

**Dowsing or Changing the Climate?: Developing strategy to attract and retain a diversity of talent in engineering and IT.**

P.Agius & B.Holland

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**Abstract**

The language of workforce planning often speaks in terms of a quest to locate 'pools of talent'. In faculties with a low representation of women, such as engineering and IT, preoccupation with student recruitment can overshadow the need to diversify the faculty profile by gender. Participation and success in these fields by women needs to be understood as a continuum in which options to enrol in research and pursue an academic career need to be communicated and modelled by faculty and industry mentors. A 2008 national report on engineering education calls for increased recruitment of women engineers and research students to academic positions in engineering schools. The authors argue that there needs to be a systemic strategy to identify and nurture potential engineering faculty. This should be informed by evidence of the deterrents to embarking on, and progressing a career in academia. It is best cast as a strategy to 'change the climate' rather than an esoteric quest for hidden wells.

[www.altc.edu.au/project-ensuring-supply-quality-uts-2006](http://www.altc.edu.au/project-ensuring-supply-quality-uts-2006)

**Building alliances for change: models of practice**  
**Cineliteracy Summer School: creating aspiration and developing academic skills**

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**THEME:** Colloboration between universities and education departments can lead to creating successful intensive learning experiences for 'first in family' students which improve engagement in learning and create aspiration for university students.

**SUMMARY:** This paper will discuss a recent innovative joint project between UTS and the NSW DET Priority School to conduct an intensive summer school for students from low SES backgrounds which aimed to improve engagement with learning and create aspiration for university study.

**KEY WORDS:** Schools Outreach, cross sector collaboration, learning experiences, building aspiration for tertiary study.

**FULL ABSTRACT:** This paper will discuss a successful collaboration between UTS and the NSW Department of Education to jointly co-fund and conduct an intensive summer school for low SES secondary school students. 'First in family' students from Year 9 and 10 NSW DET Priority Funded high schools were invited to apply for places in the 'Make it Reel' Cineliteracy Summer School to develop their creative learning and literacy. During the structured three-week program, featuring team building, writing, budgeting, computer literacy and film-making, 30 students produced three short films, one of which was later short-listed in a local short-film festival. (The NSW DET Priority Schools Program provides additional funding to schools which have a high proportion of low SES families.)

The Summer School aimed to improve literacy and learning outcomes, develop student motivation for HSC study, and create aspiration for higher education. The pilot program was so successful it will be incorporated as an ongoing feature of the UTS Schools Outreach program and will include follow-up programs at schools. In 2010 longitudinal evaluation tools will be developed to supplement the qualitative surveys conducted with participants before and after the 2009 Summer School.

The paper will identify factors that made this Summer School successful and discuss how this can be applied to other school outreach activities. Some of the keys to success were:

- A supportive, long-term collaboration between UTS and the Department of Education built on a shared commitment to equity principles and practice.
- A highly engaging curriculum based on an existing program developed by a UTS academic for NSW schools, using film-making to improve engagement in learning and literacy.
- A small team environment in which students created and directed their own films, and gained self-confidence, motivation and team skills.
- A direct experience of the university environment. The summer school was held on campus and supported by UTS students enrolled in media production courses who acted as role models and tutors. Students gained confidence in travelling to university and working with university students and lecturers.

## **RURAL RECONNECT PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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**THEME:** Rethinking equity groups and disadvantage in an era of social inclusion

**SUMMARY:** This presentation will share information and preliminary data from the Rural Reconnect project at the University of South Australia

**KEYWORDS:** Rural; disadvantage

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Two decades ago people from rural and isolated areas were identified in Australia's *A Fair Chance for All* (DEET 1990) as one of six educationally disadvantaged groups in higher education. More recently the Australian Government, in response to the recommendations of the Bradley Review, suggested changes to Youth Allowance eligibility criteria that if implemented, will have significant implications for the participation of rural and remote students in higher education, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds. Recognition of the challenges facing rural students seeking to access higher education is based primarily on the fact that most rural students must leave home in order to attend university and that there are significant financial costs involved in moving and living away from home. Yet as other studies show, while the costs of higher education are a major deterrent for rural students, there are also other complex social issues that can affect school students' aspirations towards higher education. What is relatively unexplored is the way in which financial and social factors interact and affect the experiences of rural students while they are still at school and while they are in transition and subsequently engaged in higher education.

A multi-dimensional and longitudinal pilot project introduced at the University of South Australia in 2009 is aimed at gathering information about the experiences and aspirations of rural school students, rural school leavers who defer their university study and rural students who study at UniSA. The project is an holistic, five-stage longitudinal approach to encouraging greater participation, retention and success amongst rural and remote students in higher education and encourages educated rural students to return to their communities as part of their studies. This presentation will outline the design of the project and share preliminary data gathered in the project's first year.

## **Meeting the needs of students who have a mental health condition**

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**THEME:** Models of Practice: Delivering services to students who have a mental illness

**SUMMARY:** Students who have a mental health condition represent a rapidly growing group on campus and services have had to change to meet their needs. This paper will describe the experience of Macquarie University in delivering services that enable these students to reach their academic potential.

**KEYWORDS:** Mental illness, inclusive practice, low SES group

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The Disability Support Unit works with more than five hundred students with a disability or health condition who are studying at Macquarie University.

These students have a wide range of disabilities ranging from the temporary to the lifelong and their support needs are equally diverse.

Students who experience a mental health condition represent the fastest growing group of students who register with the Disability Support Unit and these students often have very different support needs to the students who have traditionally required support to succeed in their studies.

People who have a mental health condition represent one of the lowest SES groups in the Australian community and the growing number of students from this group at University may reflect the success of strategies by State and Federal government to assist people who have a mental health condition to return to education and employment.

The episodic nature of a mental health condition and the impact that it has in so many aspects of these students lives means that they require more ongoing and intensive support.

This presentation will describe some of the changes in the practices and services provided by the Disability Support Unit to meet the needs of this rapidly growing number of students.

Changes in service provision include:

- Ongoing, pro-active, case management
- Co-ordination of services on and off campus
- A holistic approach to student wellbeing that goes well beyond the academic
- Pro-actively working with staff to maintain their own wellbeing and positive approach to their work

Case studies that highlight this new approach to service provision will be provided.

**I do aspire, just start me up: The influence of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, socio economic status and debt aversion on students' post school aspirations**

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and higher education: Engaging with diversity to transform knowledge

**SUMMARY:** This presentation details the findings of the Aspirations Online survey of students from Melbourne's West and offers an insight into the disparate nature of student aspiration and the impact of debt aversion. The presentation contextualises the rationale for universities to engage diversity to widen participation for students from under-represented neighbourhoods.

**KEYWORDS:** Aspiration, Low SES, Cultural and linguistic diversity, ethnicity, debt aversion, outreach, social inclusion, widening participation

**FULL ABSTRACT**

Socio-economic status (SES) and cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALDB) have been key foci of social inclusion principles. Access to post-school education and training is a revealing gauge of the progress being made toward inclusive practice. Accordingly, it is important to consider the aspirations towards, and perceptions of, post-school learning held by students from low-SES and CALDB. Additionally, the barriers to participation warrant exploration.

This presentation reports on the findings of the Aspirations Online survey of 2189 year 9-12 students from the western region of Melbourne. We have found that in aggregate terms, aspiration for post school learning is very high, yet university enrolments for western region schools are comparatively very low. Moreover, students from CALD backgrounds generally reported a greater preference for university education than students from English-speaking backgrounds and aversion to debt ranked high as an influencing factor for both.

This presentation will present an insight into the disparate nature of student aspiration across these groups and the effect of debt aversion, specifically in the context of the federal government's changes to student income support.

We present these findings as a rationale for engagement in diversity when considering the role of universities in widening participation for students from under-represented neighbourhoods. Further, the implications for practical intervention and collaborative outreach (as opposed to student recruitment) will be explored. The Aspiration is there - just start me up.

## **Knowledge Management and Equity in Higher Education**

**Matthew Brett, General Manager, Disability and Equity Programs**  
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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**KEYWORDS:** Engaging with Diversity to Transform Knowledge

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Strategies enacted to meet equity objectives have failed to comprehensively improve the participation of people from under-represented groups. As Australian Higher Education moves into a post-Bradley equity paradigm, novel approaches to equity should be considered. The importance of knowledge in higher education suggests that knowledge management could be a useful construct to consider in equity policy implementation. This paper will demonstrate that whilst knowledge management approaches have flaws, there is significant potential for utilising knowledge management as a tool for assessing the effectiveness of organisational approaches to equity policy implementation. Wiig's model of knowledge management is used to dissect equity policy implementation. This model conceptualises knowledge management by the dimensions of building knowledge, holding knowledge, pooling knowledge and using knowledge. Significant gaps in current equity activity can be viewed in the building, holding and pooling knowledge dimensions, adversely impacting on the outcomes of the using knowledge dimension. These findings are tested against a variety of university equity plans. In finding that knowledge management principles are useful in program evaluation, it is recommended that knowledge management principles be applied within program design to enhance the impact of post-Bradley equity policy implementation.

## **Selecting 'ability' not 'privilege'- RMIT's Schools Network Access Program (SNAP)**

Milly Fels and Helen Brooker, RMIT University

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**THEME:** Building alliances for change: models of practice/Social inclusion and Higher Education

**SUMMARY:** RMIT's Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) is a capabilities based model of admission to University or TAFE at RMIT. The SNAP program has been running for over 8 years and is based on a partnership model with government schools in the West and North of metropolitan Melbourne and Gippsland in the State's rural east. SNAP circumvents institutional selection models that reward privilege and exclude low income students from tertiary education.

**KEYWORDS:**

Competency based selection, school partnerships, educational privilege

**FULL ABSTRACT**

SNAP (Schools Network Access Program) is one of the largest non-ENTER based access schemes for low SES secondary students in Australia. Over a 3,500 students have enrolled at RMIT through SNAP. SNAP has been running for over 8 years and relies on a partnership between government secondary schools in the Northern and Western Metropolitan region of Melbourne and Gippsland.

The success of SNAP will be discussed as an exemplar of low SES access in a tertiary sector struggling to achieve appropriate representation of low SES students. The reliance on ENTER and status driven rankings to select students rewards educational privilege and reinforces failure for students from low income families. SNAP is counter-hegemonic in that the model prioritises low SES students' access through a statement of capability combined with a recommendation from their secondary school. The academic success of the RMIT SNAP cohort demonstrates that once the selection hurdle has been overcome, low SES students achieve at the same rate of those that enter RMIT through competitive selection (ENTER).

We argue that dominant approaches to low SES access mandate the construction of an individualised victim identity, and pathologies low SES students. SNAP utilises the motivation and strengths of low SES students to support their access to tertiary education.

