“I was in struggle town with my essay but the Student Learning team helped me so much.”

‘...Enthusiastic, engaging and empowering, knowledgeable and able to help students apply that knowledge.’

“I got a lot out of the unit, as I learnt how I learn and how I can apply this to get the most out of my studies.”
Contents

List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... ii

List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... ii

Student Learning and Academic Development ........................................................................ 2

- UniStart ................................................................................................................................. 2
  - Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 2
  - Enrolments 2014 .................................................................................................................. 3
- UniStart International .............................................................................................................. 4
- Introductory Academic Program (IAP) .................................................................................. 4
- Learning Skills Adviser (LSA) Services ................................................................................ 5
  - Online ................................................................................................................................. 6
- Bachelor of Dementia Care ..................................................................................................... 6
- Academic Honesty MyLO site ............................................................................................... 7
- Credit bearing units ................................................................................................................ 7
- Student Learning Drop In ...................................................................................................... 8
  - Outcomes 2014 .................................................................................................................. 8
  - New Spaces and year ahead ............................................................................................... 8
- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) ................................................................................... 9
- Publications and presentations ............................................................................................... 10
**List of Tables**

Table 1. UniStart enrolments 2014 ................................................................. 3
Table 2. National benchmarks for academic language and learning support .......... 6
Table 3. Consultations by cohort ........................................................................ 6
Table 4. Submissions and student use of Academic Honesty MyLO site ............. 7
Table 5. PASS summary for 2014 .................................................................... 9

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Breakdown of discipline specific workshop by faculty .......................... 5
Figure 2. Drop In visits from 2009 to 2014 (please note Cradle Coast, Rozelle and Darlinghurst data is for Semester Two) ......................................................... 8
Student Learning and Academic Development

Led by Lucy Sun and Sally Fuglsang

The Student Learning and Academic Development team (hereafter referred to as Student Learning), situated within the Student Life and Learning portfolio, provides a diverse range of learning development opportunities for degree students. Learning and academic skills assistance including English language development is provided through services such as Drop In, learning skills consultations, UniStart and the Introductory Academic Program (IAP). Student Learning also works with faculties to embed these same skills in a discipline-specific manner through unit and course-based workshops, and the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program.

The Student Learning team is comprised of academic and professional staff, and they deliver a diverse range of services and programs. The team has expertise in learning and teaching, academic skills development (including literacy and numeracy), English language teaching, and peer learning and leadership.

An overarching priority for the Student Learning team in 2014 has been the development and implementation of a suite of online learning resources and modes of delivery to enable flexible engagement with our services. The team has continued to advance a number of strategic policies and programs, including the English Language Proficiency Project and UniStart International, while also progressing research projects in the areas of peer learning, online delivery and English language readiness.

2014 has been both an exciting and challenging year for the SLAD team as it developed and delivered credit bearing breadth units in collaboration with other staff across the institution, and also units in the Bachelor of General Studies and Bachelor of Philosophy. In addition, teaching staff took on acting leadership roles with the loss of the Head, Student Learning position early in the year. The team looks forward to building on the new programs and services that complement our traditional activities. The Divisional restructure may require a reprioritizing of core tasks, and while this provides some challenges there are also great opportunities for the team and its provision of services to students.

UniStart

Introduction

UniStart is an academic and study skills program offered by Student Learning to all domestic students commencing at the University of Tasmania. The aims of UniStart are to familiarise students with university culture and equip them with the resources and academic skills necessary to build enough resilience to avoid attrition.

UniStart is free to domestic students and offers on campus and distance teaching pre-semester. It is accompanied by a broad suite of resources to which students have access for the academic year through MyLO. The four day on campus offerings are available on the Tasmanian and Sydney campuses. A distance offering is also available and is self-paced over five weeks. Students can participate in a combination of these as the content is aligned, which allows flexibility and for some, overcomes the work/life/study tensions beginning students often experience.
Enrolments 2014

Enrolments in UniStart grew by 33% continuing an overall pattern of growth for this national award winning academic preparation program for degree students. In 2013, 1543 students were enrolled while the eleven offerings of the program in 2014 had a total enrolment of 2051 students. Overall, 821 students enrolled for the on campus offerings and the distance program enrolments almost doubled, from 664 students in 2013 to 1230 students in 2014.

Table 1. UniStart enrolments 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Enrolment Numbers</th>
<th>% of all enrolments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rozelle</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlinghurst</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Coast</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2051</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student evaluations – survey feedback

UniStart provides students with two opportunities to provide feedback: written evaluations completed at the end of each offering and eVALUate surveys. The outcomes of these are used to guide the twice yearly review of the program. In 2014, the results were extremely positive and consistent with previous years. The eVALUate surveys did not record a result in any category for teaching or unit evaluation of under 90% positive agreement from students.

Students commented favourably on their UniStart experience;

‘...Enthusiastic, engaging and empowering, knowledgeable and able to help students apply that knowledge.’

