"I only wish that many years ago when I first studied that this kind of care, service and support was available. In my mind, for many years, I have always had a vision of the perfect or ideal university to suit my needs. It gives me great pleasure to inform my family, friends and anyone with a disability that such a university has a name. It is UTAS."
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In 2014 the University’s Career, Disability and Counselling services formed one team within the Student Life and Learning portfolio.

Led by Colin Clark

Career Development and Employment

CDE staff continued to offer a wide range of services and programs during 2014. At the heart of career development and employment practice is a suite of interventions ranging from individual consultancy to selection interview practice, resume feedback and workshops focusing on employability skills.

Individual career consultancy provides students with specific, focused and dynamic career development counselling so they can build their career direction. The role is complex, involving careful assessment and intervention with a range of presenting issues. During 2014, 734 consult sessions were attended, facilitated by two career development consultants.

Along with individual consultancy, students have accessed 280 resume checks which have been available through email and face to face. This service provides rapid feedback for students to develop their resumes effectively. A further 212 individual and small group consult sessions offered by Career Education Officers has addressed a range of employment skills including interview practice. 36 mock interviews were conducted across the state to give students real time practice with interview skills.

“...I am also pleased to tell you that I was offered the position this morning!

The mock interview was very helpful and I went into the actual interview much more relaxed having heard your feedback. I will be sure to tell my uni friends about the services on offer through career hub, I wish I had known about them earlier.”

Staff offered a suite of employment skills workshops as well as facilitating introduction to employers through faculties and student societies. Over 2224 student participants were recorded in these sessions during 2014. Video linked sessions were offered on three occasions during the year to each main campus. Attendance to these was generally low and the benefits will be reconsidered in 2015.

A significant event is the Big Meet during the March period of Graduate recruitment. During a 2 hour period, 685 students visited over 25 employer representatives on the Sandy Bay campus, providing opportunity for networking and direct recruitment pathways.

Vice Chancellor’s Leadership Award (VCLA)

The Vice-Chancellor’s Leadership Award is in its fourth year of delivery, after a successful pilot in 2010 by staff in Career Development and Employment. The Award was created to educate, challenge and inspire, and is designed to strengthen students’ character, work ethic, community awareness, leadership and employability, as well as their skills in communication, teamwork, and problem solving – skills sought and valued by employers. For the first time, participating students had the option to gain unit credit via the new Bachelor of Philosophy
program. A total of 71 students successfully completed the VCLA, 49 from Hobart and 22 from Launceston with a proportional representation of both international and domestic students. All faculties and one institute were represented across the participants with the strongest representation from Health Science.

To complete the award, students need to have participated in:

- Six, two hour interactive seminars across two semesters. These focus on aspects of leadership and are facilitated largely by community leaders.
- A minimum of 40 hours of volunteer work with a registered agency
- A phased process of reflective writing through MyLO.

Table 1 evidences the significant number of extra volunteer hours offered by participants (1409), testifying to their engagement and contribution in the program.

Table 1: VCLA participant volunteering hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>Actual Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>Total Extra Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2840</td>
<td>4249</td>
<td>1408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The VCLA has been an incredibly beneficial and character building programme. I have undertaken a variety of volunteer roles and broadened my life experiences in a manner I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to undertake. I have enhanced my capacity as a leader and developed life skills I will continue to utilise in my future. (Student participant)

The program will be restructured for 2015 to reflect a closer alignment with other student leadership opportunities at the University.
Career Mentor Program (CMP)

The Career Mentor Program (CMP) matches current University of Tasmania students (mentees) with Alumni (mentors) in order to broker a mentoring relationship. There has been a strong increase in Mentors registering for the program since its inception. There are now 182 mentors registered, as compared with 106 in 2013 (72% increase). Mentors share with students the benefit of their individual experience, access to their own professional networks, insights into their industry, and advice on practicalities such as job search, graduate application processes and professional presentation. A participant student commented:

“This program was fantastic. The valuable information and knowledge [my mentor] shared has been incredibly useful. Not only for my university subjects, but for my future career - what to expect, how to get my name out there etc. I highly recommend this program and hope to continue to talk to [my mentor] even after this has finished. What a fantastic initiative by UTAS.”

Tables 2 and 3 show this year’s 126 mentees represented all UTAS Faculties, with participation from all campuses as well as distance enrolments. The Program continues to be popular with international students, with 35 (28%) participating.

