SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY

STUDENT REPRESENTATION MODEL

Version 10 August 2012

CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND 3
1.1 Preparation of report 3
1.2 Current student representation 3
1.3 Reasons for new student representation model 3
1.4 Consultation with students about new student representation model 4
2. FLOWCHART – STUDENT REPRESENTATION MODEL 6
3. STUDENT REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE (SRC) 7
3.1 Role 7
3.2 Structure and membership 7
3.3 Meetings 8
3.4 Reporting 9
3.5 Funding 9
3.6 Rules 9
4 SRC ELECTION TIMETABLE 10

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Preparation of report

This report has been prepared by Southern Cross University ("**SCU**") for provision to SCU students for consultation with SCU students.

1.2 Current student representation

SCU is currently affiliated with 3 student associations and 2 interim student representatives for postgraduate students:

- LEXSA (Lismore and External Students Association) Incorporated NSW INC9891828, ABN 79 216 280 715 ("**Lexus**");
- Southern Cross University Coffs Harbour Students' Association Incorporated NSW Y2333440, ABN 44 732 282 288 ("**Coffs SA**");
- CoastRs Incorporated NSW INC9886929, ABN 47 919 544 221 ("**CoastRs**");
- SCU ceased its affiliation with the postgraduate student association CRUX (Southern Cross University Postgraduate Student Association) Incorporated NSW INC9880357 ABN 16 447 031 300 ("**Crux**") on 31 May 2012; and
- Melanie Thomas and Laurence Perry represent postgraduate students as interim student representatives as a result of elections held for all postgraduate students, following SCU ceasing its affiliation with CRUX.

1.3 Reasons for new student representation model

SCU wants to implement a new student representation model due to the concerns that SCU has with the existing student association structure, the need for SCU to comply with new legislation, and to address concerns that have been raised by students in a recent survey.

a) Issues with existing student association representation

In any student association model, it is critical that the student voice is truly represented, engaged with the university, and active with the student community. In the current environment, student representation has a number of issues as follows:

i. organisational maturity varies greatly across groups;
ii. duplication of administrative capacity across the groups means more dollars are expended on carrying out similar tasks at multiple points; and
iii. difficulty in truly accessing the student voice on key governance, service and policy matters by SCU.

Overall, however, the biggest concern that SCU has is the value of representation that SCU and students alike currently receive in this environment.

b) Legislative change

A further reason for SCU to implement a new student representation model has arisen as a result of the Commonwealth Government passing, in October 2011, amendments to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) ("**the Act**"). The Act enables Universities to levy an annual services and amenities fee ("**SAAF**") to facilitate the provision of specific non-academic and non-political services that will support and enrich the student experience. The *Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines* ("**Guidelines**") were made pursuant to the Act. The Guidelines set out the *National Access to*

Services Benchmarks ("**Services Benchmarks**") and the *National Student Representation Protocols* ("**Representation Protocols**").

The Services Benchmarks state that higher education providers must consider the varying and differing circumstances of the enrolled student body in determining what would be a reasonable and appropriate level of support at a particular campus, considering factors such as student cohort and campus location (2.2.5 of the Services Benchmarks).

The Representation Protocols are aimed at ensuring transparent and equitable representation for students in the SAAF environment and state that higher education providers must provide enrolled students with the opportunity to participate in a process to democratically elect student representatives. Student representatives must be students enrolled at the relevant higher education provider and must be elected by students, with at least one representative elected from each of undergraduate students, postgraduate students and overseas students (international onshore). In meeting this obligation, higher education providers must meet the necessary and reasonable cost of conducting valid and transparent polls for this purpose (3.2.3 of the Representation Protocols).

Higher Education Providers are to be compliant with the Services Benchmarks and Representation Protocols by January 2013.

c) *Feedback from students in SAAF Survey*

SCU has approved a SAAF schedule and has charged SAAF from the commencement of Session 2 in 2012.

In March 2012, SCU conducted an online SAAF Survey ("**Survey**") to give students the opportunity to provide advice about the services and amenities they see as most important. The Survey required students to prioritise funding across a total of nineteen legislated spending areas.

The results of the Survey have now been collated by the University, and were discussed with the existing student associations at a meeting on 14 May 2012, and then made available to all students on the SCU website from 15 May 2012.

The results of the Survey indicated (amongst other things) that external students do not consider that it is fair that they have to pay SAAF and that international students have identified different spending priorities to other student cohorts.

SCU is concerned about the extent of student discomfort with SAAF, about international student spending priorities, and wants to do everything within its power to ensure that students are sufficiently consulted with in relation to SAAF spending.

