THE MENTORING COMPONENT —
INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The importance of mentoring to academic leadership development

The importance of mentoring for future leaders cannot be overemphasised. Studies of university leaders have shown that learning from others is among the top three most significant influences on their learning how to lead and their leadership effectiveness (Drew, Ehrich & Hansford, 2008; Scott, Coates & Anderson, 2008). 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. At universities, as in other organisations, leaders are mentors of other staff (Drew et al., 2008). Pre-leadership academics who experience a successful mentoring partnership will develop a mentoring ‘mindset’ which they carry forward into future leadership roles.

Benefits to PROPEL participants from the Mentoring Component

The PROPEL Mentoring Component will support you as you work through the various PROPEL Program components. You will gain both direct and indirect support.

Direct support to:

- Develop specific leadership skills identified through the Leadership Skills Workshop.
- Plan and carry out the Active Component project.
- Reflect on meetings attended during the Big Picture Component.
- Be self-reflective throughout the Program, and especially in preparation for the Reflective Component.
- Experience and learn effective mentoring techniques.
Indirect support to:

- Extend collaborative networks.
- Take a focused approach to planning.
- Increase confidence in your leadership abilities.
- Increase motivation to pursue academic leadership pathways.
- Build a personal leadership development plan with both short and long term goals.
- Establish contacts and networks to support your development.
- Better balance the demands of academic life.
- Reduce any sense of isolation.
- Benefit from the knowledge and skills of an experienced academic leader.

Support for mentoring

The PROPEL Coordinators will provide regular follow-up support to assist partners maintain momentum and revisit goals.

Schedule and focus of PROPEL mentoring

Initial mentoring meetings should be held no more than four weeks after the Leadership Workshop. Partners will set a schedule of regular face-to-face meetings. You and your mentor can determine the length of meetings (one hour is ideal).

During the first two months, fortnightly meetings should be scheduled to allow you to settle in quickly. Meetings should be held at least six-weekly from then to the end of the Program. Meetings should be scheduled to align with other elements of the PROPEL Program, such as your attendance at committee meetings.

During mentoring discussions, you should focus on:

- Working through the results of self-assessment and 360 degree feedback instruments.
- Preparing an individual development plan for the coming 12-months.
- Developing your identified leadership skills.
- Planning and carrying out your leadership action project.
- Preparing for and debriefing following committee meetings.
- Self-reflection and reflection on the PROPEL Program.
- Setting longer-term leadership goals (beyond the PROPEL program) and developing action plans to achieve them.
Roles and responsibilities

You and your mentor are entering into a voluntary partnership. Both partners need to work to maintain the partnership's effectiveness by:

- Being comfortable with the mentoring match and committed to the partnership.
- Discussing and agreeing on specific time-framed goals for the partnership to work towards.
- Agreeing on and respecting the ground rules of the partnership.
- Treating information or advice shared by either partner confidentially.
- Giving and receiving advice or recommendations in good faith.
- Regularly discussing how the partnership is progressing and making any adjustments.
- Referring issues that arise, which are beyond the scope of the partnership, to a third person (e.g. PROPEL Coordinators).
- Agreeing to a 'no fault' conclusion of the partnership by either partner if, for any reason, it is no longer appropriate or helpful to continue.

Addressing partnership concerns

While many positive outcomes will be achieved from the mentoring partnerships, difficulties may arise from time to time. Mentoring partners are encouraged to be open and honest with each other about issues and look for solutions. If you wish to explore issues which are outside the agreed scope of the mentoring partnership, your mentor may need to refer you to other more appropriate sources of support. The PROPEL Coordinators may be called on for assistance at any time during the mentoring partnership.

Privacy and confidentiality

Mentoring partners must agree to confidentiality. Conversations should be regarded as private and information disclosed should not be passed on, used or in any other way revealed. Privileged or sensitive information should not be shared between mentoring partners.

References
