

# University of Tasmania

## Mentoring Program for Women



### Three Year Review 2006-2008

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Prepared for: Strategic HR Sub-Committee

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and

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## Contents Page

	Page No
1. Background	3
2. Initial program structure 2006-2007	4
a) Senior Women	4
b) Step-Up: Enabling Women in Research	4
c) Leadership Development Program for Women (LDW)	4
3. Program Development and Extension – 2008	6
a) LDW	6
b) Cradle Coast – Women’s Peer Mentoring Group (CC-WPMG)	6
c) Direct approaches	7
d) Ongoing support and advice	7
4. Review of the Program 2006-2008	8
5. Summary of Findings – Academic Staff	9
i) Contact and objective setting	9
ii) Promotion/career development intentions	9
iii) Impact of mentoring scheme on research, teaching and service	10
iv) Other areas covered by Mentoring relationship	11
v) General comments from Mentees	12
6. Summary of Findings – General Staff	14
i) Contact and objective setting	14
ii) Career development	14
iii) Impact of mentoring scheme	15
iv) General comments from Mentees	15
7. Future Directions	16
8. Recommendation	17

## **1. Background**

In July 2006 the Strategic HR Sub-Committee made available funding from the Strategic Reprofitting Fund for the purposes of establishing a Mentoring Program for Women. The primary reason the program was implemented was to address the gender imbalance in senior academic appointments across the University, particularly at academic level D and E. Women participating in the program would focus on their career development with particular emphasis on preparing or applying for promotion. The program was primarily aimed at academic women staff, however a number of general staff women also participated in the program by virtue of their participation in the Leadership Development Program for Women (LDW), which includes a mentoring component.

The program is co-ordinated through Human Resources in order to align mentoring activities with other strategic leadership programs and equity initiatives. Mrs Edmay Jackson was appointed on a part-time basis (HEO 5, 40%) to co-ordinate the program.

## **2. Initial Program Structure 2006-2007**

At commencement of the Mentoring Program for Women the following groups of women were included:

### **a) Senior Women**

Deans were invited to nominate women at levels C and D who would benefit from participating in the program. The initial group consisted of 10 women from the Faculties of Education, Arts, Science, Engineering and Technology and the Menzies Research Institute. The Deans of Health Science and Business were subsequently asked to nominate females from their areas to ensure all faculties were represented. 10 further females were identified (5 from each faculty) and were included in the program. A number of Level B staff from the Faculty of Business was included in recognition of the significant number of women at this level in that Faculty who would be seeking promotion in the future.

No nominations were received from the Cradle Coast Campus at this time.

Total mentees 2006/2007: 20

### **b) Step-Up: Enabling Women in Research**

Step-Up is a 9 - 12 month program aimed at enhancing the research capacity of women. This program has run for three years 2005-2007 with a different target group each year. The program was designed by a reference group of academic women and the Manager, Research Services and the then Manager, Staff Development.

All 20 participants in the 2006/2007 Step-Up Program were included in the Mentoring Program for Women and matched with a research advisor in a mentoring relationship.

Total mentees 2006/2007: 20

### **c) Leadership Development Program for Women (LDW): Developing Personally and Professionally**

This program is designed for women who are keen to explore their leadership potential while they are establishing themselves in their research, academic, administrative, technical or professional roles. Participants extend their self-management and leadership skills within their current roles as well as explore future career paths and possibilities. Leadership is explored focusing on leadership that can be exercised at all levels of an organisation and is not dependent on holding a senior position.

LDW participants may elect to be included in the Mentoring Program for Women. Of the 30 participants in LDW in 2007, 18 women (a mixture of academic and general staff) took up this opportunity.

Total mentees 2007: 18

Therefore, during the period 2006/2007 the Co-ordinator matched 58 mentees with suitable mentors. The relationships were put in place for a period of nine months and were formally brought to a close over the course of 2007. A positive outcome for the above groups is that a percentage of these relationships are continuing on an informal basis.

