

CASE STUDY: RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The Issue: Of major concern to most participants in the project, was the issue of recruiting quality students to participate and to remain within the Arts programs. In order to ensure that this happens, there have been novel strategies put in place at various institutions to recruit and retain students.

Retention Strategies

In recognition that students at risk are most likely to drop out, the **University of New South Wales** has appointed staff members to counsel failing or struggling students. Heads of school have also undertaken this role. Since putting this intervention in place, now when students leave the degree, it is usually after staff counselling and is in the best interests of the student. The new BA is introducing more structured student counselling and guidance for students throughout their degree. The model of this counselling is still being developed it may involve peer mentoring as well as faculty staff counselling.

The **University of Sydney** has a cross faculty mentoring program where first year students have the option of having a senior student from the same degree mentor them to ease the transition to university. In addition, the Faculty has introduced a program of identifying failing students (students who fail more than 50% of their course) and assign them an academic advisor

Recruitment

In the north west of NSW the **University of New England** has a "Principals Recommendation" arrangement where the institution accepts students based on the recommendation of their school principal, regardless of their entrance score. This is a way to overcome the fact that regional students may not have had all the opportunities of metropolitan students.

At the **University of Tasmania**, an Associate degree has been instituted. It is used as an entry point for special entry students, mature aged students or students who have not completed year 12. Students completed bridging units in the Associate degree. If they do well, they gain entry into the Bachelor program. The bridging units do not get counted towards the BA. The Associate degree is also used as an exit point for students who are struggling in the BA, as it offers an early exit point. Some students also use the Associate degree to add another major, or another discipline to their BA.

At **La Trobe University**, it is possible for an individual - without being a university student - to can enrol in a "Single Unit" and attend all classes for a unit including submitting work for examination and receiving a result for the unit. These units allow non-students to sample university life with a view to formal enrolment or just to attend classes that interest them. While there is no guarantee of acceptance into any program, students can credit completed 'single units' towards their degree if they gain entrance at a later date. Alternatively a person can enrol in an "Audit Unit" attending lectures for that unit but not submitting any work for examination.

Curtin University's Bachelor of Arts Regional program is only available to students on country campuses. Students who elect to transfer from the Bachelor of Arts into one of the more specialized Curtin Bachelor of Arts programs during the course of their undergraduate study may be required to undertake additional units in order to achieve a satisfactory level of specialisation.

Disclaimer: The information described above emerged from interviews, discussions and observation of publicly available materials during the BA Scoping Project which commenced in March 2007 and concluded in August 2008. As a result, the practices described in this case study may not reflect current practices or institutional policy. They are a reflection of the understanding at the time the scoping project was in progress.



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