise and understand their own biases and to take steps to overcome them
- 1.5. Integrate gender inclusion into planning and strategy at the university wide and organisational unit level
- 1.6. Ensure all staff are aware and competent in the application of the gender equality and related equity policies
- 1.7. Require EO Online training to be undertaken by all staff
- 1.8. Monitor and report on the 40% target for gender representation on UWS Committees

#### Measures of Success include:

- Participation of leadership team in gender equity development and promotion programs
- Completion of leadership training in unconscious bias
- Gender Equality objectives are included in University planning and strategy
- Positive MyVoice feedback on staff perception of gender equality
- Public communication and support statements for gender equality
- KPIs for improving gender equality outcomes are incorporated in Executive Managers' performance plans
- University Committees meets target of 40% representation of women on University Committees

## **GOAL 2:**

### **Improving the Representation of women in senior positions and non-traditional occupations, particularly Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines**

#### Strategies

To improve the representation of women across all levels the University will:-

- 2.1. Set targets for representation of women in senior positions and in non-traditional domains
- 2.2. Review the workforce planning process to ensure gender equality objectives are included
- 2.3. Investigate how to improve promotional opportunities and outcomes for women
- 2.4. Develop an active recruitment policy to ensure gender equality objectives are included and monitor recruitment processes, data on applications received, short list candidates and offers accepted by gender and classification levels
- 2.5. Research successful strategies and broaden search processes to attract senior women particularly in underrepresented disciplines
- 2.6. Explore and implement initiatives which could support women incorporate child bearing and child raising their career plans

#### Measures of Success include:

- A target of 40 % representation of women managers by 2020 is established and monitored. Progress reports are submitted to the Executive and Board of Trustees
- Targets are established for representation of women in non-traditional domains
- The University participates in the Athena SWAN pilot program to improve gender equality in STEMM disciplines
- Gender equality objectives are included in workforce planning processes
- An in depth review is undertaken of promotions processes and policy at the University and a consultation paper prepared
- Gender equality objectives are included in recruitment processes. Recruitment processes are reviewed to ensure elimination of bias and action plans are developed to eliminate any gender biases identified from the reviews
- There is gender diversity on selection panels
- A target of 40% representation of women on internal recruitment shortlists and external recruitments shortlists by 2020 is established. Progress is monitored and reports are submitted to the Executive and Board of Trustees

## **GOAL 3:**

### **Developing and Retaining a Gender Diverse Workforce**

#### Strategies

To develop and retain a gender diverse workforce the University will:-

- 3.1. Develop a succession planning and talent identification framework to support equitable career development
- 3.2. Include gender equality objectives in Training and Performance Management Policy and monitor and report data on training and performance
- 3.3. Investigate the issue of retention of women and develop strategies in response to issues identified.
- 3.4. Track and report terminations including resignations annually to identify trends in resignations and terminations including departure of staff during Parental or other leave associated with carer responsibility

Measures of Success include:

- A succession planning and talent development framework is developed to support equitable career development
- Performance, training and career development policies includes gender equality objectives and outcomes continue to be monitored to ensure there is no bias  Speed mentoring programs for women continue and outcomes are evaluated
- Retention strategies are developed in response to issues identified from monitoring of terminations data and exit interviews
- Greater gender balance in workforce representation and participation
- University meets Workplace Gender Equality Agency(WGEA) Employer of Choice requirements

## **GOAL 4:**

### **Reducing Gender Pay Equity Gaps**

To reduce gender pay equity gaps the University will:-

- 3.1. Conduct annual gender pay equity audits to identify where pay gaps exist and the reasons for the gaps
- 3.2. Commission a report on pay equity to recommend on strategies to address the factors that contribute to the pay gap
- 3.3. Examine the allocation of benefits/ allowances above base pay level
- 3.4. Review remuneration policies
- 3.5. Examine commencing salaries by gender
- 3.6. Develop action plans and set targets to address any gaps

Measures of Success include:

- Clear analysis of factors that contribute to the gender pay gap, with consequent consideration for policy and procedures
- Targets and strategies are developed for implementation
- Pay Equity reports are submitted to the Board and Executive Committee
- Remuneration policy supports gender equality

## **GOAL 5:**

### **A flexible workplace which enables staff to balance work and life responsibilities.**

To build a flexible workplace which enables staff to balance work and life responsibilities the University will:

- 5.1. Review flexible work and other relevant policies
- 5.2. Encourage men's uptake of flexible work initiatives
- 5.3. Provide, support and training for managers to encourage flexible work
- 5.4. Review processes and support for staff before, during and on return from parental leave
- 5.5. Establish parent and breastfeeding facilities on all campuses to support staff with childcare responsibilities
- 5.6. Monitor parental leave uptake and return to work data
- 5.7. Develop a parenting support information kit

Measures of Success include:

- Policy on flexible work is reviewed and staff are aware of and informed
- Applications for paid parental leave of 8 weeks (at full pay) are available for primary carers who are employees on a continuing appointment with twelve or more months of service.
- Profiles of key leaders who are role models of flexible working are highlighted in university communications
- Parent rooms and breastfeeding facilities on campus are available on all campuses
- Production of a parenting support information kit
- Data is analysed, monitored and reported
- Increased uptake of flexible work options by men.