The program was reviewed in June 2007 (Appendix A) to ascertain whether the program should be extended for 2008. The successful outcomes of the program led to the Strategic HR Sub-Committee providing a further 35K from the Strategic Refilling Fund to extend the program until 31 December 2008. A further progress report was provided to the Strategic HR Sub-Committee in December 2007 (Appendix B).

### **3. Program Development and Extension - 2008**

The extension of the program for a further 12 months (i.e. until the end of 2008) enabled mentoring relationships to be established across a range of programs. Some of these programs were continuations of activities offered previously (i.e. LDW) however new opportunities for expanding the Mentoring Program for Women (within current resources) were identified and implemented. These are as follows:

#### **a) LDW**

Out of the 30 female staff members participating in the 2008 LDW program, 28 elected to take up the mentoring opportunity. Feedback suggests that the increase in LDW participants taking up mentoring is as a result of positive feedback from participants who had participated in mentoring as part of previous programs.

Total mentees 2008: 28

#### **b) Cradle Coast – Women’s Peer Mentoring Group (CC-WPMG)**

Through conversations with women staff on the Cradle Coast (CC) it was identified that it was extremely difficult for women from this geographical location to commit to the time necessary to participate in LDW, which conducts activities at either the Hobart or Launceston campuses. Through discussions with senior academic staff on the CC the Mentoring Co-ordinator liaised with women staff to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in a WPMG. It was considered that this was the most effective (in both cost and time) way of providing mentoring opportunities for staff on the CC as there are insufficient mentors available to support individual relationships for CC based women. This activity also provided an opportunity for women in CC based Schools and Sections (i.e. Rural Health, TIAR and the CCC) to meet on a regular basis for networking and information sharing purposes. This type of activity, which had been sought for some time by women located on the CC, had not progressed previously because there was no one person available to co-ordinate the meetings and activities. The Mentoring Co-ordinator is now the Convener of this group.

The WPMG was launched in May 2008 by the PVC (T&L), Professor Gail Hart and since that time has met twice, the most recent meeting occurring on 13 October (yesterday). The meetings are well attended by staff from across the three UTAS Schools/Sections based on the CC.

The Group indicated an interest in learning more about how the University operates and welcomed an opportunity to undertake professional development to be made available on their campus, therefore negating the need to travel.

The theme of the second meeting was focused on effective communication in a business environment and was addressed by a NIDA Corporate Women in Business facilitator and followed by a full day staff development activity covering effective communication techniques, also delivered by NIDA.

The topic of the next meeting is community engagement and the guest speaker will be Associate Professor Elaine Stratford.

Total participants: Variable but available to all women working on the CC.

### **c) Direct Approaches**

The Mentoring Program for Women has not been widely promoted throughout the University due to the limited staffing resources available to co-ordinate mentoring relationships. Participants are either nominated by their Dean/Head of School/Section or included due to participation in a women's staff development activity. However, as a number of staff members have now participated as either Mentees or Mentors the program is becoming more widely known throughout the University and there is an increasing number of individual enquiries and/or referrals from senior staff being made to the Mentoring Co-ordinator to arrange mentoring relationships.

In 2008 there have been 11 direct approaches for mentoring. Whilst staff members have been advised that they can access mentoring in 2009 should they be included in the LDW program, in the interim the Mentoring Co-ordinator has arranged for those individual staff members to meet with a suitable senior staff member who can assist them with addressing a particular issue/question they may have.

This has resulted in:                      10 one-off consultations  
    The establishment of one formal mentoring relationship

### **d) Ongoing support and advice**

The Mentoring Co-ordinator is responsible for supporting formal mentoring relationships currently in progress, and which are due to formally end at the end of 2008. This includes:

- Liaising with senior managers to increase the mentoring group.
- Running introductory workshops for mentors and mentees.
- Matching mentors and mentees.
- Providing advice and guidance to mentors and mentees on keeping the mentoring relationship active.
- Organising staff development opportunities for the group including identifying appropriate consultants to facilitate staff development activities.
- Liaising with other Universities in relation to their Mentoring activities to ensure our program does, where possible, reflect best practice.
- Convening and facilitating the CC-WPMG.
- Liaising with the Public Sector Management Office about the newly introduced State Service Mentoring Program.

