

Internationalisation at UWS

A research led University serving the Western Sydney community should be international in its scope and outlook. In recent years, the University has revisited its international activities. Most offshore programs have been closed, the International Office has been re-organised and strengthened, strategies have been put into place to increase the number of on-shore international students, a review of mobility has been undertaken and strategies have been agreed to develop relationships with similar institutions overseas.

A strategy has been developed and is now in place to increase the number of on-shore international students, at the undergraduate and the postgraduate level, both coursework and research. The aim is to increase the proportion of international students on our campuses to at least the Australian university average. This paper is not concerned with recruitment of international students as such; rather it focuses on internationalisation as it affects the experience of Australian students and also on strategic partnerships with overseas institutions, which, while including overseas student recruitment, do so within much wider relationships.

The student experience

Many western universities have devoted considerable time and energy over the last decade trying to understand what internationalisation of higher education might mean. It is easy to fall into clichés but much harder to work out concrete proposals that enhance the learning experience, intellectual development and career potential of students. The starting point is that our students will be living and working in an increasingly globalising world, and for growing numbers of them working in an overseas country or in an unfamiliar cultural environment will be part of their working lives. Some universities have used the language of 'global citizenship' and argued that we have a moral responsibility to educate students with international understanding. Others have focussed more on the career needs of students, arguing that increasing numbers will need to be able to work with people from different cultural backgrounds or in very different cultures and will therefore need to have a broad intellectual understanding of the histories and societies of countries other than their own and preferably some competence in a language other than English.

The ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of our student body is a great advantage for the University of Western Sydney. This diversity should provide an advantage in genuinely internationalising the curricula. Few North American, British, European or indeed other Australian universities have anything like the diversity of UWS in their student body. We must ensure that the formal curricula build on this advantage.

A small number of students have the opportunity to include significant international content in their degree programs within a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Social Sciences or a Bachelor of International Studies degree where there is considerable flexibility within the degree structure. Not all take advantage of this flexibility and the issue is how to encourage more to do so. Nevertheless, an internationally focused humanities and social sciences curricula with a diverse offering of languages other than English and historical, cultural and sociological studies of societies other than those of the West is essential for any university that wishes to internationalise its undergraduate education.

However, most students enrol in degrees leading to professional accreditation and these have less flexibility than a broad based arts/social sciences degree. It is often quite difficult to build

flexibility into professionally-accredited degrees, but if we are to internationalise the student experience then efforts have to be made to satisfy both professional requirements and the need to provide broader educational opportunities. This will entail, at a minimum, curricula which allow some free units of study with students encouraged to enrol in units with internationally-focused content.

The following are some thoughts on directions that might be considered. They are not by any means exclusive, rather the beginning of a conversation on how best to internationalise the educational experience for students, or at least to provide the opportunities for them to either accept or reject.

Combined Degrees

For many Australian universities the promotion of combined degrees provides a major route for 'internationalising' the student experience. Combined degree programs – usually a BA or BSc combined with a professionally-accredited degree – provide the flexibility for students to include in their programs the study of a second language or historical/cultural/political studies of societies other than their own. They also provide the space for the inclusion of a Semester at an overseas university. UWS is expanding its provision of combined degrees and this should include these broader internationalisation opportunities.

Combined degrees are particularly attractive to high performing school leavers. If we develop a range of combined degrees on all our campuses we will attract many more of these students from the Greater Western Sydney region who currently enrol in combined degrees provided by Macquarie, UTS, Sydney and UNSW.

Courses in 'Global Citizenship'

Some universities have been experimenting in recent years with courses with titles such as 'globalisation' or 'global citizenship'. On the most innovative examples is the U21 Global Issues Programme. This is a partnership within the U21 consortium between the University of British Columbia, Nottingham University, Melbourne University, Hong Kong University, Lund University, and the Monterrey University of Technology [see www.univeritas21.com/globalissues.html]. This is a certificate in which students in any of the participating universities may enrol as an add-on to their 'home' degree. The course is taught partly on-line, with students from each of the participating universities in the same class. There is a small quota in each University which is rapidly filled.