1.4 Consultation with students about new student representation model

On 14 May 2012, representatives from SCU's Student Services group (including Professor Andrew McAuley) met with representatives of the existing student associations to discuss the results of the SAAF Survey and to indicate that SCU intended to send an email poll to all external and international students to determine whether they wanted their own separate student representative bodies.

On 18 May 2012, SCU emailed all enrolled external and international students at SCU to ask them whether they wanted their own student representative bodies. This email poll was open for students to respond until 28 May 2012. As part of the email poll to external and international students, the existing student associations were provided with an opportunity to insert their own background information / counter-narrative to be sent as part of the e-mail poll. One of the four existing student associations chose to insert

words surrounding their own perspective. The results of the email poll to external and international students indicate that they want their own separate representative bodies.

On 12 June 2012, representatives from SCU's Student Services group (including Professor Andrew McAuley) met with representatives from the existing student associations to discuss the model for student representation. The student associations provided verbal feedback on the model, some of which has now been incorporated into this version of the student representation model.

On 13 June 2012, SCU sent a copy of this student representation model to all enrolled students at SCU and invited all enrolled students to comment on the student representation model until 25 June 2012. SCU then reviewed and applied student comments to the model.

From 25 June – 25 July 2012, SCU met with the existing student associations and the interim postgraduate student representatives to discuss amendments to the student representation model. All of the existing student associations and the interim postgraduate student representatives provided feedback about the student representation model. One of the items of feedback from the student representative groups was that they believed that it was unnecessary to have a separate international student group because international representatives needed to be present in each student group.

The "Student Representation" tab within SCU's UniLife webpage (click here to view) lists the consultation that has occurred between SCU and students, and shows how the student representation model has been amended by SCU following this consultation with students.

SCU has now reviewed and applied the comments from the existing student associations and interim postgraduate student representatives to the student representation model.

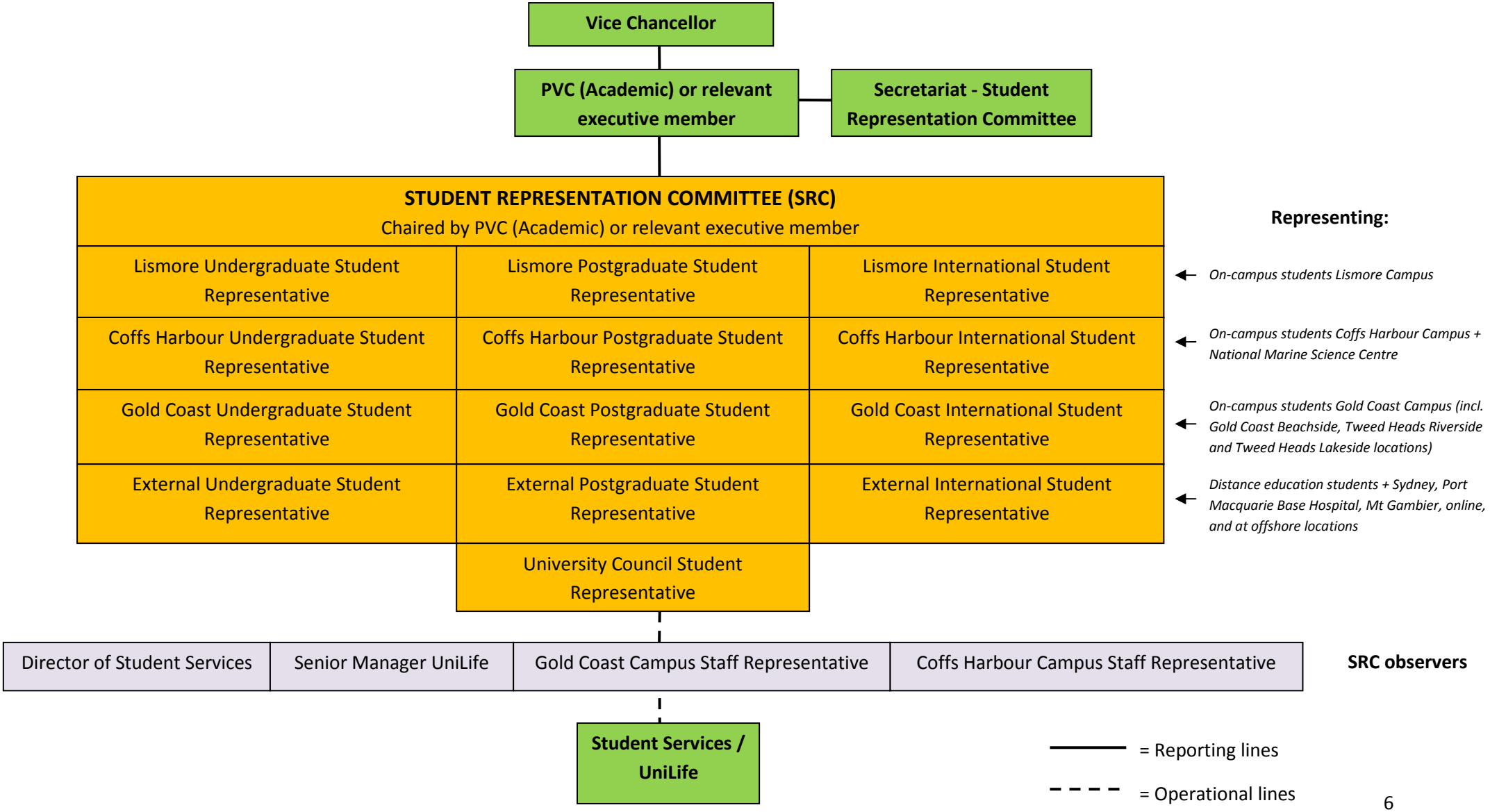
From 23-26 July 2012, SCU conducted road show style consultations with students at each campus.