‘...this unit more than prepared me for what to expect when I start uni.’

(UniStart 2014 students)
UniStart International

UniStart International was piloted by the Student Learning team in Orientation Week of Semesters 1 and 2 in Hobart. The aims of the program were to familiarise commencing international students with Australian academic culture, to connect these students with the University community at an early stage, and to begin to develop the learning skills essential for successful university study. The ultimate goal of the program was to achieve successful transition and in turn better retention. The program took the students through the process of essay writing and provided opportunities for hands on research experience in the Library, and practice in navigating MyLO.

Student feedback on UniStart International from evaluation surveys was very positive, with all participants reporting that the course was a valuable learning experience, and all saying that they would recommend the course to other students. Reasons why they would recommend the course include:

“It’s a good opportunity to start in a different culture. No matter the academic skills and communication skills, we learnt a lot we didn't hear before we are here. The teachers are so professional and approachable and it's a good preparation before the official course starts.”

Introductory Academic Program (IAP)

The Introductory Academic Program (IAP) for Australia Awards scholarship holders is a four-week pre-semester course delivered at the Hobart and Launceston campuses by the Student Learning team, with valuable contributions in the form of guest presentations from Student Centre and Library staff. The IAP’s aims are as follows: to facilitate adjustment to everyday life in Australia, Australian academic culture and student life at each campus; to develop the English language and academic skills students require for the successful completion of their degrees; and to diagnose areas of difficulty and recommend ongoing strategies to assist with these.

In 2014, a total of 29 students completed the program; 18 in Hobart and 11 in Launceston. On completion of IAP, the students continued with their studies in a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, mainly in the faculties of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) and Arts and the AMC. Feedback from evaluation surveys is consistently very positive, both in terms of content and teaching. Student comments indicate that the IAP is successful in contributing to a smooth transition to studying at the University of Tasmania:

“I am ready to start my course, IAP is such a good program and for international student this program is extremely useful. Because in IAP we learn to adapt to Australian education system.”
Learning Skills Adviser (LSA) Services

Learning Skills Advisers (LSAs) provide learning skills consultations and workshops to degree-enrolled students, on all campuses and in the online environment. The staff delivered 213 workshops in 2014. These provided students with an opportunity to obtain general and discipline specific academic skills in a group setting.

As in past years, many of the workshops focused particularly on supporting students for whom English is an additional language. The majority of the concepts covered in the learning skills consultations related to reading and writing skills, in particular assignment planning and overall structure, and vocabulary and expression. The team has been working with a number of academic staff, in a range of faculties, to deliver workshops which consist of both academic skill topics and discipline-specific topics and are designed for the needs of specific discipline groups. Most of the discipline specific workshops were offered in the Faculty of Health.

The number of consultations attended in 2014 (1974) was consistent with 2013 (1971) and representative of the capacity available with current staffing. UTAS sits slightly below national
benchmarks for staff to student ratios in relation to learning and language skill support (Table 2).

Table 2. National benchmarks for Academic Language and Learning Support across Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All students</th>
<th>International students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTAS</td>
<td>1:4091</td>
<td>1:855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Average</td>
<td>1:2707</td>
<td>1:682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Learning Skills consultations were attended by students from all faculties as well as other University institutes and centres. Overall, the majority of consultations across all campuses were from the Faculty of Health, with the exception of Cradle Coast where the majority were from Education.

Table 3. Learning Skills Consultations by cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Cohort</th>
<th>Hobart</th>
<th>Launceston</th>
<th>Cradle Coast</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Total 2014</th>
<th>Total 2013</th>
<th>Total 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals 2014</strong></td>
<td><strong>909</strong></td>
<td><strong>677</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>268</strong></td>
<td><strong>1974</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals 2013</strong></td>
<td><strong>1212</strong></td>
<td><strong>556</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>1971</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals 2012</strong></td>
<td><strong>1229</strong></td>
<td><strong>615</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>1899</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Online**

In 2014, a total of 15 academic skills workshops were conducted online and 291 students attended these workshops. In response to the requests of students, 11 of these workshops were delivered after hours. Feedback from these workshops was outstanding. 100% of respondents would consider attending another workshop delivered this way in the future, 98-100% rated the content as ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’. The following comment is representative of feedback provided:

“It is a great learning tool especially for distance education. UTAS bring on more.”

There was also a huge increase in the number of online consultations offered via web room, Skype, e-mail and phone. They increased from 63 in 2013 to 133 in 2014.

A set of interlinked, downloadable handouts that take students through the process of writing an academic essay was made available online.

**Bachelor of Dementia Care**

During 2014 the Bachelor of Dementia Care (BDC) enrolment increased from previous intakes of around 200 students, to the addition of over 1300 new students in Semester 2. Two main areas of demand from students were observed: essay writing skills and the understanding of
the expectations of academic integrity. In response to the needs of the students, on top of regular Student Learning support, a Winter Writing School was established. Here, students who had experienced difficulties with academic writing were invited to take up the offer of one-to-one tuition. This program produced some notable changes in the writing skills of particular students and they reported significant improvement in their results in Semester 2.

