Inaugural winner of DVCISS award

Associate Professor Jaime Gongora from the Faculty of Veterinary Science is the inaugural recipient of the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding and Innovative Contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy.

The award, which comes with a $10,000 prize, recognises Dr Gongora’s vision and drive behind 16 new initiatives - spanning the areas of cultural competence, curriculum development, student support and research - launched in 2013 and 2014. University of Sydney Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) Professor Shane Houston said he was delighted to announce Dr Gongora as the recipient of the award.

“It is the impressive breadth of his initiatives across Wingara Mura’s objectives, the real progress he has been able to achieve, his leadership and advocacy, and the collegiate and engaging way he has done this made him the stand out choice, from what was a stellar group of nominations,” Professor Houston said. “Outstanding people like Associate Professor Gongora live the example that making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education everyone’s business can produce remarkable results.”

Associate Professor Gongora’s diverse contributions included developing a comprehensive framework of graduate attributes and learning outcomes to embed cultural competence in the curriculum across the Faculty of Veterinary Science. He also established a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolio in the faculty, promoted student experiences and achievements, and set up new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summer and winter school programs.

Associate Professor Gongora said the initiatives implemented by the faculty had promoted diversity, and led to the recruitment and support of more pre-vet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The faculty sets aside a minimum 12 percent of places each year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, rural and disadvantaged students.

“There is now a broad perception in the faculty that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local plan has generated a more culturally competent environment where students feel welcome, confident and proud,” he said.