SCU is still consulting with the existing student associations regarding their linkages with the new student representation model. On the basis of feedback received from students attending the road shows, the Student Representation Committee was modified and the Student Groups were removed with representatives from the Student Groups merged into the Student Representation Committee.

Parts 2 and 3 of this report explain the new student representation model.

Part 4 of this report sets out the process for the election of student representatives onto the Student Representation Committee.

2. FLOWCHART – STUDENT REPRESENTATION MODEL



3. STUDENT REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE (SRC)

3.1 Role

a) Develops recommendations and a detailed budget about how SAAF and non-SAAF student services monies should be spent. The budget will be approved by the Vice Chancellor.

b) To be the recognised means of communication between its various student cohorts and SCU and to promote harmonious relations between its student cohorts and SCU.

c) To represent its student cohorts in matters affecting their educational, social and cultural interests, but excluding those solely or mainly concerned with their religious or political interests.

d) To provide a forum for the dissemination, discussion and debate of information and knowledge about matters of student interest.

e) Promote the participation of their student cohort in, and the consideration of, matters affecting their interests.

f) Relevant members provide a point of contact for advocacy assistance to their student cohorts as required.

3.2 Structure and membership

Positions

See Flowchart on page 6.

a) The 3 Lismore Student Representatives represent on-campus students from the Lismore Campus.

b) The 3 Gold Coast Student Representatives represent on-campus students from the Gold Coast Beachside Campus, Tweed Heads Riverside and Tweed Heads Lakeside locations.

c) The 3 Coffs Harbour Student Representatives represent on-campus students from the Coffs Harbour Campus and the National Marine Science Centre.

d) The 3 External Student Representatives represent off campus students as well as students enrolled at Sydney, Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Mt Gambier and online, and at offshore locations.

e) The Director of Student Services, Coffs Harbour Campus Staff Representative, Gold Coast Campus Staff Representative and Senior Manager UniLife will be observers at SRC.

Eligibility

f) All enrolled students at SCU (subject to eligibility requirements below) are able to nominate to be a student representative on the SRC, or vote in an election to select the SRC student representatives.

g) To be eligible to nominate for a position on the SRC, a student must:

- clearly demonstrate that they represent the cohort for which they nominate. For example, to stand for election as the Lismore Postgraduate Student Representative, a student must be enrolled as a postgraduate student;
- be enrolled in units or load at SCU in the 6 months prior to the notice of election;

- not be employed by SCU at a time fraction of 0.5 or more on a continuing (permanent) basis; and
- not be suspended or on a leave of absence from SCU.
- Fulfil eligibility criteria (as described above) for the duration of the term of office
- Be able to serve a minimum of 1 term of office

h) To be eligible to vote in an election for the student representatives on the SRC, a student must be:
- enrolled in units or load at SCU in the 6 months prior to the notice of election; and
- not be suspended or on a leave of absence from SCU.

Elections

i) SCU will arrange (and meet the costs of) an online voting process for all enrolled students to:
- nominate themselves for a position on the SRC; and
- vote to elect the student representatives on the SRC.

j) It is not compulsory for students to nominate for a position on the SRC or vote for those who have nominated for positions on the SRC.

k) Students can only nominate to hold one position on the SRC.

l) Scheduled dates for the online nominations and voting for student representatives on the SRC are set out in Part 4 of this model.

m) The elected student representatives on the SRC are limited to 2 consecutive terms of office as an elected member in any elected position.

n) A term of office equals 1 year.

o) Elections will be conducted on a 'first past the post' basis.

p) The Returning Officer for the elections will maintain a list of the next most successful candidates from the elections for the SRC positions to be approached in the event that an elected representative is unable to continue in the role, for whatever reason.

q) See Part 4 "SRC Election Timetable".