#### 4. Review of the Program 2006-2008

The Mentoring Program for Women is funded until 31 December 2008. To determine whether additional funding will be provided from Strategic Funds to extend the program, the Strategic HR Sub-Committee requested a review of the program's outcomes over the past three years with particular emphasis on whether participation in the mentoring program leads to improved career outcomes for female staff through promotion, reclassification (for general staff) and/or appointment to leadership positions within the University.

##### Survey Tool

Mentees who had participated in the program since 2006 (excluding 2008 LDW participants as this program is still in progress) were asked to complete a questionnaire. Response rates were as follows:

Employment Category	No of questionnaires sent	No of responses	% return rate
Academic	52	21	50%
General	*4	4	100%

\* Please note that only six general staff female employees have participated in the mentoring program since its inception in 2006, as the program is primarily aimed at addressing the gender imbalance between female and male academic staff.

## 5. Summary of Findings – Academic Staff

### i) Contact and Objective Setting

- 67% of respondents agreed that the duration of the formal mentoring relationship (i.e. 9 months) was sufficient for them to adequately develop their mentoring relationship and achieve their mentoring goals.
- 14% said they would have liked more time to develop their relationship with their mentor but that this had not impacted upon their ability to set and achieve their goals.
- 19% said that they would have liked more time to achieve their goals.
- Respondents advised that their mentoring relationships were mainly conducted through email and telephone contact after the initial face-to-face meeting.
- In comparison with general staff, academic staff were more inclined to meet face-to-face (either formally or informally) for mentoring discussions (38%) in addition to using email and 'phone.
- 81% of respondents indicated that their mentoring relationship continued after the completion of the formal mentoring program.

#### Comment

- The duration of the formal aspect of the mentoring program is seen as sufficient by the majority of both mentors and mentees.
- Consideration could be given to establishing longer mentoring relationships where long-term goals are set.
- Formal mentoring relationships lead to the continuation of mentoring/networking/collegial relationships on an informal basis.

### ii) Promotion/Career Development Intentions

- 62% of respondents indicated that they had been thinking about applying for promotion prior to joining the mentoring scheme and discussed their intentions with their Mentor.
- Of that 62%, 61% indicated that their Mentor had assisted them in preparing for promotion.
- 38% of all respondents indicated that their Mentor had not assisted them with promotion, with the primary reason being because they had either chosen not to apply or had already prepared their promotion application prior to the mentoring relationship being established.
- 38% of all respondents indicated they had not considered applying for promotion and therefore this had not been a topic discussed with their mentor.
- 48% of respondents indicated that they would be applying for promotion in the future. The main reason given for not applying for promotion was that the staff member had already applied either this year or the previous year.
- Of the 33% of respondents who had indicated they had applied for promotion, 72% indicated that they considered the mentoring program had contributed to their promotion application success.

#### Comment

- HRMS data shows that of the 52 academic staff mentees that have participated in the program since July 2006, 13 have successfully applied for and attained upward reclassification. Promotion outcomes over this period are:
  - o Level A – Level B – 10 staff