The use of a partnerships model with participating schools has been integral to the success of SNAP. Ways of expanding and deepening these partnerships will be explored as the scheme continues to open up education to those that continue to be excluded from tertiary education.

This workshop will:

- Share best practice of an exemplar model of capabilities driven low SES and low SES rural access
- Highlight the potential of systemic approaches to LSES access
- Debunk misconceptions about the academic pathways of low SES students with comparatively low ENTER rankings.
- Present a summary of SNAP student responses to the SNAP scheme and their experiences.



The University of Sydney  
partnering with our community

**Building new alliances – early learning from *Compass-  
Find your way to higher education***

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The University of Sydney has a long history of financial, learning and personal support for current students from low socio economic backgrounds and was the first university to partner with The Smith Family more than five years ago with the aim of raising aspiration among disadvantaged students.

This year the University embarked on a new and innovative project *Compass Find your way to higher education* (Compass) aimed at raising awareness, aspiration and attainment of students from low socio economic backgrounds. Compass was developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training and is funded for three years by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations and the University.

The program works with four Sydney high schools and twelve of their 'feeder' or partner primary schools with the aim of early and regular interactions and engagement with students, their teachers and families from third grade through to high school. Raising attainment is a key focus of the project and so 'value adding' to the teaching and curriculum in the schools is a key focus of our partnership.

Compass has utilised a community development approach to our work with schools; supporting the schools in leading us in the content of the activities. We aim to engage in ways that ensure that our interactions fit within the 'core business' of the school and the university and to build mutually beneficial partnerships that increase capacity both in the school and university communities.

Obviously it is too early to evaluate the impact of the interactions we are having and developing with schools, this program was built with long term outcomes in mind. However, we have done lots of learning this year and this presentation will outline some elements of that learning such as the pace and nature of building relationships and trust with schools; the value of language and senior engagement; who and how to engage in a school; building programs that are resilient to staff turnover; and keeping momentum in the flurry of school and university life.

## **Southern Cross University Equity Outreach Program**

**Rachel Callahan, Southern Cross University**

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**Theme:** 1. Social Inclusion and Higher Education- Engaging with Diversity to transform the Campus

### **Summary**

The Fusion Committee is a diverse group of staff and students who work together to organise events on campus that promote, celebrate and affirm diversity. The committee is open to all staff and students who want to join in and contribute their ideas, skills and knowledge and passion around the theme of diversity and have fun with other dynamic and committed people.

### **Full Abstract**

The committee was formed in 2007 as part of a project *Thinking Diversity – Beyond Tolerance* in the School of Arts and Social Sciences and the Centre for Peace and Social Justice. The project provided the opportunity to create innovative and accessible spaces for diversity education and support of students by connecting the University with its wider community<sup>1</sup>. The Fusion Committee has continued since 2007 with a membership which includes a diverse group of students and staff.

The two main events organised by the Fusion Committee during the year are Harmony Day celebrations and the Fusion Festival which runs for 3-4 days in September. Events include cultural: (art, film, food, music) and social events, sporting events and public lectures, forums and other ways of engaging with and deepening understanding of diversity. The events help to create an inclusive environment bringing together students, staff and the community to celebrate and embed diversity.

All events are free for staff, students and the community. The committee works with local community groups in organising events on the campus.

An important outcome generated by the committee and the events that are held has been the building and sustaining of relationships that have developed within the University community of staff and students and in the wider community within the region.

In presenting this initiative of collaboration and inclusion, a short (approx. 5min) DVD will be shown which will include students and staff who are part of the committee and others talking about their experience and their involvement in the committee and in organising events around celebrating and engaging with diversity to transform the campus.

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<sup>1</sup> *Thinking Diversity – Beyond Tolerance Project Report*, Soenke Biermann, School of Arts and Social Sciences, December 2007

## **Changing the organisational balance of women's representation through a strategic cultural change approach**

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### **THEME:**

Changing the organisational balance of women's representation through a strategic cultural change approach.

**SUMMARY:** The paper explores Griffith University's sustained success in developing and promoting women staff by embedding a focus on gender equity as a strategic priority in planning and reporting processes over the past 10 years.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender equity, strategic change management, corporate and organisational culture, women's representation.

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Griffith University has a history of long and sustained commitment to improving the representation of women in senior positions specifically, and throughout the organisation generally.

It has achieved this through embedding a focus on gender equality as a strategic priority in its planning and reporting processes for more than a decade. In doing so it has drawn on the theory and practice that underpins organisational cultural change and on strategic planning principles and practice. Through this process it has achieved an improvement in the percentage of women at all levels of the organisation, and most notably in the ranks of senior academics.

Consistent factors in the success of shifting gender equality from being a "special" consideration to one which is part of the normal planning, review and reporting processes has been the engagement of the senior executive, through the Vice Chancellor's ongoing and active commitment, and through the identification of a member of the senior executive group with specific responsibilities for gender equity. This has been maintained through restructures and reviews of executive portfolios, as well as organisational units, changes to personnel in senior positions, including the Vice Chancellor, and immense growth in the University.

This paper and presentation charts the sustained approach taken by Griffith University, and provides evidence of its achievement that make it truly an employer of choice for women. It focuses on the major events that shaped changes at corporate levels and how these translated into activities within operational units. It discusses the impact that effective policy implementation can have on changing organisational culture and practice, and shows how using change management approaches integrated into the business of the university brings about long term and sustained benefit to women.

## **Early interventions and access to University**

**Marie Carroll, Australian National University**

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**THEME:** University wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** Early school interventions increase chances of access in higher education

**KEYWORDS:** community partnerships, school interventions

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Evidence exists that engagement with universities by students and their families in the early years of high school and later primary school yields a return on investment that may be more effective in raising aspirations to higher education than other approaches that target senior high school students. But what types of engagement are effective and how can they be made relevant to the groups that are traditionally under-represented in higher education, particularly those from regional and rural backgrounds, and those with low socio-economic status? The Australian National University's Regional Partnerships Program, involves 5 elements of an effective aspiration-raising intervention: sustained; early in s; community based; high intensity; and student-to-student. Evaluations of such long term interventions are notoriously difficult, and obscured by the overall expansion of the number of equity students in higher education. Some strategies for evaluation of the program will be discussed.

**Transforming Australia's Higher Education System: What the Australian Government's reform agenda means for disadvantaged students**

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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**THEME:** Expanding on the Government's latest Budget measures to increase attainment, access and engagement in higher education

In response to the *Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education* in 2008, the Australian Government is introducing a range of reforms allowing for unprecedented investment in higher education. Over the next decade, additional resourcing will be provided to the sector to improve attainment, access and engagement for students from all backgrounds.

Integral to these reforms are measures which include:

*Real action for real participation – attainment, access and engagement:* transforming access to higher education through a major package designed to radically improve the participation of students from low social economic backgrounds (low SES) in higher education and enhance their learning experience.

*Income Support for Students:* landmark reforms to student income support which will redirect assistance so that it reaches the most needy students to boost both their higher education participation and attainment.

*Improving Tertiary Pathways:* building stronger connectivity between the higher education and vocational education training sectors.

## **The Sun-Tzu Strategy: Higher Education Partnerships for Social Inclusion**

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**THEME:** Models of university alliances for social inclusion

**SUMMARY:** This presentation examines issues confronting emerging strategic partnerships or collaborations of higher education institutions aiming to build potential student populations across defined geographical areas.

**KEYWORDS:** Higher Education, Social Inclusion, Low SES Participation, Partnerships

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

In March 2008, the Federal Government initiated a Review of Australian Higher Education. The Report (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent and Scales, 2008) argues that in order for Australia to remain internationally competitive in the global economy, it must have access to increased numbers of well qualified people in its workforce. The challenge is to identify where this increased number of degree qualified people may come from. In order to address this issue, the Report recommends that there is an urgent need to increase those members of groups that are currently under represented in higher education: "Those disadvantaged by the circumstances of their birth; indigenous people; people with low socio-economic status and those from regional and remote areas" (p.xi).

While some universities question the feasibility of increasing participation of under-represented populations others already exceed the challenging government targets nominated in the wake of the Bradley Review. This diversity within the sector is an interesting starting-point for an examination of issues confronting emerging strategic partnerships or collaborations of higher education institutions aiming to build potential student populations across defined geographical areas.

The presentation examines international practice in partnerships of higher education institutions for social inclusion and reports on models of partnerships with a specific focus on the UK experience. Recently established outreach and aspiration building partnerships in Australia will also be examined. A focus of this presentation will be identification of beneficiaries of such partnerships, together with exploration of institutional barriers and disincentives.

## **Listen and Give Voice to Diverse Learners- A Practitioner/researcher's Journey in Higher Education(HE)**

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**THEMES:** Either in Social inclusion and Higher Education or Building alliances for change: Models of practice

### **SUMMARY:**

Exploring the social and psychological aspects of dyslexia in order to improve learning 'efficiency' and influence change in the community perception of this often talented but invisible group of diverse learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Listening -Dyslexia- diverse learners- self-study action research- inclusive practices

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

I started a PhD out of a concern for the children with learning issues I see in private practice. I perceive many of them are disconnected from learning, and potentially could develop exclusion issues with society. Being vulnerable to bullying, not achieving their potential means many suffer stress and self-doubt. Sometimes this leads to mental health issues. These issues can be helped by policies favouring inclusive teaching practices and curriculum, and more awareness/knowledge of individual learning styles which could re-invigorate learning and empower all.

**My workshop** is experiential and aims to demonstrate how a group of people can quickly develop an acceptance to diverse learning needs of the 'other', when safety and inclusion are the primary values of the facilitation. Expect to experience how within a safe inclusive environment, creativity and critical thinking can become 'normal'. I expect this experience will bring participants a new understanding of diversity and how people learn best!

I use an inquiry facilitation style and invite participants to 'voice' their knowledge and experiences. Some example of questions that may be posed:  
Are identity, place and space issues for adults in HE? What are the underlying issues which may hold back our learning? I will share some emerging strategies from my research and suggest these ideas may be applicable across disciplines.

My contribution in HE equity and diversity is revealing how a 'lived experience' methodology of the researcher/practitioner can connect an individual to Self, their discipline and the learning environment. Such empowerment would mean a more socially inclusive environment where quality of critical thinking skills and engagement on all levels are valued.

