PROJECT FUNDRAISING FRAMEWORK AT CQUNIVERSITY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University can improve how it leverages its external engagement and relationships as well as its internal fundraising resources, by being purposeful in its fundraising activity. Being purposeful includes being mindful that *donors give to CQUniversity because we meet community needs, rather than because the University has needs.*

1.2 Individual donors, organisations and governments want to support projects that will deliver maximum impact for their philanthropy/support. Now more than ever, fundraisers are competing on the basis of how their organisations demonstrate value and outcomes that are of interest to funders.

1.3 To improve fundraising outcomes at CQUniversity, there is a need to consider strategizing and planning for short term, opportunistic activity and long term, deliberate activity. As an engaged University, it is appropriate we properly apply ourselves to the opportunities that are presented to us by external stakeholders as well as opportunities we purposefully develop in partnership with a range of internal and external partners.

1.4 Short term, 'near-horizon' activity responds to government and charitable sector grant cycles or industry need, and includes opportunities presented by state and federal elections, particularly in marginal seat locations. While the opportunity to 'pitch' is facilitated under these short term conditions, the need to maintain reputation and relationships leading to 'pitch time' is a critical underlying success component.

1.5 This relationship component is also critical to longer term fundraising activity which aims to engage individuals to give to the University – it is the quality of the relationship, rather than fund availability that is the key driver of success.

1.6 There is a need for leaders of the University to actively embrace fundraising by developing and committing to short and long term projects and initiatives that will be attractive to funders, as well as beneficial to the advancement of the University and the communities it serves.

1.7 Leadership is critical to the strategy, governance and operational effectiveness of significant fundraising. Leaders are the individuals inside and outside the University who will contribute their expertise, time, authority and networks to help develop and realise projects. Leaders also take an active role in developing, implementing and adjusting fundraising strategy, and monitoring and reporting on effectiveness.

2   BACKGROUND TO INDENTIFYING FOCUS FOR PROJECTS

2.1   A process of strategic questioning[1] has taken place to identify where key leaders[2] see opportunity for the University to improve its impact on its communities. The responses have been analysed to identify themes with critical mass that may be attractive to funders.

2.2   Critical mass is important as it:

- reflects opportunities that have the support of several leaders, suggesting the capacity for collaboration

- suggests an increased likelihood of the development of high-impact multi-disciplinary projects that will attract external funding

- provides scope for donor influence

- provides potential to achieve cut-through reputational gains for the University

- allows focus to efforts while achieving maximum impact internally.

3   FINDINGS FROM STRATEGIC QUESTIONING

3.1   *Power of Place and Regional Need is Paramount*.

3.2   Regardless of their location, being responsive to the needs of their local community is the common philosophy shared by leaders.

3.3   There is significant recognition that the University's raison d'être and heritage is in Central Queensland and that its key opportunities for impact will continue to be driven by the needs of its regional heartland.

3.4   Other Queensland regions hold the promise of opportunity as the University's brand and performance becomes established in those communities.

3.5   The University's commitment to regional Australia is reflected in its diverse regional areas of operation, establishing the University's credentials as a significant player and leader for the development of communities across regional Australia.

3.6   The University's presence in metropolitan settings is understood in terms of student rather than community impact – in summary, the University is regarded as a provider of niche programs and support to domestic students and popular programs for international students.

3.7   The weight of competition from bigger, more established brands and the difficulty of engaging without our 'power of place' in metropolitan communities presents a significant challenge in demonstrating how the host metropolitan communities are benefiting from the University's efforts.

3.8   While the impact on a student in achieving a qualification that opens their door of opportunity is easily understood, it is much harder to demonstrate how the University is penetrating metropolitan community fabric to play a critical role, in the way that it can demonstrate in regional Queensland.

3.9   It is considered that 'power of place' opportunities may exist outside of Central Queensland in regions and communities where the University is perceived as a trusted vehicle through which advocates and leaders of local communities can sponsor change.

4   OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT – KEY THEMES

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

4.1   It is considered that the University could improve its community impact if it had a strong focus on building the entrepreneurial capacity and sustainability of SMEs. There is perceived to be both a significant community need (ie high SME failure rates and low SME innovation) and a reputational differentiation opportunity for the University.

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[1] Director, Development & Alumni Relations developed questions and conducted interviews
[2] Pro Vice Chancellors, Associate Vice Chancellors and Deans

Community Resilience and Leadership

4.2 Central Queensland and other key regions in which CQUniversity works are subject to challenging conditions – environmental (including built), economic, psychological and social that require its communities to demonstrate resilience. Leaders of the University share a desire to support and improve regional community resilience and leadership.

Research Capacity Building

4.3 Being able to offer many more research higher degree scholarships was identified as a fundamental driver of the University's research output, sustainability and reputation as well as a demonstrable contribution to delivering positive change to its community. The scholarships would align with the University's research strengths and focus tightly on areas of agreed community need.

Better access and support for Indigenous people

4.4 There is a shared desire to do more to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and develop Indigenous strengths for future development and sustainability of Indigenous communities as well as advance Reconciliation through addressing profound disparities in education, health and wellbeing.

Social Innovation

4.5 Working with our communities in a collaborative way, using a range of strategies including human-centred design-thinking, to address entrenched social issues and identify opportunities to grow resilience and prosperity.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The University adopts a model for the development of projects that encourages a collaborative approach across disciplines and regions. Collaboration will stimulate participation and inspire progressive, unique and compelling projects.

5.2 The fundraising projects and initiatives should support the University's values, mission and strategic direction, while also allowing external parties to influence how impact is created.

5.3 Project fundraising activity should be based on impact that can be delivered primarily in regional, rural and remote settings in:

   a) Central Queensland

   b) Regional Queensland

   c) Regional Australia

   d) Metropolitan settings if the activity can also be delivered in regional settings.

5.4 Projects should be developed to be attractive to funders in terms of impact ie -

   a) far reaching and externally focused

   b) linked to strategic priorities, areas of excellence

   c) note-worthy, specific, engaging, relevant, innovative

   d) reflect opportunity for community change rather than university need.

5.5 Projects should be developed under the banner of identified themes to help create a powerful story and framework for success.

5.6 Leadership frameworks should be established to determine priorities; develop and monitor projects; support staff and seek funds.

6   CONCLUSION

This paper proposes a way forward and seeks feedback to inform future success.

7   FEEDBACK

7.1   University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

8   APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

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