



Western Sydney University Academic Mentoring Program 2016

Evaluation Summary Report – November 2016

Background

The University's Academic Mentoring Program was introduced in 2010 and 250 academic staff have participated since then from across the Schools, Research Centres and Institutes.

The Program recognises that mentoring is an important mechanism for academic career development and contributes to building a high-performing and collegial workforce. It provides a career development opportunity for Academic staff to broaden their knowledge, skills, capabilities and experience.

The Program supports the University's strategic goal to commit to a dynamic and innovative culture that secures success, is endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor and Executive, and is funded by the University. The Program is coordinated by Talent & Leadership Development with resources and tools on mentoring and career planning accessed from a Mentoring website.

The 2016 Program

In 2016, 56 academic staff participated over a ten month program with both Mentors and Mentees attending three half-day workshops at the commencement of the program (March), at mid-term (July) and at the end of the program (November). Between workshops Mentors and Mentees meet on a regular basis.

Mentees are drawn from early and mid-career Academics either nominated by their Deans or self-nominated. Mentors are members of the Professoriate or senior Academic staff, also nominated by their Deans, self-nominated or recommended by the Mentor Matching Committee.

Mentors and Mentees provided feedback on the value of participating in the structured mentoring program. Examples of reported benefits and outcomes include:

- gaining insight into the different disciplines and Schools and how they function;
- enabling opportunities for collaborative research and developing cross-school partnerships;
- developing joint research strategies;
- providing and receiving support and advice regarding promotion;
- developing skills in writing grant applications and identifying other funding sources;
- assistance with Academic Development Program and Scholarship applications;
- assistance with writing journal publications;
- gaining a fresh perspective on career development; and
- promoting the transfer of knowledge.

Appendix 1 lists the Mentors and Mentees who participated in the 2016 Academic Mentoring Program and Appendix 2 is a summary of the participants' responses to the pre and post academic mentor/mentee surveys.

Leone Cripps,
Senior Consultant, Talent & Leadership Development



Appendix 1 - 2016 Academic Mentoring Program Mentors and Mentees

MENTOR	MENTEE
Associate Professor Simon Green School of Science & Health	Dr Samuel Chalmers, Postdoctoral Fellow in Sport Physiology and Performance, School of Science & Health & Dr Jennifer Sonter, Lecturer Podiatry, School of Science & Health
Professor Lesley Wilkes School of Nursing & Midwifery	Dr Jill Hnatiuk, Lecturer PDHPE, School of Science & Health
Professor Paul Holford School of Science & Health	Dr Dilupa Nakandala, Lecturer in Human Resources & Management , School of Business & Rina Datt, Lecturer in Accounting, School of Business
Associate Professor Gary Dennis School of Science & Health	Dr Victoria Mansour, Teaching Focused Role, Associate Lecturer in PBL, School of Medicine & Dr Shaimaa Atwa, Academic Teacher, Science - The College
Professor Michael Adams School of Law	Krishan Prasad, Lecturer in Accounting, School of Business
Dr Robert Mailhammer School of Humanities & Communication Arts	Dr James Gourley, Career Development Fellowship, Writing & Society Research Centre
Professor Jane Ussher Centre for Health Research	Dr Holly Priddis, Lecturer in Midwifery, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Professor Pranee Liamputtong, School of Science & Health	Dr Amit Arora, Senior Lecturer in Public Health, School of Science & Health
Professor Bob Hodge Institute for Culture & Society	Dr Andrew Bennie, Senior Lecturer Physical Education, School of Science & Health & Michelle Catanzaro, Lecturer Design, School of Humanities & Communication Arts
Professor Lucy Chipchase School of Science & Health	Michelle Cull, Lecturer in Accounting, School of Business
Dr Alison Moore School of Humanities & Communication Arts	Dr Diane Colman, Associate Lecturer Teaching Focused Role, School of Humanities & Communication Arts
Professor Dongmo Zhang School of Engineering, Computing & Mathematics	Dr Selim Akhter, Lecturer in Economics, Finance & Property, School of Business
Associate Professor Karen Liu, School of Science & Health	Kate McBride, Lecturer in Health Science



