UWS named Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for sustainable development – Greater Western Sydney

The Office of Sustainability is delighted to announce that the application to establish a Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development - Greater Western Sydney (RCE-GWS) with the United Nations University has been approved! An RCE is a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education organisations which is mobilised to deliver education for sustainable development (ESD) to local and regional communities. Fifteen major GWS regional partners including schools, TAFE, NGOs, local government and business alliances have committed to the RCE-GWS. A key focus is to establish the region as a living laboratory of sustainability using collaborative, action learning programs which are relevant, innovative, engaged and with a unique Greater Western Sydney narrative. UWS received its UN Charter in early February.

• UWS is the lead institution in an international study of turnaround leadership for sustainability in higher education (funded by the Australian Government at $178,000).
• Executive Director Geoff Scott recently gave an address on our study of HE sustainability leaders at the 8th International Conference on Cultural, Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Vancouver and then worked with a wide range of leading North American Universities and RCEs.
• As co-chair of the Salzburg Sustainable Futures Leadership Academy Geoff also met with 25 world leaders, including the president designate of the International Association of Universities to develop the first international program on the area for University Vice-Chancellors and Presidents.

• We have undertaken an initial stocktake of the extensive work on social, economic and environmental sustainability already underway in our courses, research, operations and engagement at UWS.
• UWS, TAFE WSI and the Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN) have signed an MOU to jointly pursue sustainability issues in GWS.
• UWS was an active partner in the inaugural 2011 NSW Youth EcoSummit (please contact Beatriz Cardona for more details).
• UWS and TAFE WSI have signed an MOU to jointly pursue sustainability issues in GWS.
• UWS, TAFE WSI and the Hawkesbury Environment Network have recently received International Waterkeepers endorsement for our Hawkesbury-Nepean Waterkeepers project.
• UWS, with the Australian Learning & Teaching Council (now the Office for Learning & Teaching), completed a national stocktake of sustainability in the curriculum of every Australian University in 2010– this was a finalist in the 2011 Green Globe Awards.
• UWS was recently ranked 4th nationally as a Green University by the Australian’s HES. We aim to win in 2012.

• The UWS Office of Sustainability is working with the UWS Provosts to build the campuses as living laboratories. This includes the development of the UWS Riverfarm on the Hawkesbury campus. This work is being benchmarked against parallel developments in universities around the world.
• The UWS Office of Sustainability is working with Paul Wormell and Kerri-Lee Krause on taking a more systematic approach to building education for sustainability (EfS) into the curriculum. This work is building on the extensive developments already completed in North America (via the AASHE network) and Europe (via the Copernicus Network).
• Professors Kerri-Lee Krause and Geoff Scott are convening the inaugural UWS EfS Network forum in April. If you would like to attend please contact Helen Angelakis in the Office of Sustainability at: h.angelakis@uws.edu.au