Another excellent example is the Global Citizenship Project at the University of British Columbia (see www.internationalization.ubc.ca/globalcitizenship.htm). This is one of the most innovative and comprehensive programs to internationalise the whole of the University. It has a range of course (including on-line), seminars, research projects and mobility schemes designed in an integrated way to capture the attention of UBC students and to engage staff and the Vancouver community

Could UWS offer a concurrent certificate in 'global citizenship'? Perhaps jointly with an institutional partner?

Could UWS offer a 'globalisation' group of (half) units which might be incorporated into any degree program?

Could UWS offer one carefully constructed broad-based 'globalisation' unit and make it available for all students in all courses?

I do not know the answer to these questions. It may be that our immediate priorities lie elsewhere – for example in encouraging greater student mobility. However, we should at last think about these possibilities with a view to considering their longer term applicability for UWS.

Student mobility

Student mobility refers to the variety of international study experiences available to students, primarily but not exclusively at the undergraduate level. It encompasses not only Semester length or full-year exchange programs, which are tuition-free based on reciprocal agreements with partner institutions, but also a diverse range of short courses and professional placement, which may be fee-based. Increasing the range of opportunities for students requires the development of a culture where overseas study is both valued and promoted as a normal part of undergraduate programs.

In 2008 UWS International commissioned a report on student mobility, both incoming and outgoing. The report reviewed the Australian university context and the comparative position of UWS. It recommended strategies to increase the number of incoming Study Abroad students from North America in particular, but also from Europe where Study Abroad is growing from a relatively low base. UWS has a very small number of these students (17.3 efts1 in 2008) and is well behind other Sydney universities. The major recommendations are being implemented and should result in a considerable increase in Study Abroad enrolments in the next few years with consequent financial benefits. There are benefits other than financial from incoming Study Abroad students. The Australian universities that have built strong Study Abroad numbers over the past decade or so have seen considerable benefits in institutional positioning in the US - beneficial for research linkages - and have also seen a steady growth in the number of former Study Abroad students returning for postgraduate programs.

More importantly, though, is increasing the opportunities for UWS students to study overseas because of the enormous benefits derived by both the students personally and the institution. The commissioned report made a series of recommendations designed to improve the administration of student mobility at UWS and encourage greater numbers to participate. For example, the student mobility program has lacked a detailed policy and procedures document, including an assessment of risks and ways to mitigate the identified risks. Its development has been a high priority for the International Office. A Student Mobility Policy and Procedures Manual are almost completed. It will be posted on the UWS International website and circulated widely within the university community.

The commissioned report also considered strategies for increasing the number of UWS undergraduate and postgraduate students who have an overseas experience as part of their program. UWS is significantly under-achieving in this area. The following table compares UWS with national benchmarks for 2007.

Item	UWS	National Mean
Access to International Study Experiences All Levels	0.9%	4.8%
Access to International Study Experiences UG	1.2%	5.4%
International Study Experiences – Women	47.2%	57.2%
International Study Experiences Semester or longer	85%	69.8%
Access to Short Term Programs	0.1%	2.0%
Short Term Experiences – Women	44.4%	62.9%
International Student exchange Staff per 100 Exchanges	1.6	1.05
Access to International Research Experiences	0.8%	34.9%
International Research Experiences – Women	100%	58.4%

The International Office has been working to develop a strategy to significantly increase the number of UWS students undertaking study overseas as part of their programs. In 2008, 60 UWS students completed an overseas exchange program. The target is an increase of 20% per year from 2009. The growth target will be achieved in 2009, with around 81 students expected to enrol on an overseas exchange program by the beginning of Semester 2. New promotional material has been developed along with an improved marketing strategy to encourage students to think about an overseas exchange program from the beginning of their study at UWS. The marketing strategy is being developed with Colleges. In Semester 1 this year, for example the Study Abroad and Exchange team visited 139 first and second year classes in order to encourage students to participate in an overseas exchange. The intention is to encourage a growing number of undergraduate students to see an overseas exchange experience as a valuable addition to their program.