- o Level B – Level C – 2 staff
- o Level C – Level D – 1 staff member
- Responses indicate that Mentees are using the mentoring relationship to actively plan their future career development options and discuss those with their Mentors.
- Mentoring relationships provide an opportunity for Mentors to provide advice, guidance and support to Mentees about promotion.
- In response to a question as to whether participants believe the mentoring program affected their promotion outcomes responses included:
  - o *“Hugely helpful in demystifying the process and my fear of the panel”.*
  - o *“... helped immensely in terms of developing a strategic approach to research and targeting activities which will enhance my career...”.*
  - o *“Mentoring increased my confidence in the research activity I have achieved and the standard of my research in relation to promotions requirements”.*
  - o *“I became more aware of the process and the need for thinking 2 years ahead”.*
  - o *“Confidence and advice in preparation and substantiation of case for promotion”.*
  - o *“Given me confidence”.*
  - o *“Increased confidence in “promotability””.*
  - o *“Increased awareness of the promotions process and criteria”.*
  - o *“Significantly improved written case for promotion...”.*
  - o *“My mentor’s advice was constructive, incisive and utterly helpful”.*
  - o *“The improvements I’ve had in relation to publications will definitely help my promotions prospects”.*
  - o *“My mentor provided me with guidance and experience when applying for promotion. I believe that my mentor helped me greatly when going for my promotion”.*
  - o *“It gives me another independent person to discuss my application with and from whom to get feedback on my application”.*
  - o *“Made me think about ways of recording/documenting evidence of success to use in later application for promotion”.*

### iii) Impact of Mentoring Scheme on Research, Teaching and Service

Mentees were asked to describe any specific effects they believed the Mentoring Program had in relation to their research, teaching and service contribution. Mentees responded that:

#### Research

- There was increased opportunity to engage in cross school research collaborations as a result of introductions facilitated by Mentors (2 responses).
- Mentees believed that they were now submitting publications to higher impact journals (4 responses).
- A number of Mentees advised that they had received advice from Mentors on the grant application process increasing their understanding of the process (4 responses).
- One Mentee considered that her Mentor’s support and encouragement had resulted in her applying for an increased number of grants.
- Mentees believed, in some instances, that their research output had increased since participating in the mentoring program (2 responses).
- One Mentee considered that advice from her Mentor had made her research view more strategic.

- One Mentee credited the advice and assistance of her Mentor with the (successful) granting of her study leave application.

### Teaching

- One Mentee said that encouragement from her Mentor had led to her successfully achieving a VC merit award.
- One mentee attributed the obtainment of a competitive teaching grant to the guidance and support from her mentor.
- Another mentee said she had been supported in applying for Teaching Merit Certificate by her Mentor.

### Service

- One mentee said she now had a greater understanding of University processes and procedures and the value of participating in various campus activities.
- Mentees believed they were being more targeted with their service activities, especially with industry (4 responses).
- Mentees said their Mentors' support had assisted them in attaining appointment to University and/or Faculty/School based committees (3 responses).
- One Mentee credited the mentoring program with her increased participation on an external board.
- One Mentee said that her Mentor's support and advice had encouraged her to take on the role of Deputy Head of School.
- One Mentee said that her Mentor had assisted her in establishing networks outside the Mentee's School.
- 28% of Mentees (6 responses) said that they did not believe the Mentoring Program had any impact upon their research, teaching or service contributions.

### Comment

- The feedback from the survey indicates that Mentees in formal mentoring relationships receive a level of support and guidance that they believe positively impacts their work performance across research, teaching and service.

### iv) Other areas covered by Mentoring Relationship

- Other areas discussed/worked on by Mentees and Mentors included:
  - Understanding University culture (62%)
  - Work/life balance (43%)
  - Self confidence (43%)
  - Managing Up (38%)
  - Time management (33%)
  - Developing leadership skills (28%)
  - Academic identity (28%)
  - Networking (28%)
  - No other areas discussed (19%)

### Comment

- The above results indicate that in addition to academic specific outcomes associated with research, teaching and/or university service, mentoring relationships provide a valuable opportunity for Mentees to develop a deeper understanding of the wider university through conversations and discussions with their Mentor and/or to develop skills/techniques that assist them in their day-to-day work.

