PROPEL – Program for Preparing Early Leaders

INFORMATION FOR MENTORS

What is PROPEL?

PROPEL is a collaborative project of the UOW Social Innovation Network, led by Prof. Rob Castle, Prof. Sara Dolnicar and Prof. Wilma Vialle and funded by an ALTC Leadership for Excellence grant. The project will develop and implement a **one-year intensive leadership program for pre-leadership academics** which will train future academic leaders and will result in a model which is transferable to other institutions.

Unlike many other leadership programs, PROPEL’s major focus will be on breaking down the borders between disciplines and closing the gap between learning, teaching and research. Collaboration and interdisciplinarity will be taught and demonstrated to participants, who will work together with peers and academic leaders across all faculties and disciplines as they complete the six elements of the program.

The importance of mentoring to academic leadership development

Being in a mentoring partnership with a successful academic leader offers pre-leadership academics an invaluable opportunity to learn from the leader’s knowledge, experience and insight. Mentoring is both an opportunity for self-development and a leadership skill which itself must be learned and practised. Pre-leadership academics who experience a successful mentoring partnership will develop a mentoring ‘mindset’ which they carry forward into future leadership roles.

The PROPEL Mentoring Component

The first of the six elements in the PROPEL Program is the Mentoring Component. Each PROPEL participant will be assigned a mentor for the duration of the program (12 months). Mentoring will be carried out through regular intentional dialogue between the two partners and will involve agreed objectives and clearly defined responsibilities and expectations. The mentor’s role will be to lead the participant through explorations of his/her own abilities, goals and professional development plans. One of the main roles is to help participants take stock of where they are now and where they want to be.

Identifying the PROPEL participants

The PROPEL Program will accept 12 participants from UOW in its first year. Ideally, there will be one participant from each Faculty plus Woolyungah Indigenous Centre. All participants will be ‘pre-leadership’, that is, they will not have held an institutional leadership role.

Participants will be selected based on a range of factors, including demonstrated leadership characteristics, energy and enthusiasm for new ideas and ways of working, interest in collaborative and interdisciplinary work, and strong research and teaching performance.

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The views expressed in the project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
What’s involved in being a PROPEL Mentor?

- **Mid- August** Mentors matched with a PROPEL participant from outside their own Faculty. (Participants and mentors will be given the option of declining their selected partner and being rematched.)

- **27 August** All mentors and participants introduced at the Program Launch, which will include a mentoring training session and full details of the Program requirements.

- **27-29 September** Three-day Leadership Skills Workshop attended by participants only. Mentors welcome to attend certain sessions if available.

- **October** First meetings of mentoring partnerships:
  - mentoring agreements completed (clarifying details and objectives);
  - schedule of face-to-face meetings set (at least one hour per month – coffee vouchers will be supplied!).

- **Nov 2010 – Aug 2011** Regular mentoring discussions focusing on:
  - working through the results of self-assessment and 360 deg. feedback instruments completed by the participant prior to the commencement of the Program.
  - preparing an individual development plan for the coming 12-months;
  - developing the participant’s selected leadership skills;
  - supporting the participant as they plan and carry out the leadership action project;
  - preparing for and debriefing following participant attendance at committee meetings and interdisciplinary fora;
  - self-reflection and reflection on the program;
  - setting longer-term leadership goals (beyond the PROPEL program) and developing action plans to achieve them.

- **September 2011** Final mentoring meetings held to conclude partnerships.

The University acknowledges that mentoring is a time-consuming task. Deans of all Faculties have committed to providing one hour per week face-to-face teaching relief for both mentors and PROPEL participants to support their involvement in the PROPEL program.

Mentors will receive training in mentoring prior to the start of the partnerships, and coaching can be made available during the program from other experienced mentors. The PROPEL Coordinators will provide follow-up support at regular intervals to assist partners maintain momentum and revisit goals, including forums and ‘mentoring the mentor’ sessions.

**Further information**

Please contact the PROPEL Project Manager, Karen Lovasz, at klovasz@uow.edu.au or x8218.