Professor Anna Gibbs School of Humanities & Communication Arts	Clare Power, Lecturer, School of Education
Professor Caroline Smith National Institute for Complimentary Medicine	Kristy Coxon, Lecturer Occupational Therapy, School of Science & Health
Professor Sheree Smith School of Nursing & Midwifery	Adam Ouellette, PhD Candidate School of Science & Health – Research Assistant
Professor Vaughan Macefield School of Medicine	Dr Julien Brugniaux, Senior Lecturer Human Physiology – Medical Science, School of Science & Health
Dr Colin Stack School of Science & Health	Dr Manisha Dayal, Lecturer Anatomy -Medical Science, School of Science & Health
Professor James Arvanitakis Dean - Graduate Research School	Dr Milad Milani, Lecturer – Religion & Society Research Cluster, School of Humanities & Communication Arts
Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright School of Science & Health	Dr Ming Wu, Lecturer Dean’s Unit, School of Science & Health
Professor Andre Van Schaik The MARCS Institute	Dr Tania Perich, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Psychology: Human Behaviour, School of Social Sciences & Psychology
Professor Andre Renzaho School of Social Sciences & Psychology	Dr Karin Mackay, Lecturer, Academic Programs, School of Education
Professor Kerry Robinson School of Social Sciences & Psychology	Dr Kim Psaila, Career Development Fellowship, Lecturer, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Dr Joanne Orlando, School of Education	Suza Trajkovski, Lecturer, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Professor Deborah Sweeney, PVC Research & Innovation	Dr Genevieve Steiner, (NICM), NHMRC - ARC Dementia Research Development Fellow.
Associate Professor Susanne Gannon, Centre for Educational Research	Dr Elaine Burns, Lecturer Midwifery, School of Nursing & Midwifery



Pre and Post Comparison Mentee Survey 2016	Evaluation Sheet	Average Pre	Average Post
Question 1. I am able to:	a) Teach as well as most people	4.3	4.2
	b) Do research as well as most people	3.7	3.7
	c) Undertake admin tasks as well as most people	4.2	4.4
Question 2. I feel confident in undertaking my work in relation to:	a) Research	3.8	3.9
	b) Teaching	4.2	4.5
	c) Governance/Service	3.5	3.9
	d) Community/Industry Engagement	3.5	4.3
Question 3. The professional relationships I have developed at this University have led to:	a) Networking	3.9	4.1
	b) Research partnerships	4.0	3.3
	c) Industry collaborations	2.7	2.7
	d) Mentoring	4.5	4.0
Question 4.	I feel stressed about University life	3.7	3.2*
Question 5.	I expect that I will be satisfied with my career at Western Sydney University	3.6	4.1
Question 6	I expect that my interpersonal relationships with other staff will have a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas	4.1	4.5
Question 7. I expect that enough resources will be available to me to:	a) Enhance my teaching portfolio	4.2	4.3
	b) Develop my research profile	3.7	3.8
	c) Contribute to governance/service	4.1	4.2
	d) Engage with industry/community	3.5	3.8



Pre and Post Comparison Mentee Survey 2016	Evaluation Sheet	Average Pre	Average Post
Question 8. I expect that I will develop my:	a) Teaching portfolio to my satisfaction	4.4	4.4
	b) Research profile to my satisfaction	3.9	2.4
	c) Governance/service to my satisfaction	3.8	2.3
	d) Community/industry engagement to my satisfaction	3.6	2.2
Question 9.	I intend to stay at Western Sydney University for the foreseeable future	4.1	4.0
Question 10. I intend to apply for promotion in the next:	a) 1 year	2.5	3.1
	b) 2 years	3.7	2.0
	c) 3 years	3.6	2.6
Question 11.	I intend to add another postgraduate qualification to my credentials	2.9	3.2
Question 12.	I'm considering a career change	2.1	1.7**

Notes:

- 40% Mentee response rate
- * NB Structure of Question 4 required a reverse response
- **NB Structure of Question 12 required a reserve response

General note:

In relation to successful promotion candidates in 2016 round:

- 36 % have participated as a mentee/mentor in the Academic Mentoring program (past or present years)

Qualitative Survey Comments

Pre-survey

I really appreciate the mentoring program and would recommend the program to my colleagues. Before engaging in the mentoring program I felt stuck in my career path and through discussions with my mentors and other senior professionals I could see options to explore and develop within my career. My biggest challenge at the moment is juggling the tasks I need to develop my career and my teaching duties within my job.

I thoroughly enjoy working at WSU. I am in fantastic research institute with lots of personal and professional support. I very much enjoy my job, and plan to make a career at WSU. At this point, I would only consider changing universities if I felt that my professional needs were not being met or that I was not being considered competitive for research funding.

