

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION



Indigenous Strategy

2020-2025

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COVER IMAGE:
CHRIS EDWARDS
SWIMMY CREEK
MIXED MEDIA ON LATVIAN LINEN
100 CM X 145 CM
2010
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION
IMAGE REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF ARTIST

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is where other people acknowledge and show respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which they gather. This acknowledgement is a sign of respect and in that spirit we would like to acknowledge that The School of Education and Western Sydney University campuses occupy their traditional lands, and acknowledge the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thank them for their support of its work in their lands in Greater Western Sydney.

We acknowledge the role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have played across the centuries as the first teachers, academics, farmers, engineers, doctors, law makers and health professionals. We acknowledge and pay respect to their capacity to create safe and welcoming spaces, to share friendship and knowledge; we respect their understanding of the importance of spending time in each other's company and the value they show us in the importance of shared intellectual discussions and mutual respect in creating communities of purpose and meaning.

OUR VALUES

Our Indigenous Strategy rests on four key values.

RESPECT - in our actions and words, our teaching and research and our engagement with communities we show our respect for Indigenous heritage and culture, and the rights of Indigenous people to own and control their culture. This includes respect for customs, points of view and lifestyles. We show our respect by committing to learning and understanding the historical context of Indigenous Australians, recognising their accomplishments and the continuation of one of the oldest known cultures and knowledge systems in the world.

COLLABORATION - reminds us that we will not be able to thrive without recognising one another's strengths. This means we listen and grow together, helping and supporting each other in order to achieve our collective goals.

DIGNITY - reminds us of the importance of the belief in the goodness of people and the environment. As we become familiar with the unique qualities of the world around us and understand others through sharing, we build a space for shared action.

INTEGRITY - reminds us that we need to be ethical, trustworthy and sincere in our actions and be willing to acknowledge expertise and admit to our mistakes. We act for mutual benefit which will yield boldness, fairness, and excellence.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Provide opportunities for Indigenous Australian students to learn and succeed in an environment that promotes Indigenous excellence.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Improve the proportion of enrolled Indigenous students so that the School exceeds are Indigenous population parity.
- 02** Develop strategies that will improve educational outcomes and well-being of Indigenous students, so they excel and achieve in every aspect of their education.
- 03** Increase the numbers of indigenous students who are able to experience outbound mobility experiences with First Nations peoples in other countries (e.g. Canada, New Zealand).
- 04** Develop a transition program for Graduate Teachers and Educators with our key employment partners (e.g. Department of Education, Catholic and Independent and Early Childhood Education sectors).

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

A minimum target of 4% of all enrolled students in the School are Indigenous.

3% of all completing students from the School are Indigenous.

Retention and progression rates for Indigenous students matches or exceeds non-Indigenous students.

Indigenous students have an opportunity to complete an outward mobility program each academic year.

Transition program is co-designed and evaluated as meeting employer and Graduate Teacher/Educator needs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

INDIGENOUS

EMPLOYMENT

Position Western Sydney as a place of choice for Indigenous Australians to work in an environment that supports and nurtures their careers.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Build the proportion of Indigenous staff within the School so that it matches the proportion of Indigenous students in the School.
- 02** Establish a program with the Department of Education to support Indigenous teachers and school leaders to contribute to the learning of Initial Teacher Education students.
- 03** Promote opportunities for the professional and career development of Indigenous academic and professional staff in the School.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

A minimum target of 3% of Indigenous staff are employed in ongoing academic positions in the School.

All compulsory Aboriginal Education units are taught by Indigenous colleagues.

Indigenous colleagues are successful in achieving key career milestones (completing doctoral studies, applying for internal grants/seed funding/ADP/promotion).

At least one Indigenous staff member in the School is employed at Level D/E

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Develop the breadth and depth of Indigenous Research with a vision to promote research that empowers Indigenous Australians.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Develop an Indigenous student high achiever strategy by increasing exposure of Indigenous students to researchers and research programs across the School and University.
- 02** Investigate the potential of a 'specialist academic program' for Indigenous students which includes specialist research-related experiences such as research scholarships.
- 03** Develop an Indigenous Research Program that will provide opportunities for Indigenous students and staff to engage in reciprocal academic/scholarly exchanges nationally and internationally (e.g. Sur-Sur Dialogues).
- 04** Develop guidelines and processes to support for Indigenous academics pursuing PhD qualifications (workload adjustments, scholarships etc).
- 05** Embed a module within the suite of Master of Education Research units that focusses on the development of Indigenous paradigms/research methodologies.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Increased number of Indigenous HDRstudents.

Increased opportunities for Indigenous students to undertake research training opportunities.

Increased number of Indigenous staff with PhDs.

Increased research outputs (grants, publications, amplification of research).

Facilitation of the Sur-Sur (South-South) Dialogues.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Ensure that all students develop increased knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Review and evaluate the quality of curriculum across the School to ensure that it promotes fair, equitable, culturally inclusive and significant educational opportunities for all Indigenous students.
- 02 Review and evaluate the quality of curriculum across the School to ensure that it enables all graduates from the School to apply understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia in their work.
- 03 Develop and maintain environmental scanning to ensure that the School remains a leader of policies, practices, directions and priorities in Indigenous Education.
- 04 Develop an Indigenous Visiting Scholars Program to better contribute to the development of quality approaches to the teaching and learning in Indigenous knowledges, histories, cultures and experiences.
- 05 Develop MOUs with one or more national and or International universities/educational institutions focusing on First Nations Education.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Curriculum meets program accreditation requirements for the inclusion of Aboriginal Education in ITE programs.

All staff and students in the School have the opportunity to engage with and learn from Indigenous Knowledges through course work, professional learning events that are scheduled each year.

Signed MOUs with action plans to advance partnerships.

Annual score card to assess School progress to ascertain progress against policies, practices, directions and priorities in Indigenous Education.

One Visiting Indigenous Scholar engaged with the School each year.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FIVE

Community Engagement

Promote the School as a place of engagement that values partnerships where we work with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders to achieve common goals, where the diversity of thoughts and ideas are valued and our stakeholders are empowered with knowledge and have opportunities to create their futures.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Build partnerships with schools, early learning centres and other educational organisations to support the development of graduates from the School that are able to inspire and support Indigenous learners in their education.
- 02** Build and nurture strategic partnerships to increase engagement for improved outcomes in teaching and learning and research that has a specific Indigenous focus.
- 03** Develop a specialist group within the Future Teachers Network for Indigenous Graduate Teachers.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Active engagement with Indigenous Alumni from the School.

Increased number of partnerships with recognised Indigenous Education focus with key stakeholders.

Annual program of specialist activities within the Education Knowledge Network and Future Teachers Network for Indigenous Pre-service, Alumni and Indigenous educators across all education sectors.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SIX

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Provide leadership opportunities for Indigenous Australians across the School.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Promote deliberate and purposeful engagement which recognises the leadership of Indigenous Leaders and employers of Indigenous graduates.
- 02** Ensure Indigenous representation from staff, students and key stakeholders (internal and external) across key decision-making committees within the School.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Increased engagement by staff across the School with Indigenous Leaders and employers of Indigenous graduates.

Increased representation and participation of Indigenous staff, students and key stakeholders across key decision-making groups in the School.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SEVEN

CULTURAL VIABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE

Build Indigenous viability and knowledge across the School.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Initiate learning opportunities for staff to build knowledge and cultural competence.
- 02** Incorporate visual Acknowledgement of Country identifiers and Indigenous languages within the School areas across the University.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Indigenous country and languages are represented physically and virtually across the School.

All staff have participated in at least one learning opportunity to build knowledge and cultural competence in a two-year period.

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