



## ***STUDENT EXPERIENCE OFFICE:***

### **PEER-TO-PEER DIALOGUE AND MENTORING AROUND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Who can stop students from making a decision to cheat? Their peers. Peer culture is found to have decisive impact on academic integrity. Students are less likely to cheat in academic environments, where peers disapprove of academic misconduct. The post talks about Student Experience Office's crucial contribution to academic integrity culture at Western – their high impact peer programs and initiatives around academic integrity.

#### **PEER-MENTORING STREAM OF THE EDUCATION FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STRATEGY**

The Student Experience Office (SEO) has led the Peer mentoring stream of the Education for Academic Integrity Strategy since 2017. The focus of

this team's work has been on building capacity within our peer leaders to confidently and skillfully lead discussions amongst students on Academic Integrity and embed messaging and strategies across a range of our peer programs.

#### **STARTING THE CONVERSATION**

We engage over 1,000 students annually in volunteer and paid leadership roles through a range of programs. These include [PASS](#), [MATES](#), [English Conversation Groups](#), [LEAD](#), [Student Representation and Collectives](#), [Transition Success](#) and [Chaplaincy](#) student groups. Combined our students reach over 15,000 of their peers with individual phone conversations, informal group catch-ups, planned mentoring sessions and structured learning sessions.

#### **MAKING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY MATTER**

In 2018, Academic Integrity was included in the training for those new to these student leader roles across various programs. Students gained an understanding of the University's strategy, and developed important skills in facilitating open peer-to-peer discussions about academic integrity, including appropriate referral links and resources. The Academic Integrity Module was also embedded into the Student Leadership Training vUWS site for



**Passing the baton  
to win the  
Academic  
Integrity Relay**



optional student follow-up. This 45-minute online module could act as a refresher or supplement to face-to-face learnings and had 123 unique attempts, and 49 completions.

#### **INTEGRITY IN ACTION**

After the initial training, student leaders were supported and challenged to actively engage their peers in discussions of Academic Integrity throughout the semester. Programs each mapped core themes such as collusion, plagiarism and the honour code to program-specific “touch-points” which supported and challenged students to actively engage with their peers around academic integrity content. The themes were addressed through a range of strategies designed to best support each programs’ format and ethos.

For example, the weekly communication to PASS facilitators a key theme around Academic Integrity was addressed. Facilitators were provided with resources they could share with their students and suggested activities of how they could integrate into their session. In an early PASS session, a Quiz Activity focused on Citations, References and Bibliographies following an introductory discussion and activity around “Giving Credit” for academic

sources. Each week links to appropriate Library Study Smart Academic Integrity resources were promoted to assist facilitators in directing their peers during PASS sessions.



*PASS Facilitators at Honour Code workshop, Friday 27th July, 2018*

Activities were well received and facilitators appreciated the outlines for starting conversations. “The Academic Integrity activity [during the PASS session] enabled students to consciously think about what is ‘bystander apathy’ and what are the right and wrong things to do in their assessments.” (Rashmi Pithavadian, Senior PASS Mentor) commenting on the embedding of Academic Integrity activities by



John Webber (PASS Facilitator) whilst observing his session. Facilitators not only linked the ideas or strategies of Academic Integrity to the week's content but used the informal peer learning environment to encourage students to talk openly about these themes.

As leaders, PASS facilitators were invited to contribute their feedback to the development of the Draft Student Honour Code via a workshop co-hosted with the Learning Transformations Team on 27 July 2018. This was highly successful as PASS facilitators 'provided more than 60 pieces of constructive feedback on general meaning, structure and wording of the Code... Recommendations received from PASS members on how to improve the Code will be integrated into the Code's text.' (Dr Valeria Pashkova, Project Officer, Learning Transformations).

#### LEAD ENGAGE ASPIRE DEVELOP (LEAD)

LEAD is a program designed to develop skills in emerging and aspiring student leaders. At the commencement of the program students take a 'LEADership self-assessment' to help guide them on their journey. Students who score highly on confidence in ethical leadership have the opportunity