3.3 Meetings

a) The SRC is to meet at least quarterly.

b) At least one meeting each year must be held at each campus (Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast).

c) Meetings do not need to be attended in person, i.e. other technologies may be utilised as appropriate (if those services are available).

d) The meetings are to be chaired by the PVC (A) or relevant executive member.

e) A quorum for a meeting is more than 50% of members, with the chair in attendance at all meetings.

f) The PVC (A) will appoint a secretary of the SRC to send notices of meetings and agendas, take minutes at meetings and attend to administrative enquiries.

g) If student representatives do not attend 2 consecutive meetings of the SRC, then the PVC (A) will stand that student representative down and approach the next most successful candidate from the elections for the SRC positions [see 3.2 (p) above].

h) The Chair of the SRC may invite other SCU officers to SRC meetings from time to time.

i) Additional meetings of the Student Representation Committee may be called throughout the year as required.

3.4 Reporting

a) Prior to the end of each calendar year, the SRC is to provide an annual written report to the Vice Chancellor (VC) about:
   (i) The expenditure priorities their student cohort has identified for the following calendar year; and
   (ii) Expenditure in the previous year including achievements and highlights
b) The annual written report of the SRC is to include a detailed budget for the identified expenditure priorities for the following year.
c) SCU's Finance and Business Services team will provide support with expenditure and budget control.

3.5 Funding

a) SCU will be responsible for meeting the reasonable pre-approved travel expenses of attendance at SRC meetings.
b) SCU will provide the student representatives on the SRC with a forum for electronic communication with their student cohorts (e.g. SCU webpage, Blackboard).
c) Third parties, including the existing student associations, will be able to submit proposals to the SRC for provision of services to students. Services include commercial and non-commercial services. Such proposals are to include fully costed plans including provision for staffing and operational costs etc.
d) The SRC will include recommendations regarding these proposals in its overall advice to the VC.
e) Funding to third parties must:
   (i) comply with SCU's policies including (if applicable) SCU's Purchasing Policy and Commercial Activities Policy; and
   (ii) be subject to contractual conditions or service level agreements;
   (iii) be financially transparent.
f) The effectiveness of the SRC and the provision of all services carried out by third parties, including the existing student associations, will be subject to independent evaluation.

3.6 Rules

The SRC is to comply with the Rules of the Student Representation Committee (to include content in this document and be drafted following consultation with the SRC).

4 SRC ELECTION TIMETABLE

Task	Detail	Date
1	a. **Publish call for nominations** on the SCU website, inform students via email. b. **Publish nomination forms** on SCU website with instructions to its use, including how to submit the nominations online. Nominations may include a candidate photograph and CV.	17 August
2	**Open nominations for elections**: Receive and provide online receipts of nominations.	
3	**Provide advice to candidates:** Publish on the SCU website instructions on acceptable campaigning material, withdrawal procedures and information regarding the Student Group.	
4	**Request electoral rolls from Technology Services:** All eligible student names and emails current at the date of close of nominations.	
5	**Close of nominations**: By way of email and notification on the SCU website advise electors of the close of nominations.	30 August at 12 noon
6	**Verify eligibility of nominations**: Check the nominations against the final Technology Services electoral list and advise candidates if ineligible.	
7	**Collate candidate statements and photographs**: Verify that the candidate photographs and statements meet the requirements listed in the candidate instructions information.	
8	**Provide candidate statements and photographs to e-election provider**: Email candidate information through to be displayed on election website.	
9	**Test of e-election provider voting website:** Test functionality to ensure accuracy of information on website.	
10	a. **Voting opens**: Voting takes place on e-election provider website b. Advise electorate also via SCU website and via email	30 August at 3 pm
11	**Election reminder:** Email sent to all students again to remind them to vote	10 September
12	**Voting Closes**: Advice that voting has closed via the SCU website and e-election provider's election website.	13 September
13	**Receive election results**: Results collected from e-election provider, check for quality of data.	
14	a. **Declare election results**: Via email and SCU website b. **Advise successful candidates**: Inform successful and unsuccessful candidates of the results and advise successful candidates what the next step is including initial meeting dates c. **Advise Vice Chancellor of election results**: Draft memorandum of the full election results to SCU VC.	14 September