## **Beyond Borders: Developing Global Exchanges for Students with Disabilities**

Dr. Kenneth Durgans, Ms. Pamela King and Mr. Nelson Soto, Indiana University  
Purdue University Indianapolis

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**Theme:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**Summary:** The aim of this workshop is to demonstrate a holistic approach in promoting short term and long term international student exchanges among students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Social Inclusion, Diversity, Equity

**Full Abstract:** Gathering faculty and administrators to discuss international exchanges for individuals with disabilities can be a daunting task. We have found at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis that a partnership with the Graduate School, the Office of International Affairs, the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Adaptive Educational Services is paramount to student success. These four offices meet to outline the services that can be provided to the international student who applies who has a disability. Documentation is accepted from the school of origin and the Team does its best to mirror the services that are currently provided. This workshop offers participants a framework to promote conversations for assessing the viability of creating global exchanges for accommodating students with disabilities to assure academic success. Based on the work of Fink (2003), participants will learn an integrated approach in universal design that considers situational factors at the forefront of creating a comprehensive international exchange. A meaningful connection among institutional objectives, implementation strategies, and assessment naturally develop in this framework.

By the end participants will:

- a. assess the feasibility of developing an international exchange program
- b. explore the benefits of this holistic approach collaborating with universities home and host institutions
- c. investigate campus administration buy-in to be secured from the onset (academic accommodations and international protocol issues)
- d. generate lists of resources to develop a low cost, yet successful international exchange

Universities serve as change agents in demystifying the perception of access to study abroad opportunities. After attending this session, participants can begin critical dialogues in shifting the consciousness of faculty and administrators in furthering international exchanges for all individuals.

**Preserving the Professoriate by Broadening Participation in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) Research Careers through Collaborative Preparing Future Faculty Programs that Embraces Underrepresented Students and Students with Disabilities**

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**Theme:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**Summary:** Universities are currently in a significant transformation period that is redefining the way graduate students view faculty life and how they must be prepared to take on the professoriate. Many students are now finding faculty life less attractive as a career choice. This session will explore why and how Preparing Future Faculty programs have to be strengthened by cross-campus collaborations that allow for a more holistic approach to preparing future faculty in order to combat the waning interest of graduate students toward entering the professoriate and to help them become fully prepared for faculty life.

**Keywords:** Social Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

**Full Abstract:**

The IUPUI Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program is designed to introduce advanced graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to the full range of professional responsibilities in research, teaching, and service that will be encountered in the academy in the areas of Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics. The IUPUI PFF program objectives are to supplement the academic credentials of graduate students, enhance marketability, support schools and/or departments in producing more effective and knowledgeable future faculty, and provide the best possible preparation for future faculty in collaboration with each individual's school and/or department.

Collaborative areas that are often overlooked are the area that provides services to underrepresented students and students with disabilities. Often, these students do not identify as a member of the professoriate, thus dismissing it as a viable career.

Through collaboration the PFF program, the Graduate School, the Office designated to serve students with disabilities, the Office for Women, and the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion intentionally provides support to potential faculty by offering opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in teaching and service as well as in research.

## **'Courageous Conversations: *Beyond* Cross-cultural training'**

University of Western Australia

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### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Central to UWA's vision is the development of cultural competence as a key graduate and staff attribute, essential to their success in terms of both employability and global citizenship. UWA recently implemented '*Courageous Conversations about Race*' workshops that encourage participants to engage with race both intellectually and emotionally.

*'Courageous Conversations about Race'* represents a departure from conventional 'trait based' ('Muslims are like this; Chinese are like that') cross-cultural training approaches that have sometimes undermined the development of meaningful cultural competence. *'Courageous conversations'* are competency based, and challenge members of the University community to think through the various ways race affects *their* life and professional practice. Participants are provided with a unique opportunity to unpack their own unique racial story, better understand the concept of race 'privilege' and utilise the insights gained to develop a more nuanced understanding of the issues.

A workshop recently conducted with a group of early academics through the UWA Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) underscored the value of a competency based approach to sustain and deepen the dialogue. This paper will scope the *'Courageous Conversations'* model, and describe the process of 'illumination' that occurred during the CATL workshop.

**“I am not my postcode”**  
**The UWS Fast Forward program –Raising LSES students study aspirations.**

Kerry Fielding, University of Western Sydney

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**Theme:** Social Inclusion

**Summary:** Lack of social and cultural capital has been identified as limiting LSES students' access to higher education. Since 2004, the UWS Fast Forward program has sought to foster the belief amongst this cohort that tertiary education opens doors and is a viable and realistic post school option regardless of your postcode.

**Keywords:** Social inclusion, Low Socioeconomic status, Raising aspirations, Widening participation, Partnerships, School engagement

**Abstract:**

Since its conception in 2004 the UWS Fast Forward program has grown to encompass 22 schools in the Greater Western Sydney region with over 700 LSES students ranging from year 9 through to year 12 in the 2009 cohort.

The Fast Forward program aims to enhance students' confidence, knowledge, skills and educational attainment thus giving participants a greater interest and preparedness for participation and success in Higher Education. Through experiential learning activities, role model mentoring and “one on one” shadowing, the program actively encourages participation and access for secondary students from areas that have not traditionally accessed tertiary study.

In 2006 the Fast Forward program was awarded the UWS Vice Chancellors Award for Community engagement and is clearly aligned with the UWS mission of “Bringing Knowledge to Life” promoting the benefits lifelong learning and higher education in its multitude of forms to our students and their families. With the recent announcement of the Australian Federal Governments' “Transforming Australia’s Higher education Agenda”, the Fast Forward program is well placed for further development and expansion to promote social inclusion and Higher Education for all.

Evaluation of the program based on feedback from participating schools indicates that the program is responsible for slowly changing the attitudinal culture within our partner school communities.

Through the encouragement of students within our partner schools who show academic and/or leadership potential in middle school, the program strives to build resilience amongst this group to persevere and complete school. By fostering familiarity with tertiary education and its opportunities for both these students and their families, these young people are better placed to make a more informed choice about continuing on to some form of post school study despite the obstacles of social disadvantage.

## **Developing mainstream services as a means to improve retention and success of students from low SES – Case study: Financial Assistance Service at UTS**

Presenter/s Name: Marie Flood and Nick Cooper, Financial Assistance Service, University of Technology, Sydney  
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**THEME:** Improved financial assistance programs are a key element in supporting students from low SES and improving student attainment and engagement in higher education.

**SUMMARY:** This paper will review current good practice in central financial assistance services and the financial information and advocacy services available to Australian university students. Some comparisons with North American universities will be considered. Improving mainstream financial assistance services will be proposed as a key strategy in responding to the Rudd government's incentives to provide additional support for students of low SES backgrounds.

**KEYWORDS:** Financial assistance services, Centrelink, Student Income Support, Tertiary Education

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The Rudd government plans to allocate \$325 million over the next four years to assist universities to recruit students of low SES backgrounds and support their retention and completion rates. Improved student income support is an additional key element of the new legislation. Universities will need to review current practices and service models to determine how best to balance the allocation of the government's new funds between outreach to low SES schools and communities and the support services to be offered to students once they enrol. University services which provide financial assistance in the form of loans, bursaries and grants together with help with budgeting and debt have a long history of assisting students from equity target groups, in particular students from low SES. These services have proved to be in a good position to attract, assist and refer students facing financial, administrative and academic difficulties. The authors will reflect on the improved performance of the small Financial Assistance Service at the University of Technology, Sydney over the past four years and what has made the improvements possible. The service provides face to face interviews with any student seeking financial assistance, offering budgeting advice, Centrelink and internal advocacy for students with debts, grants to students on low incomes, recycled computers and small interest-free student loans. The advisory counselling model allows for students to be made aware of assistance available across the university and externally. UTS data demonstrating the efficacy of equity scholarships in improving retention and success will also be discussed. The authors will advocate for the further development of integrated, central financial assistance models as a key element in responding effectively to increased numbers of students from low SES, as well to developing student engagement and improving internal partnerships between student services and faculties.

## **CENTRELINK STUDENT INCOME SUPPORT CHANGES**

### **Clarifying the outcomes of the Rudd government 's proposals in the May 2009 Budget to expand eligibility for student income support through Centrelink**

Workshop presenters: Marie Flood and Nick Cooper, Financial Assistance Service, University of Technology, Sydney

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**THEME:** Commentary on the changes to government student income support through Centrelink commencing in 2010 and changes legislated to commence in future years.

**SUMMARY:** This workshop will include a presentation of information on any legislation pending or enacted in relation to student income support following the reforms announced by the government in the May federal budget.

**KEYWORDS:** Centrelink, student income support, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy, student start-up scholarships, personal income test, parental income test, Disability Support Pension

**ABSTRACT:** January 2010 will see the beginnings of the most significant positive changes to student income support in nearly four decades if the Rudd government's reform package announced in the May Budget passes through the Senate before the end of this year.

Presentations during the workshop will address the following questions:

What changes will be made and when will they commence?

To what extent can we expect the long overdue reforms to remove barriers to participation by people from low SES backgrounds and other equity groups?

What gaps and weaknesses in the government's student income support can be identified?

What university-based programs could assist students affected by these weaknesses? E.g. Merit-based scholarships, equity grants and bursaries.

Are there changes to the administration of universities which could help students in equity groups to qualify for government income support? E.g. allowing applicants to defer for two years rather than one, offering flexibility in subject loads rather than offering only fulltime study patterns

The presenters will introduce a variety of topics and encourage discussion by workshop participants of the implications of the government reforms for people from low SES and other groups under-represented in higher education. There will be opportunities for participants to identify university-funded programs which respond to any gaps and weaknesses, as well as a proposal to improve networking between university staff responsible for financial assistance to students.

**NCSEHE and University Interventions in schooling to widen participation: an overview of key findings**

Author/s & Organisation/s

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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** This workshop will provide an overview of the work of the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education framed by its five primary objectives, followed by a summary of the findings of the Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students report commissioned by DEEWR.

**KEYWORDS:** Equity, Early Intervention, low SES

**FULL ABSTRACT**

This workshop will be in two parts. The first will provide an overview of the work of the National Centre including the current research agenda for the field, drawing on the student equity issues that were identified by participants from the Student Equity in HE Forum held earlier in the year. There will be an opportunity for interaction and feedback.

The second part of the workshop will report on a research project commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations titled 'early interventions in school as a means to improve higher education for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students'. The focus of the research was on early interventions in schooling to increase university participation, with 'early' defined as pre Year 11. The project involved an analysis of national and international literature describing pre-Year 11 interventions, a survey of Australian universities to identify the nature and extent of their interventions and some case studies of effective programs. An additional meta-analysis provided a synopsis and extended the research to develop a matrix for designing and evaluating university outreach programs. This part of the workshop will report on the findings and recommendations of this project, including some questions it raised, as well as offering an example of how the matrix can be applied during evaluations.