The BDC Common Room in MyLO continued to provide learning support materials for students.

**Academic Honesty MyLO site**

The Student Learning team assumed joint responsibility of this MyLO page in 2013. It is responsible for content and the MyLO team for the technical support of Turnitin and the site. The support of the MyLO team in the development and maintenance of each iteration is greatly appreciated.

This year the Student Learning team has been reviewing and revising the content of the site. The aim is for this site to become part of an institution wide strategy that promotes a consistent and coherent message of academic honesty, in line with the University of Tasmania’s Code of Conduct.

The MyLO site allows all staff and students studying at the University of Tasmania to access Turnitin prior to submission of their assignments. In 2014, the number of submissions increased, as did the number of students accessing the service (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Submissions and student use of Academic Honesty MyLO site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of submissions</th>
<th>Number with access to the site</th>
<th>Number of students using the site</th>
<th>Average submission per user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>43,683</td>
<td>6470</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>48,970</td>
<td>40,295</td>
<td>7013</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Credit bearing units**

The introduction of breadth units into the University curriculum provided an opportunity for members of the Student Learning team to collaborate with staff from a range of faculties, including Health, Arts and SET. The team has worked with colleagues to develop and deliver the *Living and Working with Cultural Diversity* unit and the *Good Thinking: Reasoning Skills for Life* unit. The Global Perspectives program, that developed the breadth unit *Living and Working with Cultural Diversity*, received the Vice Chancellor’s team award for programs that enhance learning.

This year the Student Learning team commenced teaching units into the Bachelor of General Studies and the Bachelor of Philosophy. The units focus on topics including enhancing learning, peer learning and student leadership. The student feedback has been positive;

‘The unit has helped me to understand myself [as a learner] a little more, and given me the confidence to do things differently.’
Student Learning Drop In

Student Learning Drop In is a peer facilitated service that provides all students at the University of Tasmania with the opportunity to develop their general academic skills. It is primarily a writing centre staffed by Student Learning Mentors who work with students to identify and develop their assignment preparation and writing skills. The service is offered on the Sandy Bay, Newnham, Cradle Coast, Darlinghurst and Rozelle campuses. Semester Two 2014 saw new Drop In Spaces open in Cradle Coast, Darlinghurst and Rozelle. Semester Five, the trialling of Blackboard Collaborate for online Drop In sessions was also commenced.

Outcomes 2014

This year marked the sixth year of operation of the Student Learning Drop In Space, As shown in figure 2, there has been a decrease in the number of students attending Drop In during 2014, with the total number across all Drop In Spaces being 822. Despite this decrease, attendances for 2014 remain significantly higher than for the years prior to 2013.

New Spaces and year ahead

The new Drop In spaces, Cradle Coast, Darlinghurst, Rozelle and online, have allowed students to access the support and resources of the Drop In Space regardless of their campus or location. The initial numbers show promise, as throughout Semester 2 there was a gradual increase in student visits. Overall the feedback from staff and students has been positive.
Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

Full PASS Program outcomes are available in the PASS Annual Report for 2014

In 2014, the PASS program supported a total of 83 units across all Tasmanian and Sydney campuses and well on online. A total of 72 high-achieving students were employed by the program as either PASS Leaders or Mentors. As shown in the table below, the PASS team delivered 2232 PASS sessions (100 on average each week) and was offered to 6889 students across the year with 2200 accessing the sessions at least once. This equates to 13297 contact hours across the year with one student attending one session equalling one contact hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. PASS Summary for 2014</th>
<th>Sem 1</th>
<th>Sem 2</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units Supported</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>5124</td>
<td>4546</td>
<td>9670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Enrolment</td>
<td>3738</td>
<td>3251</td>
<td>6989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>1373</td>
<td>2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Attended</td>
<td>1146</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Hours</td>
<td>6963</td>
<td>6334</td>
<td>13297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions Conducted</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>2232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison to the 2013 year PASS has;

- Had a 13% increase in the number of units supported;
- Extended its support to 1564 unique students (22%);
- Experienced a 16% growth in total PASS attendees and an 18% increase of unique attendees; and
- Had, as a result of the increase in attendees, contact hours increased by 13%
The PASS Program is looking forward to another positive year in 2015. For the first time the program will be providing support to postgraduate Business students, and face-to-face sessions for both the Darlinghurst and Rozelle campuses. In 2015, the PASS program plans to support a total of 100 units across all Tasmanian and Sydney campuses as well as online. A total of 58 high-achieving students will be employed by the program either as PASS Leaders or Mentors to facilitate approximately 2500 PASS sessions.

**Publications and presentations**