**Table 2: Career Mentor Program participants by location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart area</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston area</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Coast area</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance and Sydney</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Career Mentor Program participants by Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSBE</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An international engineering participant commented:

“I got in depth details about working in the construction industry from my mentor. Being an international student, this really helped. I had someone whom could explain these to me. Work life and experience varies in different countries.”
Over 93\% of mentees felt that they benefited from working with their mentor, and 97\% would recommend CMP to other UTAS students.

The most common activities undertaken with mentors were discussion of career-related topics; feedback on resumes and application material; referrals to mentors’ colleagues and networks; and workplace tours.

One goal of the CMP is to improve student mentee career clarity. Mentees reported a significant increase in career clarity after participating in the Program. An Arts (Politics and Policy) student noted:

“Direct industry experience was invaluable, and considering the changing nature of the job market in Tasmania, it was also useful to see what was really required to get into the culture of the positions, rather than just the neutral or vague job description”.

**Assisted Placement of International Students (APIS)**

This program pilot was a new initiative brokered in partnership with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, TAFE and the Tasmanian Government. The program trained and placed international students into the hospitality industry with the aim to help cover seasonal demand around Tasmania. This provided valued work experience to international students, potential income and also assisted with the selection of trained and well screened staff for employers.

From 81 applications (maximum funded for was 80), 72 students were interviewed; 51 from the Hobart area and 21 from the Launceston area.

The majority of these students participated in work placements within the hospitality and tourism sector which ranged from two to seven days. CDE staff delivered specific career education workshops for these students and many of them have attended individual appointments for assistance with resume and job applications. Over 34 additional staff hours contributed to the success of the program. Gathering subsequent employment data as a direct result of the program is still incomplete but initial feedback suggests some very successful seasonal job matches in locations such as the Port Arthur Historic Site (eight current contract been offered to students).

**Elite Athlete Friendly University (EAFU)**

The CDE staff have facilitated this program for many years on behalf of UTAS in conjunction with the Tasmanian Institute of Sport and Cricket Tasmania. Currently there are 27 elite athletes enrolled at UTAS in a range of Faculties. These students have competed in events such as the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, World Championships, National Championships and the University Games, representing hockey, sailing, athletics, track and field, cycling, cricket, rowing, and canoe slalom. In order to study, these students often need special academic arrangements so they can complete units around their competing and training requirements. CDE staff assist with this process on an individual basis as well as developing policy and procedures that allow study to be equitable and accessible for these students. During 2014, 43 individual consultations were conducted between athletes and the Career Development Consultant contact.
CDE staff are using social media (UTAS Facebook etc) to increase the profile of these students at UTAS, providing increased awareness of UTAS as an ‘elite athlete friendly’ university as well as inspiring UTAS students generally in performance, leadership and participation. This year, the development of specific elite athlete webpages for UTAS has increased awareness of this program and allowed greater access for future athletes.

The inaugural Sports Celebration Evening was held during November with approximately 75 students, stakeholders, coaches and distinguished guests. Hamish Peacock (Commonwealth Bronze Medallist, Javelin) and Huw Peacock (Commonwealth Games hammer Thrower) were guest speakers and provided insight into the life of an Elite Athlete studying at the University of Tasmania.

Hamish Peacock (B Eng Hons) remarked;

“Even though juggling my studies with being an athlete at times has been challenging, especially this year, I have finally got there with the help of the University and my dad.”

Golden Key Society

CDE staff continued as Chapter Advisor to Golden Key and the local UTAS student society during 2014. This involves a liaison role between the organisation and UTAS students, assisting to co-ordinate the new member drive and increase profile across the University. Staff also participated in delivering career education workshops at the Golden Key national conference in Hobart during February.

For 2014, 2743 invitations were made to UTAS students with 503 choosing to join. This has resulted in 6198 UTAS Golden Key members since 1997.
Volunteer Expo

The importance of volunteering was again emphasised during the National Student Volunteer Week in August. This culminated in an expo facilitated by CDE staff on the Sandy Bay campus where over 20 stall holders represented a range of volunteer organisations and opportunities. A working party assisted with the help of many student volunteers and the key community agency, Volunteer Tasmania. Student and agency reflections on volunteering were recorded as podcasts and can be viewed at:


Between 250 – 300 students attending during the two hour expo and volunteer awareness campaigns increased profile across other campuses. The event provided an invaluable connection with local agencies as well as increased awareness for students of volunteer opportunities.