## **EARLY CAREER GENERAL STAFF: INVESTING IN THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**

Presenter/s Name: Carroll Graham

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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

### **SUMMARY:**

Based on an article (Graham, 2009)\_ that it had its genesis in a conference paper (Graham, 2008), the career development needs of early career general staff are discussed within the context of Australian higher education, current trends in professional development and the expectations of Generation Y.

**KEYWORDS:** general staff; higher education; early career; professional development

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

With the greying of our population, it has been widely recognised that active career development for early career academics is essential to the future capacities of universities (Hugo, Daysh, Morris & Rudd, 2004). However, the same has not been acknowledged for general staff, despite general staff comprising more than fifty percent of staff in Australian universities. This paper considers the career development needs of early career general staff, within the landscape of changes in higher education, changing professional development and the aspirations and expectations of Generation Y. One holistic approach to supporting career development for general staff – the portfolio – is discussed. It is argued that Australian universities need to invest in the professional development of general staff, in particular for early career general staff, to ensure continued success in the twenty-first century.

# ***In Their Own Words – Students’ Stories of Success: What Students From Diverse Backgrounds Tell us About Their Experiences of Higher Education***

Margaret Heagney – Monash University

Presenter/s Name: Margaret Heagney

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**SUMMARY:** In this presentation the experiences of a small group of social work students are examined via interview data collected in a Diversity and Achievement Project. The impact of barriers to their participation is explored and students’ own stories of success examined to see what assisted them to succeed in their university studies.

**KEYWORDS:** diversity, equity group students, student experience, the student voice, student supports

## **FULL ABSTRACT**

Hearing the student voice, particularly in the form of students own stories of success is always valuable for university planners and equity practitioners. It is even more important in the current post Bradley era when universities are seeking to increase their access and retention rates of a more diverse student cohort, especially those from low socio-economic, regional and remote backgrounds.

These success stories were compiled from information provided by the students via

- an initial questionnaire
- three interviews, and
- a focus group meeting.

The students self identified as members of designated equity groups. Some were studying in on-campus mode and some in off-campus mode. The interviews were conducted at the beginning, mid way, and at the end of the course and were structured around access, success and retention under the themes of *Getting There*, *Being There* and *Succeeding There*.

Using data from these sources, the students’ own stories of success were compiled, and factors, both personal and structural, which contributed to their successful experience of higher education were identified.

Issues which worked against the students coming to university immediately post school were documented. These included negative experiences of primary and/or secondary school, migrant background, regional and remote background, gender, socio-economic background, and being first in the family to attend university.

Students reported how they coped with university study, what changes they had to make to their lives to accommodate their studies, and if and how the university’s academic and student support services assisted them to succeed. They also reported their transformation as learners as they progressed through the course and how their self confidence increased.

*In their own words*, the students have articulated the personal and structural factors which assisted them to succeed in their studies as well as those which worked against them. Their perspectives and insights provide a timely topic for discussion and examination as institutions seek to shape their practices to better serve a student population drawn from diverse backgrounds.

## Safe in the Knowledge: Praxis and Pedagogy for Diverse Cohorts

Kathryn Hegarty, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, RMIT University

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### **FULL ABSTRACT**

One of the major challenges for a learner centred tertiary teacher is to tailor both curriculum material and teaching style to the often divergent needs of a commencing cohort. Learner centred approaches demand that we as teachers start with, and work from, each student's skills and knowledge. In my first year classrooms at RMIT University in Melbourne, I may have students from privileged independent schools, equity admission schemes, strictly observant Muslim and Christian students, and those who are not formally designated as equity students, but who have experienced interrupted or inappropriate secondary learning environments. At this intersection, I constantly confront some of the unnamed elephants in the university classroom; that academic curriculum is often normative, that it contributes to the reproduction of unjust social arrangements and that it is constructed towards an idealised and unhelpful notion of what a tertiary student might be. As a constructivist, I am committed to graduating cohorts who reflect the community from which they come and which they will serve as professional people. How do we actually devise and deliver a curriculum and a pedagogy which addresses these multiple imperatives? How do we build resilience and an internal locus of control for such diverse cohorts? How do we lead our colleagues, who subscribe to positivist constructs of students and academic learning? This paper will consider the approaches used in the first year program in Global Studies, Social Science and Planning at RMIT. The focus is on the praxis of curriculum and the teacher 'style and voice' which communicates to students that their learning environment is safe and that the curriculum will see them written into the narrative of higher education. I will consider the learning activities and content materials which best reflect and celebrate diversity, along with the capability based model used with first years which offers strongly evidenced rationales for the skills we seek and the framework in which they are asked to work.

## **Lessons Learnt from a Full Pay Equity Audit**

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**THEME:** Lessons Learnt from a Full Pay Equity Audit

**SUMMARY:** The Australian higher education sector has classification systems that for the most part regulate and largely standardise the salaries staff receive. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learnt from conducting a full pay equity analysis.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender Equity, Pay Equity, Higher Education

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

#### **Beverley Hill**

The University of Western Australia conducted its first full pay equity analysis in 2008. Although operating within classification structures and salary scales that to a large degree regulate the level of remuneration received by staff, the University was interested to establish the full extent of a pay equity gap. It recognised that a gender pay gap (GPG) was likely due to a range of historic and structural factors that saw women under represented in the academic staffing stream (39%) and 'compressed' into lower classification levels in both the academic and professional staffing streams. What the analysis established was that there were GPG's at some levels across both classification streams, some significant, others not. The more interesting findings came from analysis of allowances, and the fact that there were in excess of 60 different ways in which allowances could be allocated to staff. The correlation between gender and the likelihood of receiving an allowance was also established.

This paper will discuss some of the decisions to be made regarding the data included in the analysis; will demonstrate the Pay Gap Calculator developed by the WA Pay Equity Unit, discuss some of the major findings of the analysis and the possible ways forward for UWA in the light of these findings.

#### **Jenness Gardner**

Western Australia has the largest gender pay gap in Australia. In response, in 2006 the WA government established the Pay Equity Unit - the only one of its kind in Australia - to develop practical solutions to improve pay equity. The Unit developed a pay equity audit tool, a suite of supporting material and assisted a number of public and private organisations (including UWA) in undertaking pay equity audits. In 2009 the Unit's pay equity audit tool was endorsed and launched for national use by EOWA. This presentation will provide an explanation of the effective use of the pay equity audit tool, and examples of post audit recommendations adopted by some organisations.

**Low Socio-economic Status: How it is measured and  
the implications for the sector**

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**SUMMARY:** The paper will examine the current debate and implication surrounding the definition of low socio-economic status within the Australian Higher education context.

**KEYWORDS:** LSES

**FULL ABSTRACT**

There has been much discussion in recent years on definitions surrounding low socio-economic status within the Australian context. This paper will firstly examine the current debate and the implications for measures upon the 20/20 target of inclusion in Higher education set by the Federal Government as a result of the Bradley Review. The paper will draw upon what we know about current and proposed definitions within the sector. It will also draw upon the author's current PhD research into LSES students.

The paper will then draw upon recent experience from the UK within the Aim higher program to explore measures of identification used within the British context and whether these can be applied to the Australian context.

Finally the paper will examine the implications of the discussion for equity practitioners within the Higher Education sector in terms of

- a) implications for achieving the government target
- b) targeting outreach work in specific schools and
- c) targeting specific cohorts of students within schools.

## **Equity: Individual and Collective Responsibility**

**Chris Jenkin and Antonina Savelio – AUT University**

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**THEME:** Building Alliance of Change: Models of Practice

### **SUMMARY:**

For student equity to work at university – all staff must take responsibility and take ownership for successful implementation. The philosophy of individual and collective responsibility underpins all areas of work undertaken by the Applied Humanities Equity Team (AHET). The realigning of equity roles and initiatives so that each School (Languages and Social Sciences, Education, Hospitality & Tourism) has a senior academic staff member encouraging equity practices, alongside Māori and Pasifika student mentors has proven successful

**KEYWORDS:** Responsibility, Ownership, Success

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

At the last EOPHEA Conference we showcased Pasifika student successes from the School of Education. Our approach of working with students; staff both academic and administrative; and student services contribute in making a difference to student success. From 2008 this model was expanded across the Faculty of Applied Humanities.

Our three pronged strategy consists of Faculty Equity Advocates, Academic Equity Leaders and student mentors of Māori and Pasifika descent. The programme is supported and overseen by the two Faculty Equity Advocates, who are now moving into relevant research. Equity teams were set up in each school with the aim of embedding equity responsibility amongst all staff members including heads of schools, lecturers and administrators. The Academic Equity Leaders are senior lecturers who facilitate curriculum and pedagogy review processes. This is to ensure that teaching and learning approaches are relevant to Māori and Pasifika students. An important aspect of their position is to facilitate the Māori and Pasifika student mentors into post or further graduate studies and teaching positions within their schools. These student mentors are successful postgraduate and final year undergraduate students. They are role models for their peers and are facilitators for ethnic tutorials, alongside academic support for their fellow students.

Some of our successes to date can be illustrated in how schools have embraced the notion of equity with appropriate action. Schools are valuing the positive impact made by their equity teams which is evident in improved pass rates for Māori and Pasifika students. The equity programme is achieving changes in the mindset of individual lecturers.

## Partnerships for Student Equity – the Queensland Approach

Presenter/s Name: Mary Kelly(QUT), plus (possibly) Suzanne Wilkinson (Griffith University) , Ann Stewart(UQ) and Sandie Bridgland (QUT).  
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**THEME:** Internal and external partnerships – student initiatives.

**SUMMARY:** Queensland universities, VET and schooling sectors have established collaborative State-wide working parties on widening participation, and related matters, with a view to developing an organised State-wide approach to the national targets for degree-holding and low-SES participation. This workshop/presentation describes their establishment and progress to date.

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The federal Budget in May made clear the sticks and carrots for universities in order to progress the national targets around degree-holding and low-SES participation. In other sectors, similar drivers are in place (eg the National Partnership on low-SES schools).

Before May, practitioners from Equity, Student Recruitment, Marketing and Indigenous Support Units of all Queensland universities had a Roundtable meeting to discuss collaborative outreach, and the Indigenous Support Units met again as a group several times. An agreed Communiqué was developed and distributed to VCs. The 8 VCs endorsed the idea of collaborating, and several State-wide Working Groups were established in July, auspiced by the State Minister for Education, with membership from higher education, VET and schooling.

The working group focussed on “Widening Participation” is chaired by the QUT Equity Director Mary Kelly, and it has established a work program that includes developing collaborative proposals for the State which will advance the targets, and which may access Federal funding.

