

Course tailored to the needs of managers

Susan Dimitriadis, Faulding librarian

The distance education course *Strategic planning for the information manager* was offered at just the right time for me. The brochure on the Australian Library and Information Association's professional development courses offered in partnership with Edith Cowan University, arrived along with other library literature early last year. Although keen to gain some formal management skills, I was not yet tempted enough to undertake a long-term post-graduate qualification. A short, targeted course seemed a suitable alternative.

The description of the course emphasises its practical nature, in that it provides professionals with appropriate tools to make library services an integral part of the organisation. At the time I decided to undertake the course, preparing a business plan was on my list of objectives. I also wanted to position the library so that its value as an information provider would become more visible within the company. I had joined Faulding in 1995 with a brief to transform a limited manual

library service. Making changes was not enough, however: it was also important to indicate how I planned to develop the service and to gauge management support for its new role.

After enrolment, I received the course notes and instructions to complete the assignment within twelve weeks. Students are required to prepare a strategic plan and program budget for the information service of their choice and present the results in a report format that is suitable for submission to senior management.

The resulting document included a rationale of the strategic plan; a review of the service and the parent organisation; an external and internal scan; an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; a vision and mission statement; goals and objectives; and preferred strategies and budget worksheets. The library service is costed as a group of programs instead of the traditional line-item budget for operating, staff and capital expenditure. The total cost of provid-

ing a program, such as document delivery, becomes immediately apparent. Program budgeting also makes it easier to demonstrate the likely impact on library services of a particular decrease in funding. Using the provided budget worksheet format, students describe each program in terms of its purpose, activities, outcomes, performance indicators, staffing inputs, resources required, alternative course of action and consequences of non-approval.

The course notes are well written and there is a series of useful exercises. There is also a bibliography for further reading. I liked too the fact that I could undertake this course at my own pace and without having to attend lectures. I was particularly pleased with the lively and detailed comments that Vicky Watson, course coordinator, jotted throughout my assignment. Her comments were invaluable and much appreciated. I certainly would recommend this course to anyone who would like to gain practical skills in a critical area of library management. ■



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY and the AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION



offer the following short courses (distance education) in 1997:

	Fees	Available from
Project Management for Information Services	\$200 ALIA/\$240 non-ALIA	Now
Strategic Planning for the Information Manager	\$200 ALIA/\$240 non-ALIA	Now
Upgrading Search Strategy Skills (Consists of three modules)	\$100 ALIA/\$150 non-ALIA (per module)	Now
Advances in Information Technologies	\$250 ALIA/\$400 non-ALIA (per course)	Now
Selection of Electronic Resources	\$340 ALIA/\$400 non-ALIA	March '97
	\$340 ALIA/\$400 non-ALIA	June '97

- Enrolments may commence at any time.
- Participants are given generous time allowance to ensure that they will be able to work at their own pace to complete the course requirements.
- Course materials are self-paced, and available in print and electronic form through the World Wide Web.
- Courses are supported by Edith Cowan University's Virtual Campus which provides electronic information and communication services for participants via Austpac, local modem and AARNet.

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Information is correct at time of going to press.