

TEACHING AND LEARNING ENHANCEMENT PLAN 2007-2012

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of excellence in learning opportunities and outcomes is dependent upon the quality of teaching and learning provided, and a commitment to continuous improvement by all parties involved. The Sydney College of Divinity's commitment to excellence in scholarship demands a planned and strategically developed approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning.

The Sydney College of Divinity was created through a federation of Christian theological providers, and has since expanded through the incorporation of new Member Institutions. Each of the constituent Member Institutions employ their own staff and are responsible for their supervision and professional development. Whilst that right and responsibility remains, it is the responsibility of the Sydney College of Divinity to ensure the quality of teaching and learning by Sydney College of Divinity accredited staff teaching Sydney College of Divinity awards within those Member Institutions. The provision of a high quality teaching and learning experience continues to be a major aim of the Sydney College of Divinity in carrying out its Mission.

This *Teaching and Learning Enhancement Plan* represents the first major attempt by the Sydney College of Divinity to foster the development of a culture of professional development in teaching and learning through structured means. To achieve its objectives, the Plan must be strategic, sequenced and "owned" by all SCD accredited teaching staff. Whilst the Member Institutions are responsible for the provision of resources to sustain teaching and learning, teaching staff must have the ability to develop their teaching expertise. It is the role of the Sydney College of Divinity to support teaching staff by encouraging good teaching practice, and recognising and rewarding good effort and achievement. Changing technologies, resources and student populations over the past few decades have generated the need for changes in teaching and learning. This Plan attempts to assist teaching staff to be aware of and respond to such change.

The success of this Plan relies heavily upon the commitment of all those involved in the partnership responsible for teaching and learning. Teaching staff, students, Member Institutions and the Sydney College of Divinity must embrace the principles underlying good teaching and learning, and the structure and intent of this plan, to achieve the desired outcomes.

PRIORITY GOALS FOR 2007-2012

The Sydney College of Divinity is committed to the provision of high quality learning experiences and outcomes for students enrolled in its programs. The following *priority goals* are defined for the period 2007-2012:

- GOAL 1: *To develop a commitment to the value of quality of teaching and learning and to provide opportunities and rewards which encourage teaching staff to be effective, innovative and reflective professionals.*
- GOAL 2: *To ensure teaching staff are engaged in evaluating teaching and learning performance, and that the feedback obtained is used to maintain standards and improve performance.*
- GOAL 3: *To provide a learning environment which fosters increased independence in learning, and a higher degree of student centredness in the process.*
- GOAL 4: *To develop flexibility in teaching practice through innovations and increased student engagement in learning*
- GOAL 5: *To develop a stronger teaching/ research nexus and an understanding and acceptance of its influence upon the teaching and learning process and outcomes.*
- GOAL 6: *To provide and sustain relevant and premium quality infrastructures and learning environments, in which teaching and learning occurs.*

GOAL 1: *To develop a commitment to the value of quality of teaching and learning and to provide opportunities and rewards which encourage teaching staff to be effective, innovative and reflective professionals.*

STRATEGIES

1. The Learning and Teaching Committee to prepare a Position Statement which emphasises the value of quality teaching throughout the SCD Member Institutions; the principles underlying good teaching and learning; the characteristics of a good teacher and good practice; the importance of a quality learning environment; the need to be involved in a planned approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning; and the intrinsic benefits of professional development.
2. Develop a network of peers across Member Institutions which supports enhanced teaching and learning.
3. Provide professional development opportunities that encourage staff to further develop their teaching competencies to become more innovative and effective. These may include encouragement of staff to attend conferences, undertake further studies, including accredited awards in tertiary teaching and administration, collaborate with colleagues, and take professional development leave.
4. Require attendance at an SCD professional development workshop, once a year to ensure teaching and learning practice is current and informed by SCD Policies.
5. Develop a reward system that recognises effective and innovative Teaching.

GOAL 2: *To ensure teaching staff are engaged in evaluating teaching and learning performance, and that feedback obtained is used to maintain standards and improve performance.*

STRATEGIES

1. Develop a Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning, accompanied by a schedule of workshops designed to facilitate its successful implementation.
2. Encourage staff to be actively engaged in monitoring and analysing their own teaching.
3. Oblige staff to provide feedback to students from surveys, especially where such survey information has led to changes or modifications in course units or the teaching and learning environment.
4. Undertake a process of peer review of teaching.

GOAL 3: *To provide a learning environment which fosters increased independence in learning, and a higher degree of student-centredness in the process.*

STRATEGIES

1. Provide assistance to students in gaining skills and knowledge to become independent learners
2. Make available spaces and resources for the encouragement of formal and informal interactions
3. Foster a culture of life-long learning, peer interaction and the integration of new technologies into the learning process.
4. Implement and support student-centred inquiry-based flexible models of teaching.

GOAL 4: *To develop flexibility in teaching practice through innovations and increased student engagement in learning.*

STRATEGIES

1. Identify examples of best practice in technology-supported learning and incorporate them into Professional Development programs.
2. Recognise teaching innovation through SCD teaching and learning awards.
3. Provide strong encouragement for the adoption of flexible learning approaches

GOAL 5: *To develop a stronger link between the teaching/research nexus and an understanding and acceptance of its influence upon the teaching and learning process and outcomes.*

STRATEGIES

1. Undertake and disseminate research into teaching and learning practices to ensure that the most effective teaching practice is encouraged.
2. Demonstrate, by individual staff research, how that research informs their own teaching
3. Encourage and reward staff whose teaching practice is outstanding and is informed by research and scholarship.

GOAL 6: To provide and sustain relevant and premium quality infrastructures and learning environments in which teaching and learning occurs.

STRATEGIES

1. Provide maximum access to relevant and suitable learning spaces and equipment
2. Encourage student and staff input into the design and use of learning spaces
3. Give access to training in the use of information resources, and information and communication technologies.
4. Maintain and enhance the quality of library services across the Sydney College of Divinity.