



How support from UQ set me up for success

By DARBY JONES

In 2020, I commenced my Bachelor of Arts at The University of Queensland (UQ) as an anxious, mature-aged student. As the first in my family to attend university, I had no idea what to expect or whether I could handle the demands of tertiary education.

Three years later, in December 2023, I received my degree as the valedictorian of my graduating class.

This would not have been possible without two things. Firstly, the generous scholarships I received. Secondly, the unwavering support from the UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit (ATSISU).

These two pillars of support helped me in the following ways.

Tailored orientation

Shortly after I accepted my offer from UQ, I received an email from the ATSISU. They welcomed me to UQ and invited me to an online introduction session, where I met many other commencing students. The presentation included useful information about what to expect from – and how to prepare for – the transition to university.

Two weeks after I had started my degree, I met with the ATSISU's Academic Support Service Coordinator. She spoke to me about my goals and aspirations before recommending majors, minors, and courses she believed I would enjoy.

With the support of the ATSISU, I felt prepared for whatever my time at UQ would bring.

Regular updates

The ATSISU emails its students a weekly newsletter called the ATSISU Weekly Bulletin. This newsletter was

a great way to stay up to date with things that are happening both on and off campus.

It includes comprehensive lists of scholarships, internships, research, volunteering, and employment opportunities, as well as information about community events happening within the ATSISU.

It was in the ATSISU Weekly Bulletin that I first discovered information about two of the scholarships I was awarded during my time at UQ (one of which covered the cost of on-campus accommodation).

A home away from home

Keve Carmody House was an amazing place to live. Being on campus really helped me get the most out of my time at UQ. The facilities are out of this world. It felt like quite a luxury to study by the rooftop pool, prepare my meals in the large industrial kitchen, and kick back in the cinema.

My room was on the fifteenth floor. I woke up every morning to the view of mountains in the distance, reminding me how far I'd come and how much further I could go.

During my time at UQ, the ATSISU and generous scholarships empowered me to focus on my studies. I wouldn't be where I am today without them.

If you're thinking about going to university, I encourage you to reach out to the ATSISU. There are so many wonderful people there who genuinely want to see you succeed.

Find out more about the ATSISU at indigenous-engagement.uq.edu.au/atsisu or by emailing atsis@uq.edu.au.

Darby Jones is a Kamilaroi writer and editor whose work has been featured in Griffith Review Online, Island Magazine, The Brisbane Times, and various other publications. For more information, visit darbyjones.au.

Engineering a promising path to university and beyond

Amy Beckett started Year 12 unsure whether she wanted to attend university.

After participating in one of The University of Queensland's (UQ) InspireU camps, however, this outlook changed.

Inspiring high schoolers to consider university

InspireU brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students from across the state for a week-long camp at UQ's St Lucia campus in Brisbane. The aim is to empower Indigenous students to explore their higher education options through interactive, fun and educational activities.

Attending InspireU camps helped Amy envision what her life could be like as a UQ student.

"I received lots of support at the camp and got to meet current engineering students," Amy says.

"This really helped put me in a university mindset and made me aware of the opportunities open to me, including scholarships."

Making the transition

Amy decided to undertake a double degree in engineering and economics at UQ and moved from the Gold Coast to begin her studies. Upon arrival, she was relieved to see the familiar, friendly faces of InspireU staff around campus.

"The team ensure they're around to give you support when you get to university. They're still a big part of my uni journey," Amy says.

"Whether you're looking for tutoring, activities to get involved in, or just a chat, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit is there to help."

Helping others find their way

Motivated by her own positive experience, Amy is now a student ambassador for the InspireU program. She helps bridge the gap between high school students and UQ staff.

"Students often feel more comfortable talking with me casually before approaching staff for more information," she says.

"I can also give them exposure to my field of study, so they can decide if engineering is something they're interested in."



Amy Beckett is a proud Aboriginal woman studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Economics at UQ.

The role helps Amy stay engaged with the Indigenous community at UQ, and she describes it as rewarding.

"It's good to feel like I'm benefitting someone who was in my shoes a few years ago."

Gaining professional experience

Amy has gained further momentum in her studies by undertaking internships with GHD, BHP, Hatch and Boeing.

"It's given me insight into what it means to work as an engineer in different industries," she says.

"I'm much more confident in an office

setting now, and I've developed soft skills in communication and organisation."

Amy is a recipient of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation-BHP Tertiary Scholarship, which is awarded to outstanding Indigenous students in engineering and science who aspire to become leaders in business.

"They've sponsored me for my entire degree and are the reason I could afford to relocate to study," she says.

Amy is set to have plenty of work experience and industry connections to draw on once she completes her degree. She hopes to gain work in the renewable energy sector after graduation.