Partnership in Action

Stories and lived experiences of Student-Staff Partnerships at UQ in 2019

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Welcome Message
From the editorial team

Welcome to The University of Queensland's inaugural Partnership in Action booklet: a celebration of the many wonderful achievements of the UQ students and staff members who have worked in partnership to enhance students' experiences at the University.

Throughout this booklet, we hope that you are informed and inspired by the student-staff partnerships that are showcased. These are just a snapshot of the hundreds of partnerships that have been undertaken throughout the University in 2019, and we hope they give you a sense of what can be achieved with a commitment to the partnership ethos.

Thank you to the authors of these case studies and profiles for taking the time to share your stories so passionately and eloquently. The partnerships community at UQ is a growing and thriving space in which staff and students are pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved in partnership. The narratives shared in this booklet are a testament to how true, authentic partnerships challenge and drive us in ways we may never have imagined. By engaging in these dialogues with one another in an open and transparent manner, Student-Staff Partnerships (SSP) at UQ can continue to grow and evolve to the benefit of students and staff alike.

The Partnership in Action Editorial Team

Naima Crisp, Jose Escobar Lema, , Brooke Szucs (student partners, SSP Operational Group)

James Forde, Julia Groening, Madelaine-Marie Judd, Jessica Morgan, Julie Peries, (staff partners, SSP Team)

> **"The partnerships community at UQ is a growing and thriving space in which staff and students are pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved in partnership"**

Overview

Mission statement

The Student-Staff Partnerships program seeks to empower students and staff to collaborate as equal partners and mutual learners. It facilitates opportunities to connect the diverse voices, skills and talents within the UQ community, and it aims to enhance the University experience of both students and staff.

Our values

- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Engaged community
- Growth
- Respect

Vision for the future of SSP

The vision of the Student-Staff Partnerships program is to enable a wide, inclusive and diverse range of students and staff to engage authentically in partnership across all facets of the University. This program will continue to empower students to contribute to decision-making processes and in the enhancement of the student experience. Students will be able to provide their unique and diverse perspectives by engaging in partnership projects, being supported as student representatives, and by participating as consultants in student voice feedback activities.

Student-Staff Partnerships Operational Group (by Brooke and Jose)

Brooke: This year we've had the opportunity to support student partnership and representation on the Student-Staff Partnerships Operational Group. I've been advocating for the value of breaking down barriers to allow low income and first in family students to engage. **Jose:** I've been representing international students and collaborating on the creation of a more inclusive environment where students with disabilities can participate more actively and become more employable. We are honoured to represent these cohorts that have so much to contribute in this space.

Student-Staff Partnerships
Stories and lived experiences

School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work

Peta Winters-Chang (staff partner, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work) & Susannah Brady (staff partner, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work)

Engaging in partnership requires a level of commitment, trust, and passion from participating team members. The profession of midwifery espouses midwives as being "with woman" when providing care, and as midwifery academics being "with student" is key to supporting students' success. The motivation for our involvement in becoming staff partners was twofold.

We wanted midwifery students, both beginning and senior, to connect and learn from each other, with the long term goal of creating sustainable relationships for the community of midwives within our school. This empowering partnership of all midwifery students would also develop qualities that are required in the midwifery profession including teamwork, collaboration, and the ability to contribute to a community of practice.

> ### "Engaging in partnership requires a level of commitment, trust, and passion"

Faculty of Science

Shaun McAnally (student partner & student representative, Faculty of Science)

The original Student-Staff Partnership project I had the opportunity to get engaged with arose from my involvement as a student member on the Teaching and Learning committee for the Faculty of Science. In discussions with my fellow student member, we began to realise the need for a more consistent support system for students getting involved with the Faculty in these roles, and approached the committee secretary with the idea to produce a digital resource for student members on committees. Being involved with this project right from the beginning, particularly during the project proposal and idea development phases, highlighted the importance of Student-Staff Partnerships as a means of connection between the professional staff operating within a Faculty and the broader student community. Since the completion of this first phase project, our team discovered

new directions for our next stages of resource development which led to our phase two and three projects that have focussed on student recruitment and induction to Faculty of Science committees and support resources for committee chairs, respectively.

Being engaged with partnerships from a very early stage in my studies, I soon developed new skills and connections which have led to my involvement in related student voice initiatives. Student-Staff Partnerships are a launchpad for students with an idea to improve the UQ community as they encourage direct collaboration between people that may not have had the opportunity to otherwise partner on large-scale projects. I feel very fortunate to have been involved in a large variety of partnership projects within my first two years of study as I strongly believe in the sense of empowerment and connection that the SSP program gives to the student community.

> "Engaging with people from different backgrounds has been invaluable for enabling discussion... and highlighted the importance of ongoing dialogues"

Bronwyn Fredericks (staff partner and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Engagement), Sybilla Wilson (staff partner, Student Services), Brenna Wormington (student partner), Cassia Bray (student partner), Cheryl Thomas (student partner), Dewi Ratna Sari (student partner), Nell Angus (staff partner, Office of the PVC, Indigenous Engagement), Kelly Roberts (staff partner, Office of the PVC, Indigenous Engagement), Meleika Gesa-Fatafehi (student partner) & James Blackwell (student partner)

The project aimed to co-develop an engagement plan to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Indigenous) and non-Indigenous students with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in South-East Queensland.

