UWS recognises Elder contribution

For three decades, Aunty Mae Robinson has made far-reaching contributions to education and community life in Greater Western Sydney.

Through her deep involvement with the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, and as a consultant with the Education Department, she has made a difference across Sydney and the state.

Aunty Mae has a long history with UWS. In 1979 she was enrolled at the Milperra College of Advanced Education, which later became part of UWS, and was Milperra’s first Aboriginal teacher graduate. After several years teaching in Western Sydney, she was recruited by the Aboriginal Education Unit, and then served as Aboriginal Education and Disadvantaged Schools consultant in Greater Western Sydney, before returning to teaching. She again served as consultant, till her so-called ‘retirement’ in 2004.

Aunty Mae says, “It’s a great privilege to be awarded an honorary doctorate by UWS.” Aunty Mae’s contribution to UWS started as a student at Milperra, serving on the committee that developed the Aboriginal Rural Education Program, to enable Aboriginal people to study and work while maintaining their family responsibilities. She served for six years on the Council of Macarthur Institute of Higher Education, and argued strongly for the Institute to join the University of Western Sydney, because the people of Greater Western Sydney needed, and deserved, a university in their own area.

Since 2003 she has been an active member of the UWS Indigenous Advisory Council, also advising on Indigenous attributes for the Badanami Centre’s Indigenous Studies (IAS) Major, serving on the University of Western Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement Advisory Board, and in 2011 being one of our inaugural Elders on Campus.

Aunty Mae is a respected Elder in the community, valued as an advisor to Liverpool City and Fairfield City Councils. She is known across the state to both Aboriginal people and other Australians as Aunty Mae. She is a highly valued friend and mentor to many at UWS.

Aunty Mae says, “To be recognised for something that I feel very passionate about is a wonderful thing. Education is the key to success and I will continue to support education and culture.”

Aunty Mae has dedicated herself to empowering others and improving opportunities in Greater Western Sydney and beyond. Numerous honours attest to Aunty Mae’s contribution to education:

- Life member of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council 2007 Elders and Leaders Award
- Director-General’s Award for Excellent Service to Public Education and Training 2008
- NSW Department of Education and Training Nanga Mai Community Award
- Dare to Lead National Excellence in Indigenous Education Award 2007
- UWS Woman of the West Award 2010

Congratulations Aunty Mae.

Providing opportunities for Indigenous Australians

The University of Western Sydney has a wide range of study options for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

- Arts
- Business
- Communication Arts
- Engineering, Information and Communications Technology
- Environment and Tourism
- Forensics
- Health Sciences, Nursing and Sports Science
- Law
- Medicine
- Policing and Criminology
- Psychology
- Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Teaching and Education

Study by Block Mode

You don’t need to leave your community. Study in your own environment, with scheduled on-campus visits throughout the year.

Programs currently available for study in block mode include:

- Bachelor of Community and Social Development
- Bachelor of Education (Primary) (AREP) for 2013

A one-year Diploma of Community and Social Development is available on Penrith campus.

APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR MID-YEAR ENTRY

Did you know all Indigenous Australians can apply via the Badanami Alternative Entry Program?

The University of Western Sydney now offers a 16 week literacy program to help you gain entry to any undergraduate program at UWS.

For further information please contact UWS on 1300 897 669 or visit www.uws.edu.au/indigenous.
Welcome to 2012

I acknowledge the traditional owners of Greater Western Sydney, the Darug, Gandangara and Tharawal peoples, whose lands the University of Western Sydney’s six campuses span.

Welcome to the autumn edition of KooriLife. We have another exciting year ahead of us with a large number of undergraduate students commencing at UWS. Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education enrolled its second cohort of students for the Bachelor of Community and Social Development degree which is offered in block mode on the Penrith campus with a record number of students enrolling.