While the majority of the students will undertake a full session at an overseas university as part of their undergraduate program it is important to develop a range of alternatives. Some student may not be able to afford, either financially or in time, to spend one full semester overseas, others in professional courses may be unable to include a full semester as part of their program because of accreditation restrictions. Opportunities will be developed for students to undertake short courses during the summer/winter vacations or for them to undertake international industry placements.

The list of universities which are exchange partners is being reviewed. It is intended to expand the list in a broad range of countries in order to increase the opportunities for our students. UWS has also recently joined the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) which is a network of 290 colleges and universities in 39 countries cooperating to provide affordable access to international education for a diverse student population. Through ISEP our students are able to access a much wider range of host institutions than could be provided by institutional exchange agreements.

A flourishing exchange program at UWS depends on academic support. Individual academics and Schools must see the value of an overseas exchange experience and promote the program to their students. Academics and Schools should be encouraged to engage more fully in the program. This will be a priority over the next year. Schools and Colleges need to be flexible in the recognition of overseas study. If undertaking an overseas exchange is seen by UWS as an important part of students' education then we must ensure that those students are not disadvantaged in any way on their return. We must be generous and flexible in the provision of credit for units of study undertaken overseas, understanding that the experience of studying at an overseas university is in itself of great value. In particular, we must be careful in how we handle the overseas exchange experience in the calculation of GPAs. We want our best students to go on exchange, but our best students are most likely to be most concerned that the way in which we calculate their achievements in the units studied overseas does not impede their desire to enter an honours program or aspire to a University Medal. It is not easy to transcribe results from European, North American or Asian Universities into the UWS local marking scale. All Australian universities experience the same problem. Most approve the units to be studied overseas before the student leaves and on the student's return record the overseas exchange separately on the student's transcript, together with satisfactory/unsatisfactory marks. The units studied overseas are generally excluded in making formal determinations as to whether a student is eligible for entry to an Honours program but the formal satisfactory/unsatisfactory marks are not allowed to undermine the student's record. In some cases individual disciplines make judgements on the equivalence of the marks received from the overseas institution. The same process applies for determining a University Medal. An academic judgement must be applied with the principle being that the student is not in any way disadvantaged by the period of study overseas.

The starting assumption should be that if a student has passed a unit taken on an approved exchange program then the performance level is no less than the average performance level in units completed at UWS. This is not to argue that students can take it easy on their overseas study, safe in the knowledge that it will not affect their overall GPA, rather that in transcribing an overseas institution's marking system to our own we should err on the side of generosity, taking into account what we know about the student's overall performance.

Another essential part of the student mobility strategy is the provision of financial support. In 2007, the most recent year for which comparative data is available, Australian universities provided a total of \$12.9m in financial support – a substantial increase on the \$6.1m provided in 2005. The financial support provided by UWS in 2007 was very low - approximately \$80,000 (20 scholarships at \$2,500 each plus 30 scholarships at \$1,000 each)). It will not be possible to achieve significant increases in outgoing student mobility unless we increase the number of available scholarships. A proposal is before the UWS Foundation for it to provide an additional 30 outgoing student mobility scholarships a year from 2010, each with a value of \$2,500. If this proposal is accepted then in 2010 UWS will provide 50 scholarships @\$2,500 each. Subject to other demands on the funds of the UWS Foundation, it is intended to request regular increases in the number of outgoing student mobility scholarships.

Research students – international exchanges

A small proportion of postgraduate research students have always undertaken part of their study overseas – perhaps for only a few weeks but in some case for a year or more. There are also an increasing numbers of overseas students coming to UWS for a few weeks or months in a specific laboratory or attached to a specific research group. These arrangements are made through the personal research relationships of individual researchers. The benefits to research students are considerable – experience in major laboratories in another university; contacts with overseas experts; sharing ideas with fellow research students; creating research networks.

