



COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT
AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award recognises CASE member institution heads, presidents, chancellors, system heads, or other campus chief executive officers for outstanding efforts in promoting and supporting education and institutional advancement. Overall, nominees must demonstrate the ability to actively support advancement, create a vision and inspire others, establish a positive image for their institution while leading it to higher levels of success, increase their institution's stature in the community, and encourage innovation among employees.

Citation for 2019 CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award Recipient

Dr Michael Spence AC, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, The University of Sydney

Dr Michael Spence's outstanding leadership has transformed the physical and economic profile of the University of Sydney as its 25th Vice-Chancellor. Among his many achievements, he presided over a bold philanthropic campaign (INSPIRED) that raised over AUD\$1 billion - the first tertiary institution in Australia to accomplish this successfully.

Upon assuming the position of Vice-Chancellor and Principal in 2008, Dr Spence began implementing the framework for the campaign, alongside former Vice-Principal of Advancement, Tim Dolan. In keeping with the University's strategic plan for 2011-2015, INSPIRED was envisaged as a strategy to deepen engagement with alumni and friends as well as raising philanthropic funds for priority areas. The campaign was made public in May of 2013, and was regarded by many as an ambitious endeavour, unlikely to succeed in the Australian philanthropic environment. However, under Dr Spence's visionary leadership, the INSPIRED campaign has exceeded all expectations.

As key custodian of the campaign, Dr Spence was a driving force behind several positive changes at the University of Sydney. He reinforced the value of engagement and philanthropy at scale, and the campaign was targeted to alumni, friends and supporters of the University throughout the world. As a result, donations were received across 75 different countries.

At the Vice-Chancellor's recommendation, the University implemented a donor-centric approach to major gifts. This approach involved researching a donor's passions, to align them to funding opportunities within the University. The donor relations strategy of the University was also adjusted, with a personalised, bespoke approach taken to all donor communications. These combined strategies yielded incredible results and the University reached its initial AUD\$600 million fundraising goal, two years ahead of schedule, in 2017.

Dr Spence has actively supported Advancement at the University of Sydney, and his involvement has been a decisive factor in the success of the campaign. He was personally involved in raising AUD\$480.5 million. He has given thousands of hours of his time towards furthering the University's fundraising goals. Since the campaign's official launch in 2013, he represented the University in 402 face-to-face donor meetings; written to every donor to say 'thank you' for their gift to the campaign; attended over 200 stewardship events and hosted nine major events for the University's Division of Alumni and Development, many of which have led to discussions around giving.

Outside of his contributions to the INSPIRED campaign, Dr Spence has increased the stature of the University within the Australian and international community. Since his appointment, the University has maintained its position as one of the top 50 universities in the world by the QS World University Rankings. The University also increased its position in four other influential ranking categories and is listed among the top 80. In April 2019, all 22 of the University's research fields were rated as 'above' or 'well above' world standard, by the Australian Research Council (ARC). Such awards highlight the growing success of the University under the direction of Dr Spence.

The Vice-Chancellor's exceptional leadership and networking skills have also facilitated important additions to the university campus - including the establishment of the Brain and Mind Centre and the Charles Perkins Centre. Although relatively new additions, these multi-disciplinary teaching and research initiatives are proving to be crucial for the attraction of funds and world-class researchers to the university. He has also driven investment in the physical university environment, both on and off the Camperdown campus.

Under the stewardship of Dr Spence, the University has maintained a strong and steady pace in reviewing service improvements and efficiencies, releasing resources for reallocation to research, education, student experience and other strategic initiatives. A simplified leadership structure will enable faster, better informed institutional decision making. The University's faculty model has been refreshed to comprise of just five faculties and three University schools including a single, integrated Faculty of Medicine and Health. The opening of the landmark Chau Chak Wing Museum on 18 November 2020 will allow rarely seen objects from the University's collections to be displayed for the first time.

Dr Spence has championed the principle of gender equity across all areas of study at the University of Sydney. Under his leadership, the number of women enrolling in Engineering degrees increased to 32 percent, double the Australian average.

His commitment to centralisation and the stronger integration of academic disciplines has resulted in a more cohesive educational experience for students, such as the new four-year undergraduate curriculum, introduced in 2018. As part of this new curriculum structure, Dr Spence introduced common course structures and definitions across each award course. This new structure provides students with new opportunities to study or work with other disciplines and get involved in real-world projects.

Dr Spence has enhanced the reputation of the University of Sydney, both in Australia and on the global stage. His exceptional leadership has been instrumental to the success of the INSPIRED philanthropic campaign, which achieved a fundraising goal unmatched yet by other tertiary institutions in the country. Under his direction, the university has pioneered new developments and published world-class research, cementing its place as a centre for educational excellence.

In recognition of his inspiring leadership and the development of a strong culture of advancement at the University of Sydney, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education proudly presents Dr Michael Spence with the CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award.

The entry of the INSPIRED campaign into the 2019 CASE Platinum Award for Fundraising has also won the University the rare distinction of being named not only the best in the Asia-Pacific region, but also the best in the world. This is indeed a rare distinction worth noting and celebrating.

CASE celebrates the distinguished achievements of Dr Spence and the University of Sydney, which inspires our colleagues in advancement around the world to innovate and engage their communities.