

## **Undergraduate Cultural Audit – Response**

On behalf of the College Executive Committee I would like to firstly thank the May Group for their hard work in the completion of this cultural audit. Furthermore I would like to commend Fifty50 for their contributions to the planning of this audit and those that took the time to participate in the audit itself.

Culture is extremely important to any organisation. Culture impacts on our performance as a group and as individuals. Our College culture can also impact our personal lives, it's easy to forget just how much of our lives that we spend within this community. Our undergraduate students are fully immersed in that culture: studying, socialising and often living with others who are part of it.

The May Group presented their report to us in November of last year and we shared many of the same reactions that you will as you read this document. Before we detail the College's response, I would like to address one of those reactions.

Intellectually we recognise, as you will, the dangers inherent in extrapolating from such a small sample size. The opinions expressed and some of the events described could simply be outliers and not representative of the broader undergraduate culture within our College. However, from our own knowledge and from previous work, the issues highlighted have been raised before and many are not unique to our College, but impact broadly across students within STEM disciplines. All of that being said, the report identifies several incidents that, even in isolation, insist that we reflect on what we can do better and to make positive change.

Following the presentation of this report, the College Executive tasked the Sub Dean (Engaged Learning) to draft an initial Action Plan. This plan would consist of first steps: items that are achievable on a short (< 1 year) timeframe and that set the groundwork for a more in depth long term plan to be developed.

The plan was developed in consultation with the Student Experience Coordinators in each school and with input from members of the Executive. It was subsequently approved in December of last year. The plan has many components, some of which are already in the early stages of implementation.

It must be emphasised that these are our first steps only, and by themselves are insufficient. Creating the culture that we want for our College will take time and effort from all of us. It will require energy and ideas of the wider College community and their involvement in the development of a longer term strategy.

This report, despite its confronting contents, should not be seen solely in the negative. It's an opportunity to make this College a better place for our students.

Regards,



Prof Elanor Huntington

Dean, ANU College of Engineering & Computer Science

## Why culture matters to CECS & the ANU

In the ANU's 2017 Strategic Plan, we laid out a clear set of institutional values:

- We bring a distinctive excellence to our work and have the confidence to pursue original ideas.
- We are inclusive, open and respectful, reflecting the diversity of our nation.
- We are committed to integrity and ethical behaviour.
- We value, enable, reward and celebrate collegiality.
- We embrace informed risk-taking in pursuit of our objectives.
- We are committed to better outcomes for our community, the environment, our nation and the world.
- We are committed to the service of our nation, through original thinking and through courage in advancing our ideas.

In CECS we believe in these values and in building a culture founded upon them. We know that culture is a critical piece of any institution, and it is important that ours is healthy and robust. In particular our undergraduate students are fully immersed in that culture: studying, socialising and often living with others who are part of it.

## CECS Cultural Audit Response – Action Plan (3 October 2017)

This document details the initial response of the ANU College of Engineering and Computer Science to the undergraduate cultural audit undertaken in 2016, including the actions we have already taken, the initiatives that are starting right now and the beginnings of a longer term plan. You can find a summary of the audit report at <https://cecs.anu.edu.au/cultural-audit>. Its findings are not reflective of the kind of culture we want for our College. Creating an inclusive culture that is respectful of diversity is a priority for us.

Changing our culture will require initiative, time and effort from all of us. This plan is just the beginning. Help us to take the next step. You will find a few ways to engage right now below, and there will be further calls to action in the near future.

### Actions we have already taken

The College created a single visible position that reports to the Dean with responsibility for developing an evidence-based diversity and inclusion strategy, and overseeing its implementation. Prof Genevieve Bell has filled this **new position of Associate Dean (Diversity & Inclusion)** in the interim. A longer term appointment process is underway. We will invite student representatives to help us select a candidate. The AD (D&I) sits on the College Executive Committee.

The College provided **unconscious bias training** to all **staff** with senior management responsibilities, and will require this annually moving forward. We developed **educational modules for students** on gender inclusiveness, cultural sensitivity and unconscious bias and piloted them in several first-contact<sup>1</sup> courses in computer science and engineering in both semesters this year. The feedback from these pilots will inform the design of a broader set of professional development modules that will be integrated throughout our curriculum. We will continue to iteratively test and refine these with students and academics moving forward.

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<sup>1</sup> "First-contact" includes first-year students both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as articulation and transfer students entering in later years and non-CECS students taking specific CECS courses.

Building on the latest research and best known practices, both the Research School of Computer Science and the Research School of Engineering have changed the way we advertise, fill and manage tutoring and demonstrating roles to foster the broadest possible participation. There is now an **open call for expressions of interest for all tutoring and demonstrating positions** prior to each semester. Tutors and lab demonstrators are now selected in a transparent process and the College provides additional training to all casual teaching staff.