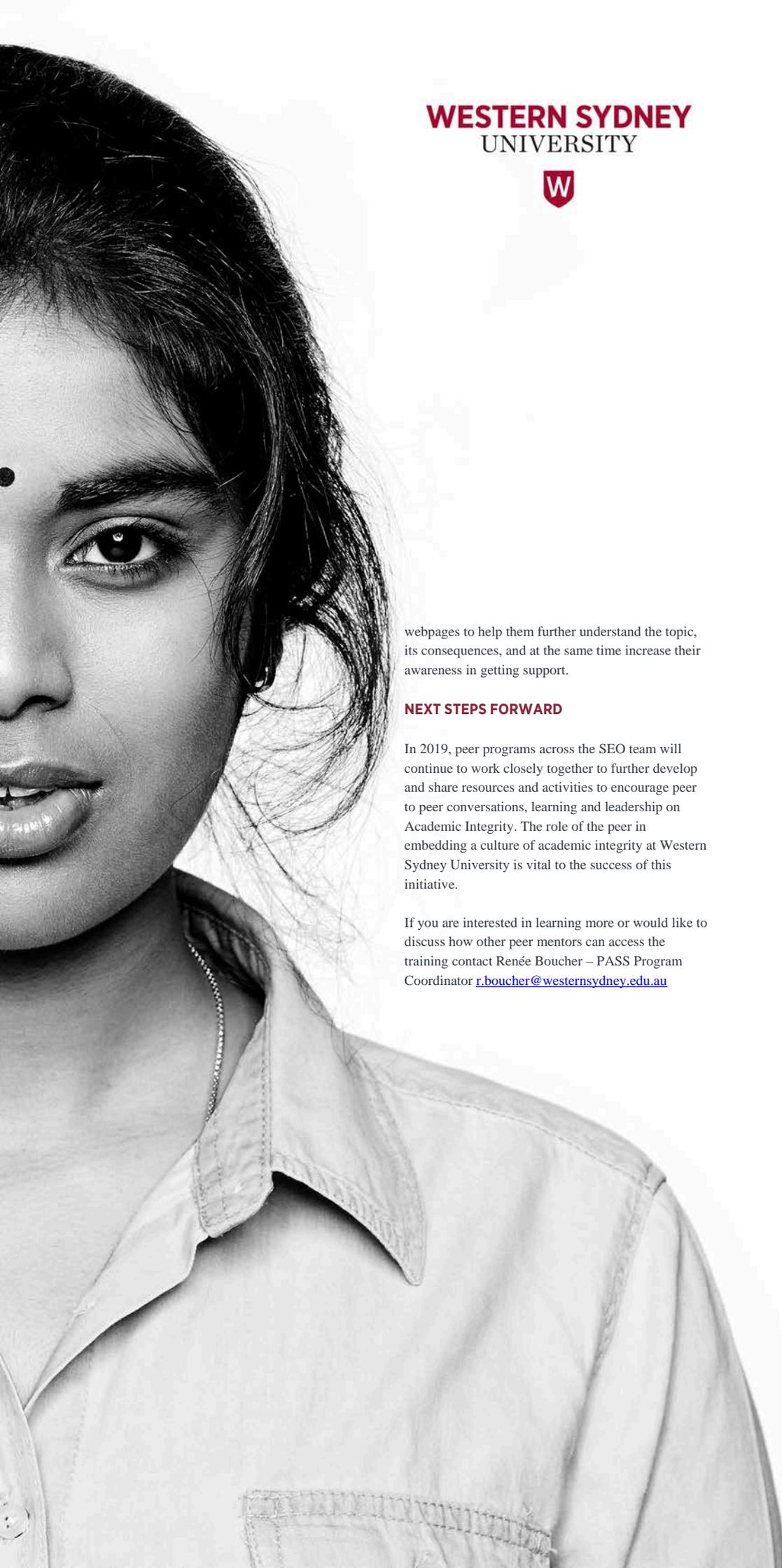
to engage in Leadership in Practice Opportunities for Academic Integrity such as the "I Don't Cheat Because" photo challenge.



LEAD Students participating in the "I Don't Cheat Because" photo challenge

#### ENGLISH CONVERSATION GROUPS: EMBEDDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY ACTIVITIES

It is vital to support our international students in developing understanding and skills of studying with academic integrity. Within the English Conversation Groups program, leaders conducted "[The Cheating Game](#)" based on the activity developed by "Academic Integrity Standards Project." At the end of the session, facilitators referred participants to various resources in the library and university



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webpages to help them further understand the topic, its consequences, and at the same time increase their awareness in getting support.

### **NEXT STEPS FORWARD**

In 2019, peer programs across the SEO team will continue to work closely together to further develop and share resources and activities to encourage peer to peer conversations, learning and leadership on Academic Integrity. The role of the peer in embedding a culture of academic integrity at Western Sydney University is vital to the success of this initiative.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to discuss how other peer mentors can access the training contact Renée Boucher – PASS Program Coordinator [r.boucher@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:r.boucher@westernsydney.edu.au)