

# Student support at UC



## **NEW LEARNING SUPPORT INITIATIVES**

### **Rationale**

The student cohort at UC is changing rapidly, as the University accepts students with lower UAIs and from diverse pathways. To ensure that learning outcomes are not eroded in this dynamic environment, it is essential that students are provided with appropriate scaffolding.

### **Aim:**

- To provide equitable and inclusive learning support for all students
- To increase student retention
- To support students who may be less well-prepared for university to meet the high standards of learning expected at UC
- To contribute towards students' acquisition of the generic skills and graduate attributes expected by UC

### **Personalised tutor scheme**

Piloted in Semester 2, 2008, this scheme matches new students with an academic in their discipline. An initial small group meeting between academic and new students can be followed up with further group or individual sessions. The scheme aims to provide support and advice on accessing learning support, careers advice, course advice and participation in campus life.

### **Library Rovers**

Second and third year IT students are employed to provide roving assistance in the Library about using the University's IT facilities (printing, networking etc); using software such as Word, Excel and Powerpoint; and basic information retrieval.

### **PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Sessions)**

Targetting a small number of high density level one or two 'hotspot' subjects which tend to have a high failure rate, PALS offers regular peer learning sessions run by students who have previously succeeded in the unit. The sessions are timetabled, available to all students enrolled in the unit, and highly interactive. Leaders are given thorough training and are supervised by the PALS coordinator. The program has been carefully researched across numerous universities in Australia, the UK and the US, and has been shown to make a significant difference to student grades.

### **Learning Resource Centres**

UC has developed several excellent learning resource centres over the past ten years. These will now be extended to include every faculty, so that there is a more equitable distribution of learning support. Learning resource centres provide peer-assisted, discipline-specific support. Delivery varies according to the culture of different disciplines. LASNet (the Learning and Academic Success Network) provides a networking group to provide quality assurance and development. One initiative of this group is to upgrade UC's existing online learning support.

### **Pathway 2 learning support: Smart Study Passport**

The present academic orientation will be upgraded into a 'Smart Study Passport'. This will be compulsory for students entering the university with a UAI below 65 and international students. The Passport will include 10 modules, including the online Academic Integrity Module; a Library tour etc. The program will be flexibly delivered over the first five weeks of semester.

### **Pathway 2 learning support: In-discipline support**

In-discipline support will be embedded into key first year subjects. Five extra hours of tuition will be provided in these subjects focusing on process rather than content: academic literacy, information literacy and study strategies. By embedding this support into the disciplines, students will understand how to deal with the discipline-specific demands of their units.