DASSH — DEANS OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN
2009-2012

Role of DASSH

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) is the authoritative agency on research, teaching and learning for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (ASSH) in 44 Australian and New Zealand universities. DASSH supports those within these institutions who have responsibility for the governance and management of research and teaching and learning in their universities.

Purpose and Operation

The DASSH constitution defines the purpose and operations of the Council.

The purpose of DASSH is to lead and promote the arts, social sciences and humanities, nationally and internationally. In so doing DASSH will advocate for the role of teaching, research and scholarship in the arts, social sciences and humanities.

DASSH will achieve its purpose by

- Sharing information and disseminating best practice
- Fostering research
- Providing a forum for the discussion of management in higher education
- Contributing to the development of education policy and administration issues with a view to establishing national position statements
- Taking a leading role in fostering the arts, social sciences and humanities in Australasia
- Creating alliances with related organizations and institutions, nationally and internationally
- Identifying issues of relevance to the arts, social sciences and humanities and respond, where appropriate.

Operating Environment

DASSH was established in 2002. It brought together persons from each university in Australia that hold senior positions of responsibility for ASSH in the relevant faculties or their equivalents in their universities. At a later date New Zealand institutions joined.

DASSH has 44 member institutions across Australia and New Zealand. The number of people that access the services and benefits of DASSH membership is in excess of a hundred people.

Benefits and services of DASSH go to those within their institutions that have responsibility for the governance and management of research and teaching and learning in their universities. These people are respected amongst their peers and the community, both nationally and internationally and are recognized and rewarded for their work and contribution to research, leadership in research and education and influence on a wide variety of issues and policies.

These senior ASSH people of DASSH member institutions exert strong leadership in the strategic development of their universities. They implement by leading their faculties, deploying resources, developing structures and ensuring efficient functionality. They extend their leadership into the wider community.

DASSH became an incorporated body in the ACT in 2004. It established a national office in Canberra in 2008 and employed for the first time, a dedicated Executive Officer that is independent of any member institution.

In 2007 the Council auspiced the ALTC funded project *Nature and Roles of Arts Degrees in Contemporary Society – A national scoping project for Arts programs across Australia.* The project involved 39 universities.

As a consequence, in 2009, DASSH was awarded funding from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) for three years to develop a Learning Network to enhance teaching and learning for ASSH.

The objectives and outcomes for the Learning Network are articulated in the *DASSH Discipline Support Strategy for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.*

DASSH Objectives

1. Advocate for and promote role and contribution of universities in arts, social sciences and humanities (ASSH) with government, industry and the public
2. Identify policy, initiatives and issues that impact on ASSH research and teaching and learning in universities and facilitate national approaches to address these and other emerging issues
3. Build a network of Deans, Associate Deans and aspirants to these positions, to provide leadership, collegial support and professional development for their roles
4. Support research and data collection on research and teaching and learning in ASSH in Australian and New Zealand universities
5. Build a sustainable, viable, effective and efficient organization for members and staff

Strategies

Objective 1
To advocate for and promote the role and contribution of universities in arts, social sciences and humanities (ASSH) with government, industry and the public.
DASSH will
f. Forge links and alliances with other relevant individuals, organizations and government agencies that have a focus on research and teaching and learning of ASSH in universities. These will include, but not be limited to:
- Australian Academy of Humanities (AAH)
- Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA)
- Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS)
- Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)
- National Academies Forum (NAF)
- Universities Australia (UA)
- Other Councils of Deans
And in New Zealand:
– Council of Humanities

–   Royal Society of New Zealand

b. Liaise and inform relevant Government departments and agencies

c. Take a membership with the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) and participate in their applicable events

d. Provide experts for media enquiries

e. Promote the achievements of those awarded for their excellence in ASSH research and teaching and learning

Objective 2
To identify policy, initiatives and issues that impact on ASSH research and teaching and learning in universities and facilitate national approaches to address these and other emerging issues.
DASSH will:
g. Focus on government policy relating to
    i.   Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) - implications on ASSH in Australian universities
    ii. National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) - implications and opportunities
    iii. Languages - the Government emphasis on languages and consequent funding implications and opportunities
    iv. Implications for universities of a national curriculum
    v.   Incorporation of ASSH into the International Science Linkages (ISL) program
    vi. Funding for research in ASSH

g. Monitor trends and influence their direction and progress within universities on issues pertaining to:
    i.   Social inclusion including Indigenous representation
    ii. Leadership for succession
    iii. Culturally and socially responsive education for Indigenous peoples and their issues in education
    iv. The definition of ASSH disciplines and their place in university curricula

h. Identify issues common to both Australian and New Zealand universities

i. Utilise the findings of the DASSH Network of Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) and its state-based groups

Objective 3
To build a network of Deans, Associate Deans and aspirants to these positions that will provide leadership, collegial support and professional development.
DASSH will:
j. Implement the *DASSH Discipline Support Strategy*

k. Design and deliver an annual conference that provides a forum and professional development opportunities

l. Organise professional development for those who are identified as or aspire to be, leaders in the disciplines

Objective 4
To support research and data collection on research and teaching and learning in ASSH in Australian and New Zealand universities DASSH will

m. Support cross-university research that expands the knowledge base on arts degrees and informs improvements in the ASSH disciplines

n. Establish a register of excellence practice in all aspects of teaching and learning so that a virtual network can be established and good practice and outcomes are not lost or constantly re-invented

o. Establish and develop a Network of Associate Deans (Research)

p. Update regularly the university profiles on the Arts degrees in Australian universities

Objective 5 - To build a sustainable, viable, effective and efficient organization for members and staff, DASSH will

r. Continue to develop systems and processes that support and facilitate high standards of
   a. Governance
   b. Financial accuracy and accountability
   c. Membership records and communications

s. Maintain an independent DASSH office.

t. Define and communicate the benefits and value of DASSH membership

u. Redesign the DASSH website so that it aligns with the DASSH strategic plan and is an accurate, current source of information and resources for members and non-members.