‘What a highly successful event you organised today!!! Thank you so much, we had 37 students nominate to volunteer on various projects to enhance what they are already studying at UTAS. These students offer an incredible resource which as a charity is highly valuable. (Participating agency)

New Colombo Plan

A new initiative in 2014 was the partnership between Global Education and CDE staff to raise the profile and assist applicant students with the highly regarded New Colombo Plan Scholarship - http://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/

Ten UTAS students were nominated to apply for the NCP scholarship and were supported across the state by intensive workshops and 14 individual appointments and interview practice.

An unprecedented five UTAS students were successful in being awarded the NCP Scholarship for 2015 out of a total 69 applicants Australia wide.
Social Media Communications

The use of the CDE Facebook and Twitter accounts increased exponentially during 2014 as mediums for circulating employment information, promoting relevant discussion topics and advertising events and activities. As of the start of December 2014, on a weekly basis Facebook recorded a weekly reach of 2905 students with 625 likes.

Disability Services

Disability staff facilitate the development of Learning Access Plans (LAPs) for students who disclose a disability or health condition and seek further assistance from the university. This is done through negotiation with the student’s health practitioner(s) and Associate Deans Learning and Teaching of each Faculty and takes into consideration each student’s individual requirements. The Associate Deans Learning and Teaching must ultimately approve or disapprove a LAP on behalf of the teaching staff in their faculty. This allows a range of appropriate accommodations for a student in order to facilitate equal access to learning. The LAPs may require specialist equipment to be loaned or purchased by the University or specialist services such as transcription of print material or provision of peer or professional note takers during class. Disability staff may directly assist with these needs or be a referral point to ensure these needs are met, providing appropriate information and advice. They also assist other University staff to support students with disabilities and health conditions through case by case consultation as required. Consultations usually cover the legal and inherent responsibilities of staff when providing services to students with a disability or health condition as well as assisting staff to negotiate University policies relevant to this area.

Significant reporting occurs throughout the year both to Faculty and external government bodies. An annual amount of financial reimbursement is provided through government assistance in order to meet the legislative requirements, particularly for students with high needs. This is accompanied by detailed institutional reporting.

During 2014, 1192 students were registered with the Disability Service, of which 640 had current and valid LAPs. 298 of these LAPs were permanent and 342 temporary. These temporary LAPs are reviewed according to negotiated timelines. With the new Student Management system implemented late 2014, all LAPs are now reviewed and validated according to sanction dates.

A significant development for 2014 was the implementation of electronic LAP approvals. This has streamlined the review and approval process for the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching and allowed a smoother and more efficient turnaround of LAP applications. The introduction of the new Student Management System has also resulted in considerable consultation and implementation time, with the possibility of more detailed reporting and data storage functionality.

Disclosed Disability Types

Disabilities are categorised into seven main areas for the sake of reporting. Table 4 shows mental health is by far the most common disability type that is disclosed at UTAS, a growing trend over the last several years. Medical disabilities are categorised as being medically
based, often due to a disease or illness. Physical disabilities are physiological in nature, such as a back condition. There were very similar numbers of students disclosing these types of disability during 2014. A considerable number of students disclosed learning disabilities. The accurate assessment and appropriate support for adult learning disabilities continues to be a challenge in the tertiary sector.

Table 4. Number disclosed disabilities by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While hearing and vision impaired disabilities were relatively low, these often require considerable equipment and support services, resulting in numerous hours of consultation and liaison for support staff.

It is noted that the University has one of the higher registered disability numbers in the country. The University has a ratio of 1:391 Disability staff to students and 1192 registered with a disability; as compared with an average ratio of 1:200-250 across Australia with many institutions having below 1000 registered students.

Number of LAPs per Faculty/Institute

In 2014 the University had 714 students on Learning Access Plans to support their studies, an increase of 10% from 2013. The number of students with LAPs has seen a steady increase over the past three years; 572 in 2012 (Oct), 641 in 2013 (Oct), and now 714 in 2014 (Oct). Table 5 shows the spread of current LAPs across the University as of Semester 2, 2014. The Faculty of Arts, as per previous years, continues to have the largest number of current LAPs, followed by Health and SET. A noticeable trend is the increasing number of LAPs at the pathways/pre-degree level.

Table 5. Learning Access Plans by Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>LAP numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMC</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Autism Project

With a growing number of students disclosing Autism Spectrum Disorder (29 in 2012 compared with 47 in 2014), Disability staff focused on the design and delivery of a small pilot project in 2014 to assist University staff in working with these students more effectively. The focus was on inclusive teaching practices as well as management of some challenging behaviours. Staff primarily from two Faculties were invited to participate in some discussions and workshops in conjunction with Autism Tasmania. A review of a range of resources was conducted as well as research into the approach of other Universities across Australia. Further research will be conducted into this area during 2015 in conjunction with other academic staff in the School of Architecture.