We are working to develop a number of strategic partnerships with international universities incorporating research cooperation. It is envisaged that exchange opportunities for research students will be incorporated into these agreements. A small number of travel grants for research students will need to be established to enable them to take advantage of these strategic partnerships.

The essential feature of strategic partnerships with overseas universities is reciprocity. It is important that UWS welcomes short-term visits from research students from partner universities. In the case of partnerships with most universities in Asia it will be necessary for UWS to find funds to support the partner university's research students. There are a number of government funding schemes – and some private foundation schemes – which we must endeavour to leverage. In addition, we will have to use some of our own funds in order to sustain the principles of reciprocity and mutual advantage.

Research Linkages

UWS has a number of joint research programs with international partners. Most have been organised by individual researchers, often with a combination of Australian and partner country grants. There are a number of Australian funding agencies which actively support international joint research projects, with the Department of Science and Innovation recently indicating that it will expand the opportunities in this area. We must ensure that our internal processes and procedures assist researchers in developing the necessary overseas linkages and in seeking funding sources within Australia and internationally.

In discussions with overseas institutions a major focus is the development of research linkages. Many potential university partners see research linkages as the most important component in a relationship. We are creating agreements which include provision for postgraduate students to come to UWS as well as for direct links between researchers at UWS and the overseas institution which over time are expected to lead to joint projects. Most of the universities we visit are concerned about institutional capacity building, by which they mean not only the provision of overseas research training for their early career staff but also the development of an international orientation within their university.

Strategic Partnerships

Individual academics have international linkages of varying intensities. It is important that as many as possible of these linkages be leveraged to the advantage of the university. There is nothing to be lost by the individual and much to be gained by the institution. To this end a contacts database will be constructed, initially with a cohort of senior staff but eventually broadening to the UWS academic community as a whole. Ultimately the database should be able to be interrogated on-line by any staff member, particularly those travelling overseas to conferences or on study leave, so that linkages may be strengthened and perhaps developed into institution wide linkages.

Institutional partnerships are important to internationalisation. While many UWS formal institutional relationships will cover student Exchange and Study Abroad only, we will develop a small number of in-depth institutional partnerships in a limited number of countries. The partnerships may include: student exchanges; twinning programs (where the one or more years of a UWS program is taught by the partners institution), off-shore programs, joint degrees, capacity building and joint research projects.

UWS has limited resources, both financial and human, and must therefore enter into strategic partnerships carefully. The focus for the immediate future is on developing strategic partnerships in Vietnam, Indonesia and the Middle East and consolidating the strategic partnerships that already exist in China.

The strategic partnerships being developed in Vietnam and Indonesia are good examples of how we should proceed.

In Vietnam we have entered into a partnership with the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City (UEH). Initially this was for a joint Doctor of Business Administration program, funded by the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam. The current agreement is for 5 years, with 10 students each year entering the DBA program. The students are staff from UEH and other universities in southern Vietnam. They all have a Masters degree, most from an English-speaking country. They undertake a 9 month full-time preparatory program in UEH jointly developed by UEH and UWS College of Business. The objective is to prepare for study at the DBA level. After successfully completing the preparatory program, the students come to UWS for 18 months, where they complete 12 months of coursework and commence work on their thesis. They then return to UEH for the final 18 months of work on their thesis. Both UWS and UEH have appointed a Director for the program – the UEH Director has a PhD from UTS – and each student will be jointly supervised by an academic from UEH and an academic from UWS. UWS will be responsible for the examination of the theses and the degree will be from UWS.

