An Inter-Professional, Leadership Development Programme for Psychology Students

Professor Lynne Cohen
A/Prof Paul P. W. Chang
Acknowledgement

- Australian Learning and Teaching Council ALTC Fellowship to Professor Lynne Cohen (2010) for continued development of the programme
Context of Psychology

- Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)
- Structure of the undergraduate programme and degrees
- No practical component, purely “theoretical”
ECU Graduate Attributes

- Ability to communicate
- Ability to work in teams
- Ability to develop critical appraisal skills
- Ability to generate ideas
- Cross-cultural and international outlook

Aim for ECU curricula (2012): Employability-orientated
ECU School of Psychology and Social Science

- Enhancing Quality and Learning (EQUAL) Programme
  - Peer mentoring
  - Curriculum review
  - Orientation programmes
  - Tutor training

- Formal Interprofessional Leadership Training
Success of the EQUAL Programme

The ECU Psychology course has been rated

***** (5-star) for Good Teaching

***** (5-star) for Generic Skills, and

****  (4-star) for Overall Satisfaction

(source: 2009 Good Universities Guide)
Inter-professional Leadership Programme

- Development of leadership characteristics and capacity
- Sorely lacking in all programmes
- Other universities offer leadership programmes but are extra-curricular, generic, and not tied with any specific project
- Importantly, there is no mentor-mentee relationship
Inter-professional Leadership Programme

- ECU experience
- Formal programme of leadership development
- Based on a business leadership model (Mentoring relationship)
- Programme and its delivery is flexible, making it context-specific to student’s discipline and interests
Inter-professional Leadership Programme

- Programme structure
- Initially 12-months
- Revised programme 6-months
- 2nd and 3rd year students only
- Formal 1-page application
- Formal workshops (five mandatory meetings)
Negotiating with industry partners

- Strategic
- Relevance to psychology
- “Experience-building”
- Length of project
Workshop

- Differentiation between leadership and management
- Building resilience
- Managing stress
- Professional networking
- Social networking
- Mentorship
- Emotional intelligence
Project examples

- Esther H.: Health promotion presentations in primary school
- Phil R.: Uniting Care West & Mental Health
- Julie R.: Working with teenage mothers
- Felicity G.: Psychological Services at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
- Robert L.: Anglicare Family Relationships Centre
Project debriefing

- Two sessions to evaluate presence of leadership skills in students
Formal recognition by ECU

- Certificates
- Dinner
- Recognition by Chancellery
Formal evaluations

- Development of leadership skills (formal questionnaire & focus group results)
- Qualitative interviews with mentors
Findings and Interpretations

- Development of personal traits and confidence
- Communication (e.g., public speaking, approaching organisations)
- Application of leadership skills in the real world
Programme Outcomes

- Placement of students in government and NGOs
- Employability of ECU graduates
- Engagement with industry partners
- Leadership knowledge of participants
- Practical experience for psychology students outside APAC constraints
- Collaboration with other disciplines