The Indigenous Australian Studies major introduced a new unit called Indigenous Landscapes which is offered to first year undergraduate students in the Nature Conservation course. The Indigenous Australian Studies major is an important tool in rolling out the University’s Indigenous Graduate Attribute, which is a program put in place to add Indigenous content and elements of study to existing courses at UWS. Badanami Centre provided a Final Report to DEEWR in May for the project “Embedding an Indigenous Graduate Attribute”. This is a step forward, as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students now have the opportunity to learn about, and appreciate, the history and culture of Indigenous Australia, while gaining knowledge and skills for working productively with Indigenous communities across Greater Western Sydney and beyond. Introducing the Indigenous Australian Studies Major was a monumental step for our University as it helps to teach students the cultural, historical, social and economic issues affecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and their relationships.

From Monday 16 April to Friday 20 April, thousands of students graduated at Parramatta Campus and received degrees across a wide range of disciplines including nursing, education, business, psychology, law, social and health sciences, engineering, humanities and education. I would just like to congratulate the Indigenous graduates on their fine achievements at UWS and wish them the best of luck with their careers and achieving their dreams.

Associate Professor Berice Anning, Dean, Indigenous Education and Director, Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education.

Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education

The UWS School of Medicine received recognition by the LIME (Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education) Network at their annual conference in New Zealand.

Cris Carriage, Indigenous Program Officer and Jenny Akers, Rural Program Manager, proudly accepted the award in the category of Leading Innovation in Community Engagement for the Year 5 Indigenous Health attachment.

This innovative program is undertaken by all 5th year students in a five week attachment with an Aboriginal Medical Service across New South Wales and in metropolitan Sydney. UWS also has rural clinical schools located in Bathurst and Lismore where students undertake their attachments during their placement.

Cris Carriage, Indigenous Program Officer says, “I am delighted to have been involved in the development of the program which puts students at the heart of the Aboriginal community to experience Aboriginal health in urban, rural and remote settings.”

The program has a number of key learning outcomes for students including a broad understanding of primary health care, the many roles an Aboriginal Medical Service plays in the community, plus the importance of community involvement that contributes to health care delivery and services.

This award winning program has been developed with the advice, support and encouragement of the medical program partners and through the sheer commitment of School of Medicine staff and students for a number of years. The strong investment made by the School of Medicine to establish and develop relationships with the partners is providing invaluable knowledge to the students who are now learning about, and contributing to, the work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the communities they serve.

Congratulations to the School of Medicine.

‘A program that put students at the heart of the Aboriginal community to experience Aboriginal health in urban, rural and remote settings.’

Helping students gain entry to UWS

In late 2011, the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education introduced a pilot literacy program to assist students in building their confidence to tackle an undergraduate bachelor degree at UWS.

Badanami has developed a series of rich learning literacy modules designed around key themes with the goal to increase students’ literacy levels. The 16-week preparatory program has been designed to scaffold students’ learning by providing focussed academic reading and writing skills necessary to successfully complete an undergraduate degree.

Program coordinator Phil Vossey says, “The modules were developed to meet the increasing number of mature age students wanting to undertake a university degree but have no other formal qualifications and may have been out of the workforce for a number of years”.

The preparatory modules provide students with the ultimate flexibility and convenience with all learning materials sent directly to the student’s home. There are weekly milestones that each student is required to meet, they are supported with a set of structured learning tools, plus a dedicated program coordinator to assist with their learning.

‘Academic literacy is critical to the success of students not only in their studies but on the job’

Associate Professor Berice Anning, Dean, Indigenous Education

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‘The preparatory modules have proven to be an attractive option for rural and remote students given the flexible structure of how the program is delivered,’ says Phil Vossey.

Not only will students gain the academic literacy skills necessary to gain entry to UWS, students will learn more about life as a university student, scholarship opportunities and student and cultural support options.

Associate Professor Anning, Dean of Indigenous Education at UWS, says, “Academic literacy is critical to the success of students not only in their studies, but on the job – the ability to find, evaluate and use information is an essential skill”.

The Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education are now accepting applications for the Literacy modules for commencement in August. For more detailed information about this program, please contact Badanami on 1800 032 953 or email study@uws.edu.au.

Disclaimer

Views expressed in articles are contributors’ own and not necessarily those of UWS. Statements of fact are believed to be true but no legal responsibility is accepted for them.
UWS Elders on Campus Program

The University of Western Sydney’s Elders on Campus program is underway.

The Elders on Campus Program provides a means to formally recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and country Elders to the University of Western Sydney and the wider community that the University serves.