At the time of writing, no concrete outcomes are yet apparent, but by late 2009, it is expected that the following will be developed:

- A conceptual framework to inform the development of proposals;
- A set of collaborative projects and actions, both short-term and long-term, that are tailored to Queensland’s circumstances.

Both these outcomes will be of interest to practitioners in other states. Of particular interest will be the conceptual framework, which covers matters such as the differences between traditional marketing and “widening participation” activities; the precise role of universities in any inter-sectoral partnerships; how strong internal partnerships are a pre-requisite for inter-sectoral work; and how to marry the particular needs of key cohorts (eg Indigenous) and high-need districts, with a State-wide perspective.

**“I could be a volunteer doctor in Africa, or perhaps a stage show director”’: collaboratively raising and developing students’ aspirations through the Tertiary Aspirations Network**

Leander Kreltszheim, Holly Langfield

**Theme:** Building alliances for change: models of practice

**Summary:** In late 2008 a network of student equity practitioners from across Victoria established the Tertiary Aspirations Network (TAN) in order to discuss opportunities for collaboration on aspirations-developing outreach programs, and develop partnerships with schools, parents and community organisations.

This presentation explores the development of TAN over the past 12 months and provides feedback on pilot outreach workshops conducted for students and parents from underrepresented areas, including:

- workshops delivered to year 10 students as part of regional Careers Expo days;
- the Hamilton Aspirations Day, for year 10 students from 5 western Victoria secondary schools;
- a regional Parents’ Information Session.

**Keywords:** Collaboration, partnerships, outreach, low SES, regional and isolated, aspirations, early intervention, disability, Indigenous.

**Full abstract:** The Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (2008) has undoubtedly had significant impact upon equity practitioners responsible for social inclusion programs within the tertiary sector. In response to the review, the Australian Federal Government has called for *a national target of 20 per cent of university enrolments at undergraduate level of students from low SES status backgrounds by 2020*. Achieving such substantial increases across the sector will be challenging, with early intervention programs and partnerships between relevant stakeholders being key to its success.

The Centre for the Study of Higher Education’s 2007 study *Participation and Equity: A review of the participation in higher education of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous people* discussed these strategies, recommending:  
*... a concerted national response [to the underrepresentation of low SES students in higher education and] the development of new approaches to cross-portfolio and cross-sectoral action*<sup>1</sup>.

In response to this report, and similar research, a network of student equity practitioners from the nine Victorian universities established TAN in order to discuss opportunities for collaboration on aspirations-developing outreach programs, and develop partnerships with schools, parents and community organisations. The core aims of the network are to:

1. share information and resources between participating universities in regards to outreach activities for year 9-10 students from underrepresented backgrounds;
2. identify schools and regions of overlap between universities’ outreach projects, and develop the aspirations of students in schools not currently serviced;
3. collaborate on activities to increase the knowledge of post-secondary education options to students from underrepresented backgrounds; and
4. facilitate and support working groups to explore issues of research pertinent to the development of collaborative outreach activities.

This presentation explores the development of TAN over the past 12 months and provides feedback on pilot outreach workshops conducted for students and parents from underrepresented areas. These include:

- workshops delivered to year 10 students as part of regional Careers Expo days;
- the Hamilton Aspirations Day, for year 10 students from 5 western Victoria secondary schools;
- a regional Parents’ Information Session.

<sup>1</sup> A complete copy of the report can be downloaded from <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/pubs.html>

## **Helping Out with Homework: A Partnership Program**

**HollyLangfield – La Trobe University**

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**THEME:** Building alliances for change: models of practice

**SUMMARY:** The presentation will discuss the establishment and outcomes of a pilot program run by the Equality and Diversity Centre at La Trobe University in 2009. The program utilised University student volunteers as mentors/tutors for students at a local high school located in a low SES area, with high population of migrants and refugees.

**KEYWORDS:**

Low SES, homework club, partnerships, raising aspirations, outreach

**FULL ABSTRACT**

To achieve the Low SES targets recommended by the Bradley Review, more students of Low SES background need to remain academically engaged during high school. The government is encouraging universities to form partnerships with local schools, and the La Trobe Golden Key Homework Club program was piloted in 2009 to determine if this might be a useful partnership arrangement.

The Golden Key Honour Society is an international organization which invites membership to university students who were in the top 15% of Yr 12 grades. The Society has a community service aspect to its charter. The Equality and Diversity Centre at La Trobe University approached the Golden Key Honour Society at the university to determine their interest in participating as volunteers in a Homework Club. Strong interest was expressed by the Society.

The Equality and Diversity Centre then approached two local secondary schools to determine their interest in a Homework Club. One of the schools was very interested and a pilot program was established.

The presentation will discuss the co-ordination aspects of the program, what activities occurred, how volunteers were rewarded, how helpful the program was to high school students and plans for expansion in 2010.

## **Levelling the playing field for students with print disabilities and improving academic outcomes**

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**THEME:** Building alliances for change: models of practice.

**SUMMARY:** This presentation will provide an overview of a timely, sustainable service model for the provision of accessible coursework reading materials to students with print disabilities via personalised individual webpages.

**KEYWORDS:** Alternative accessible formats, print disabilities, special needs students

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

In 2003, as part of our Disability Action Plan (DAP), the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) made a commitment in line with the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) Guidelines for the timely provision of accessible coursework reading materials to students with a range of print disabilities. This led to the development of the Alternative Formats Service, a joint initiative between the Library and the Student Services Unit.

This presentation will provide an overview of the development of the UTS service model which combines outsourcing of the content transcription process with delivery of coursework reading material to students via personalised individual webpages. We will also cover some ideas for resourcing the service in a sustainable way and how we approach our biggest problem of getting the resources to the students on time enabling them to commence the semester on an equal footing with their peers.

The service was monitored over a five year period and students surveyed to determine the impact of the service on their academic performance. The data collected shows significantly improved progress and academic outcomes for students with print disabilities at UTS.

A scaffolded approach is used to determine the levels of service offered to students which encourages them to increase their self sufficiency in the conversion of documents over the term of their studies with the aim of producing 'work ready' graduates.

## **Southern Cross University Equity Outreach Program**

**Presenter's Names:** Jo Mason, Robert Cumings

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**Theme:** 2. Building alliances for change: models of practice or 1. Social Inclusion and Higher Education

### **Summary**

Southern Cross University's Equity Outreach Program works with a number of regional and remote high schools including Casino, Kyogle, Richmond River, Nimbin, Woodenbong, Nambucca Heads and Kempsey.

The program seeks to demystify university and to encourage the interest and aspiration of secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are under-represented in higher education.

The school students are offered a small-group, experiential program designed to assist them to overcome real or perceived barriers to attending tertiary education. The program involves being responsive and creative in its approach by building authentic relationships on the journey of promoting social inclusion.

### **Full Abstract**

University students and staff work together to facilitate the program, with a team of staff and students visiting each of the schools running an interactive information session with the high school students to workshop their questions, concerns and aspirations about going to university.

The second part of the program involves the school students and staff visiting the University for a 'hands on' experience of university student life. The program aims to bring together a diverse range of university staff and students to engage with the high school students and their staff. Recently as part of the outreach program, approximately 60 students, some teachers and parents from Casino High School and Nimbin Central High School participated in activities during NAIDOC Week on the Lismore campus.

To go on this larger journey you open the door wider, take the door off the hinges and then knock down the wall!! Ways we have worked towards opening the door...

We gave more time to enter into individual discussions leading to finding out what the school students were interested in hearing about and being involved in.

We involve and work with multiple University stakeholders including Academic Schools, Marketing, Academic Skills Development, Office of Regional Engagement, Teaching and Learning, Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples, and the Library.

We increased our visits/communication with the schools involving them in the events such as Deadly Days, Fusion Festival, Sorry Day, NAIDOC.

We open to more creative communicate channels, including school notice boards and newsletters.

We actively seek out the pathways the school has established to connect with parents and utilise these pathways to promote parental involvement.

We encourage and respond to requests. e.g. University students to talk about study skills at a high school seminar.

University students who are part of the school and campus visits are often students who have attended the school they are visiting and have experienced educational disadvantage and understand the challenges.

And looking beyond Schools- In 2009 the program started working with TAFE colleges.

## **'Poor students' and reliable data: The role of data analysis in rethinking equity groups and supporting social inclusion**

Rob Miller, Equity Officer (Analysis), Equity & Diversity, RMIT University

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### **THEME: Social Inclusion and higher education**

#### **SUMMARY:**

This workshop will explore the significance of data analysis in driving changes to increase low SES participation in higher education. It will discuss how data can be analysed in ways that may encourage a rethinking of assumptions about 'poor students' and provide supporting evidence for social inclusion initiatives.

#### **FULL ABSTRACT**

This workshop will explore the significance of data analysis in driving changes which can increase the participation of people from low socio-economic-status (SES) backgrounds in higher education. There are a range of assumptions that exist about what limits the participation of people from low SES backgrounds in higher education. These assumptions about 'poor students' can be a significant additional barrier to access. The workshop will discuss to what extent these assumptions are supported by the available data on low SES access, participation and success. It will provide an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of data and how it can be analysed in ways that may encourage a rethinking of these assumptions and provide supporting evidence for social inclusion initiatives.

In particular, the workshop will focus on the following issues;

- How low SES status is defined and the challenges this poses in terms of targeting access programs and measuring their effectiveness.
- How to identify 'disadvantaged' and 'under represented' secondary schools and what these labels tell us, and, more importantly, don't tell us about students from these schools.
- What TER scores tell us about students capacity to succeed in higher education and what alternative data is available for use in selection processes.
- The tensions and contradictions produced through different approaches to increasing low SES participation employed by state based tertiary admissions centres, tertiary institutions and the Australian government.

The workshop format will encourage participation with the aim of pooling knowledge about the available data and sharing our experiences as practitioners about the challenges of using data analysis to support our work.

## Volunteering Value - The Role of Current University Students in Widening Participation

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education: Leading Practice in Social Inclusion

**SUMMARY:** The presentation will examine the role of current students in widening participation projects which aim to increase low socioeconomic status participation in higher education. It will discuss the various ways of involving current students, with a particular focus on engaging, managing and rewarding them as volunteers.

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The current drive to increase the participation rates of low socioeconomic status (LSES) students in higher education is prompting a development in the number and type of outreach activities undertaken by institutions, particularly for those with the furthest to go to meet the government's 20% participation target. In this 'outreach drive' students already studying in Higher Education are perhaps the best and most readily available resource to engage with potential students from LSES backgrounds.

How do we engage and value current university students in increasing LSES participation?

Drawing on UK models the presentation will look at the different modes of engaging and recognising current students in outreach activities. It will also identify the conflicts which exist between some of the current strategies.