The joint DBA program is leading to further joint activity. A twinning program is being developed for the Bachelor of Business and Commerce, whereby a Foundation Year (including advanced English language instruction) and the first year of the Bachelor program (the UWS College Diploma) will be taught at UEH. Students then have the option of coming to UWS with advanced standing for the first year's work or continuing in Vietnam for a UEH degree. In the

initial years only a small cohort is expected to enrol in this program – perhaps 20-30 each year. If this twinning program is successful it may lead to other joint programs with UEH both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The success of the strategic partnership with UEH has led to the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO – RETRAC) which is based in HoChiMinh City to approach UWS for a partnership. SEMEO is a strong organisation with branches in each ASEAN country. The Regional Training Centre in Vietnam specialises in the teaching of English language and in education and is a first class institution. Some of their senior staff has doctorates in linguistics or English literature from English speaking universities. SEAMEO – RETRAC in HCMC wishes to introduce the UWS Master of Interpreting and Translating program into its suite of programs and also wishes to develop a Doctor of Education program with UWS on the same lines as the DBA with UEH. If the EdD proceeds it will be funded by the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam on similar lines to the funding of the DBA. Negotiations are in progress.

Other opportunities in Vietnam are emerging: in policing, forensics and criminology (both postgraduate and short courses) and in business disciplines, especially joint research, with the Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

The partnership opportunities in Vietnam are considerable. They are positioning UWS very strongly in that country. This can be seen in a strong growth in the numbers of Vietnamese students coming onshore to study at UWS – including a few doctoral students who have learnt of UWS through its involvement with UEH. We now need to consolidate these activities, ensure that we implement the programs properly and leverage the opportunities that will flow from them.

In Indonesia we are developing strong relationships with four universities: Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta (one of the top three public universities in Indonesia), State Islamic University in Jakarta (the top State-funded Islamic university in Indonesia), Muhammadiyah University in Jakarta and in Yogyakarta (two of the strongest private Islamic universities operated by the moderate Islamic social group Muhammadiyah) and Sadhu Guna University in Jakarta (a new private university in Jakarta owned by a Foundation which operates one of the strongest networks of English language institutes in Indonesia). We already have links with Gadjah Mada University through the School of Natural Sciences which supervises a number of their staff in PhD programs. The MOU with Gadjah Mada University focuses on Health and Natural Sciences, with opportunities for joint programs and joint research projects. The State Islamic University will be offering the first year of the UWS Bachelor of Business and Commerce program from 2010 – successful students will come to UWS with advanced standing. The partnership with Muhammadiyah University Jakarta covers the Health Sciences, with the first higher degree research candidates coming to UWS on Indonesian government scholarships in Semester Two this year.

A recent visit to the Middle East by senior UWS staff opened up a number of partnerships opportunities with public and private universities and also with various funding Ministries. The Middle East will become a major focus for UWS in the next few years particularly for capacity building and research linkages.

These strategic partnerships are carefully chosen and closely monitored. We can only sustain a limited number and we must ensure that we retain close oversight. Considerable benefits will flow to UWS both in a steady stream of postgraduate students and a stronger positioning of UWS in the various countries.

Offshore programs

UWS has had an unfortunate history with offshore programs. Most lacked proper business cases and were with partners not fully aligned to the University. The only successful overseas programs have been the nursing program operating in Hong Kong for more than a decade. The programs have been managed by Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University which have proved to be excellent partners focused on quality outcomes for the students.

It is important that UWS make a fresh start with offshore programs. They are an essential part of the internationalisation agenda of any Australian university. Without them it is unlikely that UWS can enrol significant numbers of international students. Good offshore programs reduce the costs for overseas students while at the same time ensuring a continuing flow to Australian campuses. Good offshore programs can play a very important role in positioning the university which will lead to other opportunities. There are many variants of offshore programs – ranging from twinning programs to full scale campuses with or without commercial partners. At this stage of the development of UWS we should restrict offshore involvement to twinning programs or license arrangements with dependable university partners. We lack the institutional and academic resources to become involved in anything more ambitious.

Any offshore activity must be deliberate, planned, sustainable and consistent with the broader strategic objectives of the university. The critical element is to work with a reliable partner who shares our academic values and our emphasis on providing a quality student experience. This is easily said but quite difficult to put into practice. It is important to make unhurried decisions and only to enter into agreements after proper due diligence. We must be prepared to walk away from a potential partnership if in the end it cannot pass all the due diligence tests.

A protocol has been developed for approving all offshore activities. All proposals will be tested against this protocol.