The program involves local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community elders, who provide protocol guidance, leadership in cultural workplace relations and mentoring of staff, cadets and trainees across all of the University’s campuses.

It is with great pleasure to announce the following recent awards and recognition of achievements presented to our Elders on Campus:

- The 2012 NSW Schools’ Nanga Mai Awards Winner for the Love of Learning category – Aunty Edna Watson, Darug elder.
- The Margaret Oatfield Zest Award for outstanding project within an Aboriginal organisation was presented to Aunty Sandra Lee, Darug elder and Secretary of the Tribal Aboriginal Corporation for the positive impact that community capacity building activities have had on the Greater Western Sydney region;
- Aunty Noreene Bragg-Smith, Kamilaroi Elder features in the 2012 Edition of Who’s Who of Australian Women; and
- The 2012 Inaugural University of Western Sydney Community Awards - local heroes:
  - Aunty Edna Watson – Elder on Campus
  - Aunty Fran Bodkin – Elder on Campus
  - Aunty Mae Robinson – Elder on Campus
  - Aunty Norma Shelly – Elder on Campus

In addition to the Elders of Campus program, the University has employed its’ longest standing Aboriginal staff member, Aunty Jean South as Badanami’s Elder in Residence. Aunty Jean provides cultural support for students studying at UWS and plays an important role in assisting students to succeed at university.

Indigenous Mentoring Program

students now enrolled at UWS

When Bou Ovington joined the UWS Indigenous School Student Mentoring Program (ISSMP) as a year 10 Leumeah High School student in 2009, he was not sure what the future would hold.

Bou initially considered doing a course in construction at the local TAFE when he finished school, as well as hoping for success in his favourite sport of rugby league. Today Bou is enrolled in the Bachelor of Psychology at UWS and aiming to work in sports psychology. His participation in ISSMP led him to aspire to university and boosted his expectations of success. “Visiting the UWS campuses and meeting uni students and staff made me feel comfortable with the environment and I started to see it as a place for me”, he said.

Bou worked hard to reach his goal. On the basis of his school academic results and principal’s recommendation, along with his high level of engagement in the ISSMP, he was made an early admission offer to UWS as well as a conditional scholarship of $2000 per semester. Bou is now the recipient of an Indigenous Achievement Scholarship that helps him pay for textbooks and day-to-day necessities. Psychology was his first choice, saying, “I thought about sport and exercise science or PE teaching, but I’m interested in how the workings of the mind impact on people’s capacities and performance.”

Due to a shoulder reconstruction Bou was unable to play rugby league in the 2011 season, but having completed his rehabilitation he is looking forward to a good year at his local club, the Campbelltown Kangaroos. Hopefully, he will make the representative squads for the NRL under 20s Toyota Cup Competition in the coming seasons.

Back at high school Bou became a Student Representative Council member in year 10 and went on to be chosen as vice-captain as well as the inaugural ATSI captain. He was also a House Captain. “Bou was an outstanding role model with a terrific work ethic,” said Deputy Principal Sandra Young. “He thoroughly deserves his success. We think the ISSMP is a great program and hope to see many of our current participants at UWS in future years.”

Bou is one of four ISSMP graduates enrolled at UWS this year. “We started with only a small number of students in 2009 (at Leumeah and also at Ambarvale High) so this is an exciting result, especially as these four weren’t planning to go to university when we first met them,” said Anne McLean, Manager, Schools Engagement at UWS. “We are very proud of the students and wish them every success. Ongoing support will be available through the Badanami Centres as they progress through their courses.”

The ISSMP was started by Anne with Maree Graham, Manager Indigenous Outreach, and is designed to engage Indigenous students in education, build their skills and confidence and raise their awareness of the study and career options open to them. It also provides valuable experience for the UWS students who act as mentors. The program currently involves seventeen high schools and nearly 200 year 10-12 students. From the middle of this year it will be expanded to include year 8 and 9 students also.

“At a year 11 workshop we visited Badanami at Campbelltown and I saw something on a noticeboard that motivated me”, Bou recalled. “It said Bigg Aboriginal is a reason to succeed, not a reason not to.”