Using the University of New South Wales ASPIRE project as a case study the presentation will look at current students as volunteers in a widening participation project.

While the use of volunteers in the project grew out of initial budgetary constraints the ASPIRE Ambassador scheme which developed is now the project's most valuable asset in terms of both sustainability and impact. The presentation will share this model by addressing the following questions:

- What value do volunteers add to the project?
- What values do volunteers bring with them? How do their values impact upon the project and in turn how does the project impact upon their values?
- What is the budgetary value (and cost) of a volunteer?
- How do we deliver a valuable volunteering experience for current students?

**Migrating to Uni: A support program for  
Students with Refugee Background**

Claire Nihill and Marita Quaglio – La Trobe University

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and higher education

**SUMMARY:** The presentation will discuss the establishment and outcomes of a refugee support program established at La Trobe University. The program involves allocating a role of Refugee Contact Officer to existing staff members at all La Trobe's campuses. The Contact Officers meet with the students each semester to discuss their academic progress and ensure they are using all available support services.

**KEYWORDS:**

Refugee, social inclusion

**FULL ABSTRACT**

Victoria has high numbers of refugee arrivals, many of whom are relocated to regional areas as part of a resettlement program. The campus catchments for La Trobe University include a number of areas with high refugee population and this led to the establishment of a Refugee Support Program at La Trobe University in 2008. By mid 2009 there were 43 students registered for this support program.

The presentation will discuss how the program was established and the duties included in the role of Refugee Contact Person that were added to existing staff roles. Details will also be provided on the types of assistance that students receive and promotion of the program. The presentation will also provide data on the types of qualifications these students bring with them to Australia, and the types of courses they apply for in Australian universities.

At the Albury-Wodonga Campus a large group of students with a refugee background commenced a University Bridging Program in 2009 and the presentation will discuss the ways the Bridging Program was adjusted to meet the needs of this cohort of students.

We will outline the Bridging Program at the Albury-Wodonga Campus and how it was adjusted to accommodate the needs of a large group of refugee student.

## **INCLUSION OF A MAORI PERSPECTIVE IN AN AN ART AND DESIGN CURRICULUM.**

Tui O'Sullivan, Auckland University of Technology (AUT University)

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**THEME:** Indigenisation of Higher Education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**SUMMARY:** A model of engaging with diversity to transform knowledge initiated by the School of Art and Design at AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Inclusion, Higher Education, Inclusivity, Maori, Marae.

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

New Zealand Government policy, Tertiary Education strategies and University investment plans currently require recognition of the need to address three targeted Equity groupings – Maori, Pacific Islands (Pasifika) people and People with Disabilities. It is intended that an increase in the number of students from these target groups would broaden the representation of the wider community and demonstrate a commitment to actively engage with the communities served by individual tertiary institutions.

For the past decade there has been an increase in the number of programmes taught at universities and polytechnics which have included Maori (Maori, tangata whenua, indigenous people of New Zealand) knowledge and culture in the curriculum, and have offered a Maori perspective in a range of subject areas.

One such programme which demonstrates recognition of cultural identity and the value of operating in a non traditionally western environment is taught by the AUT University School of Art and Design in cooperation with a local urban Maori Community.

In 2008 an arrangement was entered into with managers of a local community marae, (Marae traditional cultural meeting places with carved meeting houses) Awataha, to base much of the teaching of one cohort of the Certificate in Art and Design Intermediate (CADI) programme on their marae, an urban pan tribal marae situated adjacent to the University's North Shore Campus. All cohort members experience some workshop activities on this off-campus site.

This presentation will describe how the introduction of Maori knowledge and culture into a curriculum taught in a community setting has contributed to a socially inclusive medium for learning.

## **Equity101: The New Portal for Equity Researchers, Managers, Practitioners, Policy Makers and Government**

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**THEME:** 2. Building alliances for change: models of practice.  
A national and international resource toward collaboration and alliance building to facilitate change.

**SUMMARY:** This paper will discuss the recently developed *equity101* website; outlining the functionality of the site, and providing a discussion of the site's place in furthering and facilitating equity agendas in higher education. Delegates will have an opportunity to view this new resource and consider possible applications for policy, practice and research.

**KEYWORDS:** Resource, collaboration, online, library, repository, blog, discussion, synergy, connectedness, groups, education, equity, profiles, information hub.

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The recent Bradley Review of Higher Education has informed the Australian Government's higher education agenda: to provide greater access to higher education for all Australians, particularly those currently under-represented, while simultaneously increasing graduate numbers. Student equity workers, and the wider higher education equity community, comprised of practitioners, government officers, policy makers, academics and researchers, have identified better support services and linkages as key to achieving these outcomes. It seems likely that new network technologies can assist to consolidate the progress in some areas of education equity and further highlight opportunities for future improvements in the field. In consultation with key stakeholders, the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education has been tasked to develop *equity101*: a site supporting dynamic collegial networks and providing opportunities to better locate information and scholarship for this growing community.

The *equity101* site offers a centralised online portal which seeks to facilitate increased collaboration, opportunities for evolving discussions, awareness of equity news and events, and dissemination of equity scholarship. Capitalising on the web 2.0 environment, *equity101* uses social software to allow collaborative development, through wikis, blogs, and groups – even allowing free web space for equity group pages. This paper will outline the site's key functionality – from a growing repository of national and international equity information to dynamic calendar updates of equity events. The site also offers expert and community reviews of texts in key categories, allowing users to easily find and identify relevant scholarship. The site will better facilitate collaboration and research for the Australian and international equity community, while also raising the profile of those who work in the equity in education space. The paper reflects on the ways in which this site will act to build the scholarship of the field, increase access to leading methodologies and provide future opportunities for equity research.

## **Conducting sustainable outreach and transition programs in collaboration with schools and community organisations**

Susan Roberts, The University of Queensland and Catherine Spencer, CQUniversity

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**THEME:** Building alliances for change: models of practice

**SUMMARY:** The Tertiary Awareness and Transition Program (TATP) is an example of engagement between a university, schools, national and local community agencies and students' families. It is a sustainable program designed to raise awareness of, and improve the direct transfer rate to higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** Collaboration, Low SES, First in Family, Reaching Academic Potential, Aspiration Building, Informing Practice, Issues and Concerns

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The Tertiary Awareness and Transition Program (TATP) is an example of engagement between a university, schools, national and local community agencies and students' families. It is a sustainable program designed to raise awareness of, and improve the direct transfer rate to higher education.

TATP is conducted in collaboration with regional Queensland schools with significant numbers of students from low SES backgrounds. It is also conducted with The Smith Families' Learning for Life students in the greater Brisbane district. Many participants are likely to be first in their family to attend university.

TATP recognises that from Grade 9, students from low SES backgrounds are less likely to reach their academic potential than their high SES peers. Therefore, the program is conducted with students from grade 9 through to Grade 12. Its design provides complimentary learning in academic and study skills which assist in improved school achievement and retention, immediately. Participants receive meaningful hands-on experiences so students and their families become familiar with a tertiary environment and realise that university study is an attainable goal.

The findings from students' evaluations and reflective journals inform equity practitioners on ways in which today's students want outreach programs to be delivered. The evaluations also identified numerous obstacles to tertiary education and students' initial perceptions about university, that are often barriers in themselves. From the findings the pilot program was modified and better outcomes were achieved as evidenced by participants' responses, changes to subject choices better suited to a tertiary pathway, and a confidence for all stakeholders that students were better prepared for the transition to university.

Despite participants coming from similar backgrounds, each school presented its own set of issues and requirements. This meant the program design needed to become more flexible without compromising goals and student engagement.

**Working with schools: How to overcome the barriers schools raise when universities wish to conduct outreach activities.**

**Susan Roberts, The University of Queensland and Catherine Spencer,  
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**THEME:** Building alliances for change: models of practice

**SUMMARY:** Despite universities conducting sustainable and successful outreach programs some schools are not committed to these programs. This workshop is designed to consider some successful strategies and brainstorm how equity practitioners can overcome barriers raised by the school system.

**KEYWORDS:** Collaboration, School Based Activities, Aspiration Building, Low SES, Rural and Remote, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Success and Failures.

**FULL ABSTRACT**

CQUniversity and The University of Queensland staff have been collaborating and engaging with high schools in two of the more disadvantaged districts of Queensland, these being Wide Bay-Burnett and Fitzroy. Community agencies have also been included in the outreach efforts, such as The Smith Family Learning for Life students in the Fitzroy and Greater Brisbane districts.

The workshop presentation will provide an overview of the aspiration-building, tertiary awareness and transition programs offered to the schools. With over four hundred student participants from five schools, the program results and research reveal that the programs are viable, have successful outcomes, and can be conducted with large cohorts of high school students from Grades 9 to 12.

Program participants are from equity cohorts including low SES backgrounds, rural and remote districts, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Many of the students involved are first in their family to attend university. Despite participants coming from similar backgrounds each district presents its own set of issues, school requirements and varying degrees of commitment to the programs. The reasons behind this will be discussed along with the solutions that have succeeded and failed.

This workshop is designed for participants to brainstorm how equity practitioners can overcome barriers raised by schools. Shared ideas and innovations will promote leading practice in aspiration building programs and work toward a change in the representation of equity target groups in higher education.

Facilitators will conduct and record group discussion and provide a written summary after the conference.

## **BUILDING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH MUSIC**

Dr Jennifer Rowley & Ms Susie Walsh, Sydney Conservatorium of Music,  
University of Sydney

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education

**SUMMARY:** A social inclusion audit was conducted as the first phase in a multi phase project to identify and develop social inclusion and community engagement at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music

**KEYWORDS:** social inclusion, community engagement, pre-tertiary education, music; disadvantaged social settings

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

“Maximum participation in economic, social and community life is a defining characteristic of an inclusive society. Achieving this outcome for all Australians means delivering policies and programs which support people to learn and strengthen their ability to participate actively in the labour market and in their communities” (Australian Government, Social Inclusion Principles for Australia, p1 retrieved 7/9/09 EML/SIPrinciples.pdf/C58EA28C-18C0-4a97-9AF2-036E93DDAFB3/SIPrinciples.pdf).

The Sydney Conservatorium of Music (a faculty at the University of Sydney) recently conducted an audit of social inclusion activities. The main focus of this audit related to pre-tertiary education and the opportunities provided by the Conservatorium to students from disadvantaged social settings, which enhance their sense of aspiration and attainment through education – specifically through music. This was an invaluable exercise and although only a ‘snap-shot’, it gave an indication of the breadth and depth of the Conservatorium’s social inclusion and community engagement activities.