There are a number of basic procedures designed to protect the reputation of UWS and to ensure that any offshore activity is only begun after proper and rigorous analysis. First, there must be a strategic fit for the proposed offshore activity. However worthy the activity might be in its own right, if it does not fit into the strategic focus of the University's international engagement then it should not be pursued. This will restrict the country, the institution or the region in which UWS might have offshore activities. Second, all agreements must be properly documented with the rights and obligations of all parties clearly stated. They must be approved by the DVCAE and signed off only after being scrutinised by the International Advisory Committee which advises on international activities. The legal entity is the university, not a College or a School. Informal agreements are not permitted. Third, there must be a thorough business case which details the real costs, including overheads, and the potential returns to the University. Fourth, all agreements to offer UWS programs offshore must have clearly stipulated quality assurance mechanisms. Fifth, there must be a clearly stated review processes and considered exit strategies.

We are currently involved in a small number of offshore programs and a number of others are under discussion. The partnerships in Vietnam and Indonesia have already been discussed. There are also a small number of articulation agreements where the first year curriculum of a partner university has been mapped and is deemed to be equivalent to the first year of the Bachelor of Business and Commerce program (sometimes with some changes to the curriculum). Students who successfully complete this first year may articulate into the second year of the BBC in Sydney or may opt to continue with the home university degree. These students only become UWS students when they come to Sydney and enrol with advanced standing. Other current articulation agreements allow students who have completed a full program or part program at a partner institution to upgrade their academic qualifications with

advanced standing or complete their offshore programs at UWS. These arrangements have been especially successful with the Ontario Colleges in Canada.

UWSCollege has an agreement with Samaj College in Kenya to deliver the Foundation Studies program under license. The first group of Samaj students have recently completed this program and will enrol in the Diploma programs at the UWSCollege Nirimba campus in July before entering the second year of their university program in Second Semester next year. Samaj College teaches the UWS Foundation Studies curriculum, with examinations set and marked in Sydney. In addition, there is considerably staff development support provided by UWSCollege. This model is likely to be introduced to a Church-based School in Sri Lanka next year. The strategy is to develop a small number of partnerships with high quality private or community-based schools in Asian countries which can provide a UWS Foundation Studies program to the exact standards as that offered in Sydney. It is much more economical for the students and will provide a flow of quality students into UWS courses.

Future options need consideration. For example, should we offer jointly badged degrees? The Co-tutelle program with French universities is a jointly-badged degree and most Australian universities are involved in this program. Could we envisage a jointly badged undergraduate or postgraduate degree with a partner university in Asia? If our relationships with the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City or SEAMEO RETRAC in Ho Chi Minh City evolve in the way that they might, we may need to consider deepening the relationships into jointly-badged degrees at some time. How far should we go on license arrangements – the first year of the degree program only or as much as two years? Might we offer the whole of a UWS degree offshore under certain circumstances?

International Consultancies

There is considerable scope for UWS to be involved in international consultancies. These can be very important both for the income produced but more importantly for the additional benefits that can flow through to the university. Strategically focused and well-managed international projects might begin as consultancies but evolve into a mixture of consultancy work, research projects and capacity building which includes student flows. An increasing amount of educational work in the international arena is obtained through tenders. Well managed international project work can position the University strongly in an overseas country leading to student flows and research contacts. The key is strategic focus – UWS cannot spread its resources in an ad hoc way – and strong management. Much of this work involves tendering for projects and all of it involves relationship management. For these reasons all international project work will be managed by UWS Innovation and Consulting as it is the only group in the University with the requisite skills for preparing tender documents, relationship and project management and management of risk.

A good current example of UWS working overseas on a consultancy basis is the projects being undertaken in Chile in the areas of early childhood education and sustainable tourism. These projects are being managed by UWS Innovation and Consulting in partnership with the School of Education and the College of Arts. The Chile consultancy work is likely to lead to joint research projects, including a proposal for an ARC Linkage grant. The projects are educationally sound, socially responsible and properly costed. The model that has evolved in Chile is a model that may be extended to other countries in the future.

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