‘Bou was an outstanding role model with a terrific work ethic,’
Deputy Principal
Sandra Young

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Top left to right: Aunty Edna Watson, Aunty Sandra Lee, Aunty Fran Bodkin, Aunty Mae Robinson
Bottom left to right: Aunty Thelma Quartey, Uncle Harry Allie, Uncle Rex Sorby, Aunty Jean South

Please join us in congratulating all of our Elders for their outstanding contributions and achievements.
Collective provides support

UWS Rural Indigenous Student Visit

Indigenous students from six high schools in rural and remote areas of NSW got a taste of university life at the University of Western Sydney.

Forty students from years 9 to 12 made the trip to UWS along with six support teachers. Manager of Schools Engagement at the University, Anne McLean, says the visit is a great opportunity to provide students with an experience not normally available to them. “Students in rural and remote areas often miss out on visiting universities, because there aren’t any close to their home towns.

“By bringing groups down to Sydney and having them stay on campus, they can get a sense of what uni is like, meet academic and support staff, chat to Indigenous UWS students, participate in academic enrichment activities and find out more about specific courses they might be interested in.”

“We also make sure they have the opportunity to hear from local elders and all of this makes them feel more comfortable with the environment they would be part of if they enrolled with us and lived on campus.”

“UWS is committed to creating, enhancing and promoting a variety of opportunities and pathways to encourage and enable school students from all backgrounds and a range of academic achievement levels to enhance their educational attainment and increase post-school options,” says Ms McLean.

Staff and students were accommodated at the Hawkesbury campus for the duration of the trip, and visited Penrith, Werrington North & Werrington South campuses.

The program of activities included campus tours, fun and educational academic workshops in a range of disciplines, aspiration building and career planning sessions, cultural workshops with local Aboriginal elders, an ancient Aboriginal astronomy night and discussions with current UWS Indigenous students, staff and academics. One session specifically covered what university study is like, how to apply and what to expect.

The students commented that the visit was a great experience and they valued the opportunity. They particularly enjoyed meeting current UWS Indigenous students as this gave them a real insight into what higher education study is like. The discussion with community elders was also well received.

Several students commented that they had not considered university study as an option previously but the visit to UWS had altered their perceptions of future study. Clearly the visit had successfully embedded an aspiration for higher education.

Schools that participated are:
- Lightning Ridge Central School
- Collarenebri Central School
- Walgett High School
- Gilgandra High School
- Scone High School
- Singleton High School

UWS Indigenous Student Collective provides support

Commencing university can be a daunting experience for even the most confident individual.

For Blake Tatafu, a second year Bachelor of Community and Social Development student, being given an opportunity to fulfill his life-long ambition of getting a university degree is a dream come true.

Blake says, “Coming to UWS has been a life-changing experience and I want to share this with other Indigenous students.”

Moving from the central coast of NSW, Blake knew that if he was to be successful and have a great student experience, he needed to build a strong network around himself.

“UWS has a great Indigenous support centre in Badanami, where other Indigenous students can meet and network, but does not have a collective formal group that provides support for all Indigenous students.”

After gaining support and approval from the Badanami Centre, Blake formed the ‘UWS Indigenous Student Collective’, which is the first student representative group that focuses entirely on Indigenous students at UWS.

“This group is special as it assists Indigenous students to gain a sense of leadership from delegating roles and responsibilities across the group, which is very beneficial for the members and their future careers.”

The Indigenous Student Collective allows Indigenous students to embrace and empower Indigenous culture through the implementation of activities that will take place throughout the academic year.

“Many of the activities include individual and group study programs, Aboriginal spirituality sessions, sporting activities, such as involvement in the Indigenous Tertiary Education Games, creative arts performances, and social activities.”

Through these programs, Indigenous Student Collective members will be able to acquire collective power to represent themselves throughout their university life at UWS.

“I encourage every Indigenous student from each campus to join Indigenous Student Collective, as it is a great opportunity to form new friendships, while creating contacts for the future.”

To join or to gain more information about ICS, email: 17207690@student.uws.edu.au or join the Facebook group: http://www.facebook.com/groups/238724616187555/