This paper will report on Phase 1 of a multi-phase project - the audit process. This measuring of the effectiveness of social inclusion programs at the conservatorium highlighted the many sound practices already in place. The next phase of the project was to conduct structured interviews with staff responsible for initiating the social inclusion programs and the findings of extended interviews with social inclusion program providers will be reported on. Finally, the project saw the development of a collaborative faculty approach to delivering music to the community. The purpose of this project was to enable the Conservatorium to better articulate its current and future role in the development and implementation of the University’s Social Inclusion Strategy. This paper will document more comprehensively the myriad activities undertaken by conservatorium staff and students in the areas of social inclusion and community engagement

**Maintaining the Momentum: examining the effectiveness of gender diversity programs'**

Inge Saris, Sue Sadauskas  
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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** The paper will focus on a range of programs offered by ANU to support the career advancement of academic women and evaluate the relatively low level of take-up of some of these initiatives. It will canvass a number of options for maintaining the momentum and effectiveness of gender diversity programs.

**KEYWORDS:** Career advancement, gender diversity, participation, program evaluation.

**FULL ABSTRACT**

The paper will discuss academic staffing profiles and canvas in a general way the possible explanations for the short fall of senior academic women within (especially) research intensive universities. Areas identified by the ANU for attention will be discussed, with a main focus on initiatives which target academic women's career advancement, women's leadership development and programs that support early career female researchers. Subsequently we talk about the relatively low participation rate for some of these initiatives and we would like to hear the experiences of other universities on this. The paper will include the results of a study currently taking place, which explores a number of possible hypotheses behind the relatively low take-up of support measures by academic women. Finally options will be explored for improving levels of participation and sustaining engagement and momentum.

## **A Step Out of Poverty: Aspirations, Retention, and Transformation**

Linda Shallcross, Elizabeth van Acker, Giorel Curran

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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives.

### **SUMMARY:**

This power point presentation, based on the findings of a three year study, will discuss the important role of student equity, scholarships, outreach programs, and student services in facilitating access to higher education by students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The study identifies the factors that enabled their participation in higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** scholarships, student-equity, outreach, social justice, aspirations, retention

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

This paper reports on a three year exploration of the experience of students awarded Chancellors' scholarships for education and accommodation costs associated with their studies at Griffith University. The study makes a significant contribution to informing social justice and equity policies and programs with findings grounded in the student experience of those with the least social and cultural capital. The inquiry draws upon the direct experience of those adversely affected by poverty and other instances of disadvantage. The study revealed the extent of the social barriers encountered by scholarship recipients who described family backgrounds of domestic violence, child sexual abuse, chronic ill health, alcohol and drug abuse, family tragedies, family breakdown, long term stress disorders, refugee trauma and insecure accommodation.

From these backgrounds, participants aspired to transform their lives by pursuing pathways to University, for example through access to the Uni-Reach program. The scholarships made it possible for them to live in rented share house accommodation and to travel to University. The participants identified counselling, student equity services, and student welfare as key retention factors because of the cultural and social capital built before critical times arose when their knowledge and access to these services prevented them from "dropping out".

While the study found that equity scholarships facilitate retention and contribute to widening participation, the study also identified that equity outreach programs and student support services were fundamental to building cultural and social capital to facilitate transformation for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The study recommends the awarding of scholarships to ensure the participation of those with the least social and cultural capital.

## **Raising Aspirations for Tertiary Study: The Aspire UWA Program**

Judy Skene, Student Services, The University of Western Australia  
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**THEME:** Building Alliances for Change: External partnerships and student initiatives

**SUMMARY:** Raising aspirations and increasing participation for disadvantaged students are national priorities in higher education in Australia. The Aspire UWA program is a major new outreach initiative of The University of Western Australia. This paper details progress to date and explores strategies to build and sustain partnerships.

**KEYWORDS:** partnerships; raising aspirations; outreach

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Widening access to higher education in Australia has gained fresh currency with the focus of the Rudd Government on social inclusion. The Review of Australian Higher Education (DEEWR 2008) noted the unacceptably low participation rates of students from low Socio-Economic Status (SES) backgrounds, Indigenous students and rural and remote students. These students are particularly under-represented in Group of Eight research-intensive universities like The University of Western Australia (UWA). There has been a lack of progress nationally in improving representation of disadvantaged students over the past two decades despite the efforts of dedicated individuals.

This paper details an expanded focus by UWA on outreach to disadvantaged students. A successful bid to the Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund in 2008 of \$2.45 million has enabled the Aspire UWA program to form partnerships with 24 schools that have low rates of transfer to higher education. Six of these schools are in the Pilbara region of Western Australia and 18 are in outer-metropolitan Perth. Aspire UWA aims to raise aspirations for tertiary study, starting with Year 9 students and working closely with them, their families, schools and communities through to successful transition to university.

Although in its early stages, this ambitious program has been received enthusiastically by the partner schools. The program has a 'whole of university' approach but the key internal UWA stakeholders are Student Services, the School of Indigenous Studies and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. The program concept also received strong endorsement from the corporate sector which hopefully will translate to further opportunities for the target cohort. The opportunity to exchange strategies with EOPHEA colleagues on building and sustaining alliances, engaging students and families and gaining 'institutional buy-in' would be welcomed.

DEEWR (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education*. [Accessed 6 January 2009]  
Available from [www.deewr.gov.au/he\\_review\\_finalreport](http://www.deewr.gov.au/he_review_finalreport)

## **Senior University Women's Perceptions of Development Needs, Support and Challenges**

Lucienne Tessens and Claire Webb, The University of Western Australia

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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** Overview of the development and support needs of senior university women and the challenges they face in their roles.

**KEYWORDS:** Senior women, development needs and support, workplace challenges, gendered workplace culture

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

Women-only staff development programmes have been conducted at Australian universities for many years, and considerable work and effort have been invested in them as a strategy to address gender inequity. However, gender imbalance remains prominent in the senior echelons of the higher education sector. This suggests continuing systemic and cultural barriers to women's progress within universities.

The University of Western Australia offers the Leadership Development for Women (LDW) programme and the Senior Women's Network (SWN) to cater for the development needs of female staff. In response to the challenge that the LDW programme does not accommodate the needs of the most senior women, and in the absence of evidence regarding the effectiveness of SWN events, it was decided to conduct a survey.

A questionnaire was distributed to 134 senior women comprising 66 academic women at level D, 35 at level E and 33 professional staff women at level 10 or above. The survey included questions about the women's participation in LDW and SWN programmes, whether the University should offer a more senior leadership programme for women, what format and content such a programme might include, and what other development opportunities would be of interest to them. Questions were also asked about the current challenges senior women face in their roles, what support mechanisms they require, what factors have influenced their career development, and their perceptions and experiences of the gendered workplace culture. This presentation will provide a summary of the women's responses to the survey.

This presentation is important for anyone involved in supporting senior women in universities, as challenges, development and support needs of women who have broken through the glass ceiling are identified and discussed.

## **Parental leave and research funding - conflicts and compromises?**

Prue Toft, The University of Auckland

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion and Higher Education, Leading practice in social inclusion

**SUMMARY:** This presentation questions if research funding criteria and procedures can be in conflict with parental leave requirements. It examines flexibility to accommodate parental leave, barriers that can arise when parental leave must be paid from research funding, and suggests compromises to support parental leave for researchers.

**KEYWORDS:** research, parental leave, women

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

This presentation arose from a larger collaborative project between the Tertiary Education Union, the EEO Office and Human Resources at The University of Auckland on Women Returning to Work.

Informants in the Women Returning to Work Project reported various barriers to their research productivity. Ensuring grants and awards did not contain provisions which would present obstacles to women returning to work is the focus of this study. The findings would apply equally to men who have taken parental leave.

Particular interest is on provisions for

- early career researchers who had taken parental leave before seeking research funding
- researchers who had taken parental leave after receiving research funding

Funding for emerging researchers which has a time limit between completion of PhD and application for funding could disadvantage researchers who have taken parental leave. Out of one internal and three external grants, for 'emerging researchers' three contained a time limit since completing PhD (five years and eight years).

Flexibility for extensions to accommodate parental leave while receiving research funding was variable.

An additional issue of concern was paying parental leave payments from the research grants, which could impact on research groups' ability to meet deadlines, and raised concerns of potentially disadvantaging younger women's employment opportunities.

Compromises which could balance the needs of research programmes and serve the interests of women taking parental leave included amendment to the criteria for early career researchers to exclude time taken on parental leave or using alternative criteria such as quantity of funding previously received. Other strategies for women who were more advanced in their research careers including allowing 'out of round applications' for women returning from parental leave, and ensuring women who received research funding were aware of provisions for extensions, and variation of contracts.

**Reticence, reproduction, or relativity?**  
**Comparative statistical analysis on gender in academic promotions**

Prue Toft, EEO Manager and Professor Chris Triggs, Department of Statistics The University of Auckland

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**THEME:** Social Inclusion in Higher Education, Measuring the effectiveness of social inclusion programmes

**SUMMARY:** Initially promotions results indicated higher success rates but lower application rates for women. This motivated an in-depth statistical analysis to determine whether or not there were real differences between men's and women's promotions application and success rates up to associate professor at The University of Auckland.

**KEYWORDS:** promotions, gender, parental leave, childrearing

**ABSTRACT**

Between 2004 and 2008 promotions reports have indicated overall high women's success rates (69% for women compared with 61% for men) but a slightly lower application rate (11% for women compared with 14% for men).

This has led to speculation as to possible causes:

- Promotions performance is influenced by women being more 'reticent' or 'risk averse' which would lead to slower progression;
- Parental leave and childrearing responsibilities may lessen women's application rates;
- As the percentages are small and the numbers of applicants can be small, the differences may not be meaningful;
- If women are more successful in promotion, it may be because they delay applications until they have more extensive evidence. This would explain higher success, but lower application rate;
- If women's higher success rate is counterbalanced by a lower application rate, there may not be an overall gender difference;
- Differences may be specific to faculties.

This study has examined four promotion bars in an academic career; (senior tutor bar (teaching only academics), top of lecturer grade (B), senior lecturer bar and top of senior lecturer grade (C). Staff on these bars have been tracked by age and gender over a five year period. The length of time that people are on these bars and how this relates to application and success rates has been analysed.

While speculation had been that women would have slower application rates due to 'reticence' and childrearing, the findings concluded that with the exception of senior tutors, where duration was similar, women spent less time on the promotion bars than their male counterparts. The study did not produce evidence of gender difference in application and success rates in promotion, but showed that there was a very strong effect of age on both rates of application and of success.

**Enhancing long term university – school partnerships: UniSA Northern  
Adelaide Partnership**

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**THEME:** Building Alliances for Change

**SUMMARY:** Report on recent developments within UniSA's school partnership activities in the northern suburbs of Adelaide and future planning in the context of the Bradley Review.