Post-survey

The mentoring program is an extremely important program. It has certainly helped me a lot. [Name withheld] is an outstanding mentor. I am so lucky to have him as my mentor.

I would like to say a big thank you to the organiser of this program and to my mentor [name withheld]. Such a program was invaluable to me personally as I was stuck in my career path for the past couple of years and my mentor through this program has helped me to move forward beyond the toxic work environment I am in, It was extremely useful having him to bounce ideas off and to seek his professional advice on issues/situations that would have put career blockers in my path. His impressive experience was priceless. Due to the great impact this program has had in my life and my career so far through learning from him, it has inspired me to become a youth mentor the 'Raise – the Youth Mentoring Foundation' this year, hoping to impact people's lives like he through this program has done in mine. My only concern at the moment is where do I go from here? I don't want to lose the momentum!

Thank you for organising such a wonderful program, I have gained a lot from this experience and am deeply grateful to both my mentor and the Talent & Leadership Development Team.

I had a good experience with the mentoring program; [name withheld] shared a number of good ideas, including focus on the bigger picture for the future of my research. He was a great listener and supporter of my plans and ideas. He helped shaped a number of significant aspects of my research throughout the year.

My experience in participating in this program was effective with the strong support from the mentor when I most needed it.

The mentoring program was a wonderful opportunity. Due to time demands etc. I was not able to meet with the mentor as many times as I probably should have. I feel that the mentoring process is more useful for someone who has been employed for a few years and looking for promotion.



Pre and Post Comparison Mentor Survey 2016	Average Pre	Average Pre
1. Mentoring is an important role that all senior academics should participate in	4.6	4.4
2. The mentoring program will benefit my professional development	4.2	3.9
3. I have enough time to provide appropriate mentoring support	3.6	3.9
4. Mentoring has been an important part of my own career development	3.9	4.0
5. Meeting one-to-one to discuss career planning is an important part of the mentoring process	4.5	4.8
6. Workshops/groups meetings with other members of the mentoring program is an important part of the mentoring process	4.1	2.8
7. Providing feedback on writing (e.g. journal articles/grant applications) is an important aspect of mentoring	4.2	3.5*

Notes

- 42% mentor response rate
- * NB. Some mentors indicated on their post survey that they weren't asked to provide feedback on Question 7.

Qualitative Survey Comments

Pre -survey

I think this is a great opportunity for both the mentee and the mentor and something that the University should continue to support in the future. It may also be worthwhile having mentors for mid-career academics as well.

Mentoring is linked to collegiality, and both are absolutely essential to creating a good, vibrant and supportive academic environment. Doing academic work well is a complex and difficult task, and in my opinion very few people do it well. Although the concept of “career” is important to any worker, within the context of mentoring I feel we have to reduce the emphasis on ‘career’ and the associated ‘tick-boxing’ exercise and increase the focus on the question, ‘What constitutes a good academic’? I would also like to see much more support for mentors from the university and explicit recognition through university awards and promotion for mentoring. Why not ‘profile’ mentors and have their images appear in an impressive WSU document? I would like to see some effort directed towards helping mentors create a ‘mentoring portfolio’ and, for example, helping them address the challenge of obtaining evidence of good mentoring without coercion of mentees. I would also like to see a little more formalization of the mentor group – for example, establishing a College of Mentors. Finally, the mentoring program at WSU provides a role model for other institutions (that I am aware of), is critical to building a good academic environment, and it has been a privilege to be involved with. I think both women and men should act as mentors, but at this stage I feel strongly that women should be given priority as mentees. I would like to see time set aside at the final session of the year for mentors to report on and discuss aspects of intuitional processes (Bullying, restructuring etc.) that hindered mentees; progress and what can be done about it in the future.

Post-survey

Providing feedback I believe is an important aspect of mentoring but it wasn’t because it didn’t come up with my mentee.

My mentee was not at the provide feedback in writing phase and it was more about career planning and problem solving on organisational aspects of their role. Time is always in short supply as an academic so the time question not relevant for me as I had agreed to be involved in this program and committed to the process.

I enjoy the mentoring. Although I have not had as close an interaction with this years’ mentee as with previous mentees I have still found it very rewarding. It is very important to meet regularly (once per month) and to have a plan covering various elements for the mentee.