## v) General Comments from Mentees

Mentees were asked to list the greatest benefit they received from participating in the Mentoring Program and/or any other comments they might have in relation to the program. Comments received referred to:

### Program Benefits

- *"Networking into another faculty to enhance my academic growth".*
- *"Advice about conducting research and better use of Endnote".*
- *"... The benefit to me was contact with other areas within UTAS".*
- *"Having a peer who had gone through the same career path I myself am currently embarking on..."*
- *"Developing a friendly and supportive relationship with a senior female academic who takes a genuine interest in my academic development ... and is genuinely happy about my successes".*
- *"Thinking about how to act, plan and develop as a research leader".*
- *"Talking through research ideas and planning strategies to achieve them with someone who could advise on how realistic this was and suggest strategies to achieve the ends".*
- *"Helped me to get organized – focused".*
- *"Getting a different perspective from a senior person within the Uni regarding how to progress my career and having this advice tailored to me specifically".*
- *"Honesty".*
- *"Unstuck myself from a couple of ruts".*
- *"The greatest benefit from the mentoring scheme was getting to know a senior academic better, and getting to know them as a colleague".*
- *"A face-to-face contact that was independent of the School of xxxx".*
- *"I gained much benefit in being able to discuss my career with someone outside of my immediate environment".*
- *"Having someone to ask about University processes – especially not someone involved in the Faculty of xxxx". It enabled me to learn about how the Uni works but get a broader idea of University culture".*
- *"... It is extremely valuable to talk with someone from another section of the University and in another field. I really liked being able to do that and think it broadened my perspective".*
- *"Having an independent mentor to discuss research plans and career progression with".*
- *"Detailed feedback on promotions application and improved career confidence".*
- *"Access to first class strategist and intellectual".*

### General Comments

- *"I think the Mentoring Program is a great idea".*
- *"I have really enjoyed this scheme ... I would like to see the program continue. My relationship has been a successful one and I would like others to have the opportunity to also develop a good mentoring relationship".*
- *"The Mentoring scheme is a valuable one; I hope that it will be continued".*
- *"It is a terrific program and one that should be continued with Step Up".*
- *"This scheme is so valuable".*

- *"The scheme is one way to ensure that the University can ensure that women are contributing to their full potential and that the organization is running at its most efficient and effective".*
- *"It has been an invaluable program..."*
- *"My mentor has been absolutely fantastic...". "... I fully endorse the continuation of this well run program".*
- *"I think the scheme is a good one in principle, I just wasn't able to engage with it myself".*

## 6. Summary of Findings – General Staff

### i) Contact and Objective Setting

- All respondents agreed that the duration of mentoring relationships (i.e. 9 months) was sufficient for them to adequately develop their mentoring relationship and achieve their mentoring goals.
- Respondents advised that their mentoring relationships were mainly conducted through email and telephone contact after the initial face-to-face meeting.
- 80% of respondents indicated that their mentoring relationship continued after the completion of the formal mentoring program.

#### Comment

- The duration of the formal aspect of the mentoring program is seen as sufficient by both Mentors and Mentees.
- Formal mentoring relationships lead to the continuation of mentoring/networking relationships on an informal basis.

### ii) Career Development

- All respondents indicated that reclassification had not been the primary objective of participating in the Mentoring Program.
- However, whilst reclassification may not have been the primary objective for general staff Mentees, all respondents indicated that they discussed other career development options with their Mentor, such as:
  - Undertaking and internal/external secondment/transfer.
  - Taking up a different appointment.
  - Working in project teams.
  - Changing career directions.
  - Undertaking higher duties.
- Other areas discussed/worked on by Mentees and Mentors included:
  - Self confidence (100%)
  - Networking (75%)
  - Understanding University culture (75%)
  - Work/life balance, developing leadership skills and managing up (75%)
  - Two respondents also advised that their Mentor had actively assisted them in managing a particular work related issue.

#### Comment

- HRMS data shows that of the six general staff mentees that have participated in the program since July 2006, two have successfully applied for and attained upward reclassification.
- Responses appear to indicate that Mentees are using the mentoring relationship to actively plan their future career development options and discuss those with their Mentors.
- Mentoring relationships provide an opportunity for Mentors to provide advice, guidance and support to Mentees in understanding the University's culture, providing networking opportunities that may not otherwise be available, and building the self-confidence of mentoring program participants.

