Principle 5
Value and recognise individual and cultural diversity through the provision of an inclusive context of support and respect for all students.

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In my teaching I seek to contribute to the development of a learning environment that acknowledges and engages with students as ‘whole people.’ I keep in the forefront of my mind that I am working with people not just students. I am reminded often of Anita Roddick’s (founder of the Body Shop) (2000) reflection, ‘We advertised for staff but people turned up!’ The somewhat arbitrary differentiation of students’ personal and learning needs, and the simplifying assumption that the former are ‘someone else’s responsibility’ is a recurring theme in higher education (Silver & Silver, 1997). I have sought to express this aspect of academic leadership in three main ways: support for individual students, developing co-curricular programs, and enhancing the learning and teaching system.

For example, the Professional Capability Program (PCP), developed by my colleague Professor Alf Lizzio and I in the School of Psychology is a School-based co-curricular program, that focuses in an integrated way on students’ personal and vocational needs over the lifecycle of the degree. The PCP was first run in 2002 and systematically evaluated for two years (2002-2003). The success of the PCP program is indicated firstly, at a more general level within the University by the adoption of the lifecycle framework to inform the delivery of student services, and, more specifically, by the adoption of the LAMP and GO programs by other Schools within the Health Group. The PCP, developed in consultation with students, consists of a suite of five co-curricular programs across the student lifecycle:
1) The TRIAL Program (Taking Responsibility for Independent Academic Learning);
2) The LAMP Program (Learning About My Profession);
3) The WEP Program (Workplace Experience Program);
4) The MACE Program (Mentoring Academic Colleagues Effectively);
5) The GO Program (Graduate Outcomes).

Other examples of initiatives specifically designed to increase our capacity as a School to recognise and address the particular needs of students from differing backgrounds or pathways includes a raft of macro and micro-level interventions aimed at enhancing the academic success of our Indigenous Australian students. These innovations include:
- raising the awareness of the needs of our Indigenous Australian students with staff in key administrative and academic contact roles;
- liaising with the Undergraduate Program Convenor to facilitate cultural understanding in relation to factors affecting timely completion of assessment;
- curriculum enrichment (e.g., working with academic staff towards the incorporation of more Indigenous Australian studies material into the School curriculum);
- support processes (e.g., providing a specific orientation for our first year Indigenous Australian students; meeting with individual students, on request, to discuss academic progress, and future career directions); and
- policy development (e.g., negotiating an equity policy for Indigenous Australian students for entry into our honours program).