

MEDIA RELEASE

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Feedback on student engagement can improve higher education, says ACER

Meaningful feedback on student engagement in higher education can be used to help institutions to attract and retain students and support students' learning, education experts will tell the 2009 Student Engagement Forum this week.

The Forum, to be hosted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and La Trobe University in Melbourne on Thursday, will feature keynote speaker Indiana University's Professor George Kuh, the Founding Director of the United States' National Survey of Student Engagement.

The US National Survey of Student Engagement has been used to survey approximately 1,200 colleges and universities since its 2000 debut, and led to the development of a similar test in Australia and New Zealand, ACER's Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE).

AUSSE program director, ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Hamish Coates, will also speak on how universities can use AUSSE results to improve education.

"Information about university student engagement can help institutions attract and retain students, support student learning and development, determine the value added by a university experience, manage resources, monitor academic standards and learning outcomes, and monitor programs and services," says Dr Coates.

"Engaging students in the overall educational experience, providing effective individual support, and setting high expectations may induce students to complete their education.

"This is particularly important in light of recent AUSSE results that show a third of Australian and New Zealand university students seriously consider leaving their institutions before graduation," he says.

More than 25,000 students from 29 Australian and New Zealand universities participated in the latest cycle of the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE), conducted in 2008.

The 2009 Student Engagement Forum, 'Promoting Student Engagement for Learning: Improving Practice with AUSSE Data', will be held at La Trobe University on Thursday, 2 July.

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