Program for Preparing Early Leaders

The University of Wollongong (UOW), through an Australian Learning and Teaching Council grant, is developing the **PROPEL Program**: a one-year intensive leadership program for pre-leadership academics.

**The 2010 PROPEL Program, which commences in September, is offering three places to academic staff from universities outside UOW.**

The tertiary education sector is operating in an environment which has become unprecedentedly dynamic. The key challenge for all universities is to learn how to both survive and prosper in this rapidly-changing environment. Doing so will require a new generation of leaders in who are open-minded, understand the necessity for true teaching-research nexus, value diversity and interdisciplinarity, and are able to quickly understand and adapt to external pressures.

**PROPEL is a unique leadership program which will offer a select group of academic staff the opportunity to develop the skill-set and mind-set of successful future leaders in advance of their first leadership roles.**

Universities with a participant on the **PROPEL Program will gain:**

- Twelve-months of leadership development through mentoring, active project work, workshops and fora, strategic committee involvement, reflection and peer support.
- All registration and accommodation costs for their participant covered by the Program.
- Ongoing support from UOW to manage all aspects of their participant’s involvement in the Program.
- Completion of a project by the participant which will add value to their institution.
- Increased opportunity for collaboration with other Australian universities.
- Opportunity to contribute to an ALTC-funded initiative which has sector-wide significance.
- Regular feedback on Program progress and final outcomes.
- Access to a Resource Kit designed to allow Universities to run the PROPEL Program locally.
- A highly skilled candidate for future leadership positions.

Participating universities will contribute . . .

- Active involvement in identifying and selecting the best applicants from their institution.
- An experienced leader from their institution to act as a mentor to the participant for 12 months.
- Participant’s time and travel costs to attend a leadership workshop on 27-29 September (recess) as well as two half-day fora and a one-day reflective event in Wollongong NSW over a 12-month period.
- One-hour teaching relief per week during session for the participant and their mentor for 12 months.
- Opportunity for the participant to engage with Faculty-level or university-level committees.
- Support and encouragement for the participant and recognition of their time and effort.
- A contact person to act as a liaison point between UOW and the participating University.

**Key dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>April/May</td>
<td>Applications invited from outside UOW.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 July</td>
<td>Applications close.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early August</td>
<td>Deans, Heads and other nominated referees may be contacted for further information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 August</td>
<td>Participants selected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late August</td>
<td>Framework for non-UOW participants arranged with assistance from local contact person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 September</td>
<td>Program commences with 3-day residential workshop.</td>
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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.
Overview of The PROPEL Program

Program Components

The Program will run for 12 months commencing September 2010.

Participants will complete six components:

MENTORING Participants will be matched with a mentor from outside their own Faculty. Cross-Faculty partnerships will broaden the participants’ experience beyond their own discipline.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS The Program will commence with a three-day workshop, focusing on generic, teaching and research leadership skills. At the end of the workshop, participants will select specific skills from each area which they will work on developing, with the help of their mentor, over the next 12 months.

INTERDISCIPLINARY Two Interdisciplinary Fora will be held to explore the benefits of approaching an issue from different directions.

BIG PICTURE Participants will attend high-level committee meetings and strategic events to gain insight into the day-to-day workings of the University.

ACTIVE Participants will choose one project, with significance to their Faculty, which they will lead during the Program.

REFLECTIVE Throughout the training year participants will reflect on their experiences and will present them at a one-day event at the end of the Program.

In addition to the six Program components, participants will be encouraged to form a community of practice to support each other, share ideas and experiences and develop and expand their networks.

How PROPEL participants will be managed and supported

The management and support of non-UOW participants on the PROPEL Program will be the responsibility of the UOW PROPEL Coordinators and will be undertaken with as little impact as possible on the participant’s own University.

Each participating University will be asked to nominate a contact person to act as a liaison point. This person may be the participant’s Head of School or Dean, or any other staff member with an interest in leadership development (such as members of the PROPEL Leadership Advisory Board or Academic Development Unit staff).

The contact person will act as a source of information and advice on:

- a suitable academic leader to be invited to mentor the participant;
- appropriate committees and events for the participant to attend;
- valuable projects the participant may be able to lead.

The PROPEL website – research.uow.edu.au/propel - will form a central hub for communication between the PROPEL Coordinators and participants (both UOW and external), as well as among the participants themselves. Through the website and the community of practice, participants from other universities will experience an equivalent level of involvement and support during the Program as UOW-based participants.

Selection of PROPEL participants from outside UOW

Universities interested in taking part in the PROPEL Program should nominate between one and three staff members. Names of nominated staff should be forwarded to the PROPEL Project Manager (Karen Lovasz klovasz@uow.edu.au) who will contact nominees directly. All staff interested in applying will need to complete an application form to be submitted to the PROPEL Coordinators by 30 July. Applicants require their Dean’s approval to apply.

Applicants from outside UOW will be considered against the same selection criteria as UOW applicants (see next page). Three non-UOW participants will be selected, ideally from three separate Universities.
Eligibility
The aim of the PROPEL Program is to develop leadership abilities in academic staff who have shown potential to be leaders. The Program is targeted to pre-leadership staff who have NOT held an institutional leadership role:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institutional leadership roles (NOT ELIGIBLE):</th>
<th>Other leadership roles (ELIGIBLE):</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Head of School or Discipline;</td>
<td>- Chief Investigator on grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Associate Dean or above;</td>
<td>- Subject Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Director of University Research Strength or</td>
<td>- Committee Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Research Initiative.</td>
<td>- Director of Faculty Research Centre</td>
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<td>- Period of acting in an institutional leadership role</td>
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While most pre-leadership staff will be at Level A, B or C, applications will be accepted from staff at Level D or E if they have not held an institutional leadership role.

Applicants must be permanent or fixed-term staff (not casual). Fixed-term staff must be on a contract of at least 3 years with at least 2 years of their contract remaining.

Selection Criteria
All applicants will be considered against the following selection criteria:
- Characteristics of leadership (see below).
- Energy and enthusiasm for new ideas and ways of working.
- Interest in collaborative and interdisciplinary work.
- Strong research and teaching performance (relative to opportunity, but not necessarily in equal measure).

Applicants will need to demonstrate how participation in PROPEL will benefit themselves (at current point in their career) AND their Faculty/University. Applicants who are studying towards a HDR qualification will be asked to clearly show how they will manage their time to fully commit to the PROPEL Program.

Characteristics of Leadership
Research undertaken by the PROPEL Project has determined that some of the most highly-valued leadership characteristics are also the most difficult to teach. Applicants will be selected for PROPEL who already possess and demonstrate many of these characteristics:
- Direction, vision, originality.
- Role model who demonstrates a quality of excellence and is passionate about their discipline (in either teaching, research or both).
- Genuine interest in people and the ability to connect with staff on a personal level.
- Genuine regard for diversity and seeing difference as positive.
- Personal traits including drive, energy, enthusiasm, positive attitude, conviction, cooperativeness, patience, consideration.
- Maturity, self-understanding, self-motivation, being true to own personal values.
- Comfortable working in complex situations.

For more information and to nominate a participant:
Please contact the PROPEL Project Manager, Karen Lovasz, at klovasz@uow.edu.au or 02 4252 8218.