Counselling Services

The University provides counselling services across all three major Tasmanian campuses, as well as online to students at remote campuses and studying via distance. A total of 841 individual students sought counselling support during 2014, with many seeking multiple individual sessions with one of our Counsellor practitioners.

Clinical Services

Counsellors have filled 2265 sessions during 2014 which is reasonably consistent with previous years and recognises a ceiling number of sessions that can be offered with the current staffing levels. The initial assessment and therapeutic treatment of clients remains the core business of the counselling staff. These sessions have been spread over 841 individual clients which equates to approximately 2.7 sessions per client. This reflects a decrease of individual clients from the previous year but an increase in the amount of time required to spend with each client to assist them to manage their condition. Overall, 5% of the total student EFTSL (16686) has accessed counselling services for 2014. This rates favourably with a recent national survey of counselling services in Australia and New Zealand tertiary institutions, where 5.2% of the student populations accessed the service and the average number of sessions per client was 2.9 (Stallman, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes compared with similar services</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of clients functioning at or above healthy levels by the end of counselling</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average duration of counselling</td>
<td>2-3 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whenever possible, counsellors aim to collect data from clients to monitor their overall progress. Ensuring that a treatment outcome is achieved is an essential part of good practice. The Counselling Service now has a database of 2461 updated client outcome records that are consistently added to each year. The program used to collect this data is based on normative values and is a common tool used in a number of University and community based counselling agencies.
The data suggests that outcomes as a service are as expected when compared with other services with more than half of the clients reporting an improvement to an acknowledged healthy level by the end of counselling. This does not include clients who although not reaching this level, still significantly improved. The average length of contact with a counsellor is 2-3 weeks which suggests a positive and cost effective investment in the wellbeing and retention of students who might otherwise need to withdraw from their studies. Given the relatively small size of the counselling team and that the student to counsellor ratio is well below the nationally recommended benchmark, the number of students seen over the course of the year is significant and considerable treatment impact is achieved in a short time. National benchmarks for counselling across the sector indicate 1 Counsellor for every 3000 students; in 2014 the UTAS ratio for counselling support was approximately 1:6500.

Given the rise in session numbers required to assist students during 2014, a particular assessment intervention was piloted during Semester 2 as an attempt to better track this trend. This follows on from a study by Stallman (2010) in which two Australian universities provided population samples that were assessed using the same instrument. The pilot study involved the use of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), a widely recognised mental health, brief assessment tool across health services in Australia. 175 clients of the counselling service completed the K10 with 80% being undergraduate and 83% domestic students. It is noted that 97.1% of UTAS students were in the “serious” to “mild-moderate” range for mental illness compared with 83.9% of Stallman’s sample of students.

Data showed two trends of particular interest:

- 66.3% of UTAS students in this sample were in the “high” to “very high” distress range compared with 26.6% of the Stallman (2010) samples. Both samples of students are significantly higher than the prevalence rates for mental disorders among the Australian population.

- As clients were seen more often by practitioners, they improved in their mental health. On average, this improvement was progressive and constant over 3 sessions.

This pilot study suggests some important and concerning trends for UTAS students who are attempting to manage academic study while balancing their mental health. It has significant implications for retention of these students and displays the importance of offering and maintaining appropriate health interventions.


**Workshop Delivery**

An important aspect of counselling staff proactive service delivery is the development and facilitation of a range of workshops to both staff and students to assist with mental health care, transition to university and general wellbeing. During 2014, 36 formal workshops were offered to students and staff with over a thousand participants. These were sometimes as part of a broader context such as orientation, as well as standalone activities. Topics included the management of stress and time, communication skills, Managing Difficult
Behaviour, Mental Health Awareness and Mental Health First Aid Training. Of those trained, 75.7% were students and 24.3% staff.

**Consultative support**

Counselling staff continued to be available for consults to all University staff and students requiring assistance with managing a difficult situation, behaviour or environment. The consultative service is contacted either via the free call 1800 number, via the Client Service Officers or directly through individual practitioners. During 2014, 158 consults were recorded on the database. This acknowledges the ongoing need staff and students continue to have in seeking advice and assistance when managing often complex behaviour issues on campus and online.