**KEYWORDS:** Partnerships, schooling, participation

**FULL ABSTRACT**

The University of South Australia's Northern Adelaide Partnership (UNAP) was established in 2002 as a Corporate Priority to enhance social inclusion and educational outcomes in one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged regions in Australia, the outer northern suburbs of Adelaide. Based around our northern suburbs campus at Mawson Lakes, UNAP facilitates social inclusion projects designed to increase educational participation, promote university pathways, and build community capacity. This presentation will outline a number of the initiatives that have been developed, in collaboration with the schools in northern Adelaide, to enhance higher education opportunities, including the appointment of a dedicated Northern Adelaide Schools Liaison Officer and the integration of a Year 10 University Orientation Program into the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). The presentation will conclude with an overview of the most recent developments emerging from a Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund (DASA) grant and the post-Bradley environment.

## **Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience: partnerships for success**

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**Theme:** Building Alliances for change. External partnerships – student initiatives

### **Summary:**

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) is a not for profit organisation, originating in 2005 at the University of Sydney and is now operating in universities across NSW.

The program is targeted at Indigenous High School students from years 7 – 12 to improve educational outcomes such as year 10 and 12 completion rates and university entrants. This paper will outline the AIME program at the University of Wollongong with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of partnerships in achieving program objectives.

### **Full Abstract**

Partnerships are necessary and highly effective in strengthening program objectives and this has proved to be the case in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program. The AIME program is targeted at Indigenous High School students from years 7 – 12 to improve educational outcomes such as year 10 and 12 completion rates and university entrants.

Partners in this program include: over one hundred volunteer mentors, who are students at the University of Wollongong; five local high schools and their Indigenous students; Illawarra Aboriginal Cultural Corporation Centre; Dapto Koonawarra Youth Connect; Community Based Working Group; and of course AIME with the Wollongong Program Manager Jake Trindorfer.

AIME mentors are recruited from all faculties at the University and must complete AIME training full day plus additional stream training for example to be a year 9 mentor or a homework centre mentor. Mentors are predominantly non-Indigenous students at this time. They are not paid for their time but instead are provided with a uniform, and a certificate of participation to include in their resume.

The program is set up to analyse positive outcome of the mentoring. Both quantitative and qualitative measures are in place. For example year 10 and year 12 completions are measured pre and post mentoring at each high school and student's confidence levels are assessed by feedback from informal surveys of both mentors and mentees.

One of the most positive outcomes of the program is the interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and the greater understanding developed through cultural and educational exchange.

This presentation will highlight the successful partnerships for positive outcomes which reach into the Indigenous community of the Illawarra.

**Creating Accessible Teaching and Support (CATS):**  
**The CATS Self Review and Planning Tool - An instructional and**  
**interactive 'how to' workshop**

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**THEME:** 3. Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** The CATS Self Review and Planning Tool is an effective quality assurance activity which aims to identify opportunities for improvement in inclusive practice in the university environment. This interactive workshop aims to demonstrate the functionality of the tool and outline some practical applications of the process.

**KEYWORDS:** disability, quality assurance, inclusive practice, self review

**FULL ABSTRACT:**

The ALTC funded Creating Accessible Teaching and Support (CATS) project aims to improve outcomes for students with disability in university education by better resourcing university staff to practice inclusively. The 'self review and planning tool' is a fully interactive, accessible and web-based program that has been developed to assist universities to review their performance against the Universities Australia (formerly AVCC) Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability. These guidelines provide an excellent framework for *better* practice and encompass the spectrum of the student experience, from recruitment and selection through to transition to employment.

The CATS self review and planning tool can facilitate a number of outcomes for universities including:

- a clear picture of current practice in relation to students with disability;
- identification of opportunities for improvement;
- engagement of staff at all levels in conversations about inclusive practice;
- increased awareness and education around disability issues; and
- development of 'action plans' that align with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education (2005).

During the session delegates will be introduced to the self review and planning tool and receive a demonstration of key functionality. A representative from a partner institution will present a showcase of the use of the tool at their university. Interactive activities will focus on the conceptual and practical applications of a self review process, and the steps involved in planning for and implementing change. Delegates will receive detailed workshop resources and will have the opportunity to discuss with the CATS project team the application of the self review and planning tool at their own institutions.

## Learning Community Partnership Group

RMIT University

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### **FULL ABSTRACT**

The Learning Community Partnership group at RMIT University brokers learning and research opportunities at the RMIT Hamilton Centre and through learning partnerships in northern metropolitan Melbourne. The ways of engaging with community and undertaking outreach work is built on over 10 years of experience by team members within the group.

Our ways of working are based on a belief that the University should provide opportunities for people to contribute and engage with the world by creating learning experiences for and with people in their community. However, our role is to link training and community partnerships to learning and teaching and research opportunities for the University. Our way of working is the *interconnection* of practice and theory through an action research, action learning mode. This includes links to enterprises, schools, other education and training providers, community-based groups and government (Federal, State and Municipal) organisations.

The brokering work of the group in Melbourne's North is achieved by being heavily involved in extensive partnerships across the region, including with Local Learning and Employment Networks, local government, youth commitments and secondary school clusters. The aim of these partnerships is to improve the outcomes for young people, in the area of career education and transition from school for further education, training or work. This presentation will focus on one such partnership – the Whittlesea Youth Commitment - established in 1999 as a response to high youth unemployment, low school retention rates and lower than average post-school education in the City of Whittlesea. What have been the outcomes for the University of being involved in the youth commitment? What are the outcomes for our students and the young people in the region? What impact has it had on the organisations involved in the youth commitment? What are the benefits and challenges of maintaining involvement in this partnership and what are the opportunities for the future in a post Bradley era?

## **“It is just the way it is”: Reflections of Women as Mid-Career General Staff**

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**THEME:** Excellence for All: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** This paper explores career progression of women as mid-career general staff. It found that navigating careers within a university environment is relative to opportunity. Low levels of confidence, lack of career direction and feeling unsupported by management all added to the sense of disempowerment that many of these women experienced.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender equity, career development

### **FULL ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the career progression of women general staff at a newer metropolitan university. Interviews were conducted with fourteen of the twenty women who completed a gender equity program for mid-career general staff between May and November 2008. The participants were asked to discuss their career path, work/life balance and the usefulness of the program for their career planning and make recommendations on how to improve the program.

The research is located within discourses around career opportunities for non-academic staff, choice and careers, balancing work and other responsibilities, and the role of gender equity programs in broadening an understanding of organisational culture and career choices.

The research found that the ability to navigate careers within a university environment is relative to opportunity. Younger women had a greater sense of being in control of career planning, whereas the career trajectories of older women had often not been straightforward.

One important theme was lack of belief in the ability to influence or control their career direction. The comment of one participant when describing the endless juggling of work and family – “it is just the way it is” – was a metaphor for the careers of some of these women and the sense that they were unable to change anything in their working lives. Low levels of confidence, lack of career direction and feeling unsupported by management all added to the sense of disempowerment that many of these women experienced. Women as mid-career general staff have to make decisions about their working and non-working lives, but often the choices are limited. Those with dependent children juggle competing demands, some having little time to reflect on how they could achieve a better balance.

## **Responsibilities Rights and Respect Online**

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**Theme:** University Wide Equity Initiatives

### **Summary:**

Responsibilities Rights and Respect Online (RRR Online) is an online tutorial designed to educate university students about harassment and discrimination, within the context of a university environment. This paper will outline the evaluation of RRR Online with students in the university residences. Analysis of a survey completed by the students, about diversity, harassment and discrimination, and the outcomes of student focus groups will be discussed in the context of the program improvements.

### **Keywords:**

Harassment, discrimination, tertiary education, online, tutorial

### **Full Abstract**

The Director EED, the Dean of Students and the interactive multimedia team from the Educational Media Laboratory (emlab) within the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong have joined together in a project to create an online tutorial to educate university students about harassment and discrimination, within the context of a university environment.

RRR Online uses a suite of scenarios to explore the rights and responsibilities of students in different contexts, typical of student experiences, with special attention given to harassment and discrimination. Each of the seven scenarios is followed with a reflection and feedback section aimed at providing the students with an understanding of the issues surrounding the scenario. Importantly, it highlights how students should deal with the different situations and where they can go for help should they find themselves being harassed or discriminated against.

The program has been trialled with the students in university residences to gain their feedback on the structure and content of the program, its applicability to university students and where it would be most effectively used to educate students about discrimination and harassment.

Prior to the students accessing RRR Online, they were asked to complete a survey to determine their current level of awareness about harassment, discrimination and diversity education at UOW, and to assess their personal opinions of the prevalence of harassment and discrimination and how they would react in certain circumstances.

An analysis of the survey results was used to explore some pertinent issues in the focus groups and to use the feedback to further refine the RRR Online program. The simple fact that the majority of students would inform their friends when they are the victim of discrimination and harassment would indicate the need to educate all students to be informed about appropriate support and action in a university setting.

**“I returned within a year. Things don't change that quickly.” Or do they?**

Nadine Zacharias, Deakin University

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**THEME:** Excellence for all: university wide equity initiatives

**SUMMARY:** The paper reports on the experiences of female staff who have utilised one of the country's most generous parental leave schemes. A significant number of women experienced substantial changes to their role, work environment and relationships upon their return. The study highlights a need for explicit strategies and proactive communication to facilitate re-integration.

**KEYWORDS:** parental leave, return to work, stay in touch

At a time when a universal paid parental leave scheme for Australian parents is on the horizon, it is important to investigate those organisations with well-established parental leave schemes to identify both good practice and persistent challenges in implementing more generous parental leave provisions. This study evaluated the paid parental leave scheme of a Victorian university which offers one of the most generous provisions in Australia.

The study evaluated the experiences of female staff with regard to their most recent period of maternity/parental leave at the university. It included a sample of 93 women who had commenced maternity/parental leave between January 2005 and March 2008. It drew on three sources of data: information from the university's HR information system, questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

This paper focuses on the issues associated with taking an extended period of parental leave of nine months or more. It explores challenges around communication during the parental leave period as well as those associated with the return to work. Lack of information on changes in the organisation and to the position emerged as important concerns. Only a minority of women had been invited to important meetings or participated in training while on leave. About half of the women had discussed explicit strategies for the return to work with their supervisors. A substantial number reported significant changes to their substantive role, work environment, supervisory arrangements and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. The interviews in particular illustrated that the relationship of women with their supervisors before commencing an extended leave period determined in large part the quality of the leave experience. It is argued that to effectively administer generous parental leave provisions proactive communication during the leave period as well as detailed planning for the return to work are crucial to ensure positive experiences.