Both Schools have **strengthened** their **student feedback mechanisms** to provide multiple independent feedback channels and more robust reporting on actions taken in response to student feedback.

### Initiatives that are starting right now and for which we need your help

Contact details for the *people responsible for these initiatives* and further information can be found at <https://cecs.anu.edu.au/cultural-audit>. The *Student Experience Team* will update this webpage regularly with new information.

We have started to develop a broad set of **professional development modules for students** for integration with our core curriculum by the end of 2018. The modules will include material on professional conduct, gender inclusiveness, cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias and respectful relationships. The Schools are taking an evidence-based approach in the development of these materials and are aiming at no less than leading their disciplines in this area. If you would like to engage with this development please contact the *Sub-Dean Engaged Learning, Dr Matthew Doolan* or the *Associate Director (Education)* in your School, *A/Prof Klaus Weber* in Engineering or *Dr Uwe Zimmer* in Computer Science. There will also be opportunities to engage with this initiative via surveys and focus groups.

We are starting a **research project** that will ensure that we have **robust data on our progress** towards an inclusive culture that is respectful of diversity. The College will partner with a specialist research institute such as the ANU's Social Research Centre to ensure we are using appropriate and objective measures and a methodology that allows us to adapt our strategy as we progress. We will gather baseline data in the first half of 2018 and regularly measure our progress over the coming years. If you would like to engage with this project, please contact *A/Prof Dirk Pattinson* or *A/Prof Jochen Trumpf*.

The Computer Science Students' Association (CSSA), the Engineering Students Association (ESA), the ANU Students' Association (ANUSA) CECS representatives and Fifty50 have committed to helping the *Student Experience Team* and the *College Executive* to **shape the longer term strategy and plan for cultural change**. The Student Associations will form a coalition for diversity and inclusion to help coordinate activities that will drive positive cultural change. Students who would like to be involved should contact the current *ANUSA CECS reps* Ash Wang and Emma Boyd.

Student teams can apply for **funding from the Student Experience Fund** to realise projects that contribute to positive cultural change. If you have an idea and need support please contact the *Sub-Dean Engaged Learning, Dr Matthew Doolan* or the *Deputy Manager Student Services, Ms Natalie Young*. Want to set up a **photo competition** for non-stereotypical images of computing and engineering professionals? Want to form a team that helps the College find a **design for the common spaces in our new building(s)** that is founded on inclusive principles? Want to set up a platform where we can **collect and discuss evidence-based articles** on diversity and inclusion? These are just examples. We are open for your ideas. Please get in touch.

## The beginnings of a longer term plan

We recognise that culture cannot be changed overnight but there are **examples of successful transformations of culture** in our disciplines at other universities, for example in the School of Computer Science and College of Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University<sup>2</sup>, the School of Engineering at Brown University<sup>3</sup>, Caltech<sup>4</sup> or Harvey Mudd College<sup>5</sup>. The College will reach out to these institutions and seek advice and guidance on our own journey. We will **host a long-term visit in 2018 and/or 2019 of a senior academic leader** who is involved in a successful process of cultural change at their home institution. If you have a concrete proposal for someone we should target please contact the *Dean, Prof Elanor Huntington*.

Our College forms the technical professional part of the University, and part of our mission is to ensure that our graduates uphold the highest professional standards. As the national university, we have a mandate to play a **national leadership** role in this space. The College will explore ways to work with the national professional peak bodies, the Australian Computer Society<sup>6</sup> and Engineers Australia<sup>7</sup>, to allow us to draw on a larger set of experiences across the sector in Australia.

Once the College has appointed a new Associate Dean (Diversity & Inclusion), they will lead the College through a process of developing an **evidence-based long term diversity and inclusion strategy**. Some of the initiatives detailed above will contribute to the groundwork for this strategy. We will all need to show initiative and take responsibility in this process. Let's get started today!

The ANU College of Engineering and Computer Science leadership team  
*Elanor Huntington, Alistair Rendell, Saman Halgamuge, Thushara Abhayapala,  
Leanne Cambridge, Jochen Trumpf, Steve Blackburn, Dan Macdonald, Genevieve Bell,  
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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cmu.edu/news/stories/archives/2016/september/undergrad-women-engineering-computer-science.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brown.edu/academics/engineering/about/diversity>

<sup>4</sup> <https://diversitycenter.caltech.edu/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hmc.edu/diversity/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.acs.org.au/insightsandpublications/news/2017/124397.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Diversity-Strategy>