## ii) Impact of Mentoring Scheme

Mentees listed a number of benefits from participating in the Mentoring scheme, including:

- Help with career planning.
- Establishment and maintenance of networking groups.
- Having someone to discuss specific issues with.
- Having someone to talk confidentially with.
- Being listened to and encouraged.
- Learning and understanding more about the wider University.

Comment

The above comments indicate that mentoring is well received and well liked by those participating in the program.

## iv) General Comments from Mentees

Mentees were asked to list the greatest benefit they received from participating in the Mentoring Program. Comments received referred to:

- *"The networks I was able to establish (and maintain)".*
- *"Being able to talk over situations confidentially. Being listened to and encouraged".*
- *"Great to have someone to talk to especially when taking on a new challenge such as higher duties".*
- *"I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to work with my Mentor, who was extremely generous, open, trustworthy and astute".*
- *"The Mentoring scheme gave me the opportunity to hear about the career progression and choices of other general staff and a better awareness of the opportunities available to me".*
- *"The Mentoring Scheme prompted me to think about long-term career planning and whether or not this was of importance to me".*
- *"As a general staff member I found the Mentoring program invaluable and feel certain I would not be able to establish networks and learn as much about the wider University community if it were not for this opportunity".*

## 7. Future Directions

It is clear from the survey outcomes that the Mentoring Program for Women is considered a valuable addition to the range of programs the University currently offers to assist female employees to progress their careers. Whilst a specific positive correlation between female staff participating in the mentoring program and successful promotion/reclassification outcomes is difficult to draw, the program appears to have led to an increase in participants considering applying and preparing more robustly for promotion whereas they previously may not have done so.

The increase in referrals by senior academic staff also appears to indicate that the program is seen as a useful and valuable component of the University's range of leadership and development programs for women.

In deciding whether the program should be extended, the Committee is encouraged to consider the following internal and external factors, in addition to the survey outcomes:

- Women academic staff remain significantly under-represented at Levels D and E, with only 45 women employed at these two levels compared to 162 men (statistics as at 31 March 2008). The Mentoring Program for Women provides an avenue for women to discuss their career intentions one-on-one with their Mentor and receive support and guidance in preparing for promotion.
- The Mentoring Program for Women is a program that supports the EDGE2 priority of fully embedding a high performance culture by providing a framework for the development and career advancement of (particularly) women academic staff.
- The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) has consistently provided feedback to UTAS that the Mentoring Program for Women has positively assisted the University to achieve and maintain its annual Compliant Status with the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Act.
- EOWA has also advised employers seeking the Employer of Choice for Women (EOCFW) citation (a citation UTAS is working towards) that having in place programs dedicated to removing gender imbalance in the workplace (such as a Mentoring Program for Women) will assist employers in their application for the citation.
- The program provides potential opportunities for extending links and networks with the State Government by establishing mentoring relationships between UTAS and State Service employees. This has not yet been initiated due to the uncertainty of the program's long-term future.
- Having in place a Mentoring Program dedicated to assisting women employees sends a clear message to the University community that UTAS is committed to addressing the gender inequity gap between males and females in senior positions through dedicated funding of programs aimed at achieving this goal.

## 8. Recommendation

Given the above, it is recommended that:

- The Mentoring Program for Women is extended for a further three years, until 31 December 2011.
- That the employment fraction of the Mentoring Co-ordinator be increased from 40% of fulltime to 50% of fulltime in order to:
  - i) Build upon activities already offered,
  - ii) Further develop new initiatives commenced during 2008 (i.e. CC-WPMG), and
  - iii) Provide opportunity to further develop the program particularly in the areas of one-on-one referrals and the establishment of cross-sector mentoring relationships with the State Government.