With Indigenous students already having the knowledge of engagement with Indigenous communities, it strengthened their bonds with communities in South-East Queensland. For non-Indigenous students, including international students, it created a deeper understanding of different ways of working together with students, staff and communities. This included learning about Yarning, an Indigenous methodology. Yarning allowed us to understand people's viewpoints and perceptions on current Indigenous affairs and about communities and reconciliation topics.

Over the course of the project we believe we have gained a greater understanding of the differences and similarities in how we think, work and understand the world. Engaging with people from different backgrounds has been invaluable for enabling discussion. Starting our meetings with a focused yarn provided a process for engagement, and highlighted the importance of ongoing dialogues for reconciliation and of deeply listening to one another.

Throughout the project we engaged with Indigenous peoples, historical legacies, and ways to transform relationships at UQ with Indigenous communities and within the broader community. For Indigenous students, this project was a way to reflect on the strengths of Indigenous peoples and cultures, and offered an affirmation of beliefs, identity and ways of being.

The project, through Yarning, enabled us to address power and bring equity into the discussions between students and staff fostering deeper understandings of people, cultures and notions of community, along with ways to mobilise for change. The project resulted in a shared lunch between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and community members, including Elders featuring Indigenous foods as part of the UQ Bloom Festival.

Community of Practice
Building a community together

The Community of Practice (CoP) was created as a space for students and staff from across UQ to come together and engage in conversations on Student-Staff Partnerships, the challenges and effective strategies to inform practice.

Recently the CoP came together to co-design and co-create the Student-Staff Partnerships mission statement and values (see page 4). A group of CoP members brainstormed ideas, shared practice and developed a range of values and statements of what they believed to encompass the partnerships ethos. These values and statements were then shared with the broader partnerships community to vote on, with the most popular values and mission statement being chosen. These values and mission statement will serve as guiding principles for those within the partnerships community to reflect upon when engaging in partnership.

Student-Staff Partnerships
Changing perspectives

Faculty of Medicine

Simone Austin (staff partner, Faculty of Medicine)

The Faculty of Medicine introduced a new Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee in 2019, which aimed to develop and maintain an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture for all staff and students.

Through an expressions of interest process via the SSP team, we received a total of 60 applications from students. We were overwhelmed by the significant engagement from students, and were pleased that so many students in our Faculty community were interested in developing and maintaining an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture.

Due to such a high level of student interest, we increased the number of student representatives from 2 to 4 students. This allowed us access to the student voice from a greater range of programs across medicine, public health, health sciences, and MPhil. We were very impressed with the high quality of the contribution from students on this committee, who were able to provide a voice for many underrepresented student groups, particularly students who are located in our rural clinical schools.

Through the work of this committee, a Student-Staff Partnership project was instigated, aimed at improving LGBTIAQ+ Education in Health Care. An additional

4 students were recruited as student partners. The outcomes of this project will contribute to a significant review of the Medical program, and will ultimately address the barriers that LGBTIAQ+ people face in accessing and receiving effective health care, and enable future doctors and health care providers to consider strategies to make their practice more inclusive of LGBTIAQ+ people, to ensure they are providing a safe environment for patients.

> **"We received a total of 60 applications from students. We were overwhelmed by the significant engagement from students, and were pleased that so many students in our Faculty community were interested in developing and maintaining an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture"**

Faculty of HASS

Naima Crisp (student partner & student representative, Faculty of HASS), Jimi Bursaw (staff partner, Faculty of HASS) & Joy Chalaby (student partner & student representative, Faculty of HASS)

In our attempts to dismantle traditional staff-student power dynamics and to break cycles of negative student representative experiences for both students and staff, we have come to realize that:

• Support and infrastructure for partnership and voice must be grounded in the experience of the student partners/reps and the barriers they/we face to engagement.

• Co-creation must sit at the heart of each project from its inception.

• The most powerful tool at our disposal

is the act of building community.

In HASS we are working to ensure that each piece of infrastructure and support (handbooks, selection processes, strategy, policy) is co-created and articulated in an accessible student voice and perspective; and that student representatives have a space to share, build strategies, and find confidence in their roles and voices.

We are doing this through a HASS Representative Community of Practice, a Student-Staff Partnership project on supporting representation, and through genuine relationships that have developed into informal staff/student passion projects, and committee spin-off working parties.

So what's our advice? For student representation, create a platform for

representatives to come together to talk about commonalities, support, and barriers. Create platforms for reps and staff to come together beyond committees to see how we can reach the next plateau of voice and partnership.

Start having the conversations. Start early. Habituate the conversation. Ensure there are staff beyond the committees who are happy to champion alongside students. Ensure there is support for staff and students to do the work that needs to be done by providing the basics: a bit of funding, a bit of time, a bit of food, and a place to come together.

This is just the beginning for us and we must all continue to educate one another as we iterate for stronger partnership in the years to come.

School of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Giselle Pickering (student partner & student representative, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences)

I've been a student representative for two and half years in both the SEES student consultative committee (SCC) which reports to the SEES Teaching & Learning committee and this year in the new UQU Academic Advocacy Network (AAN). When I started out, student reps in my school were fairly isolated and didn't have direct influence on change implementation. However, since then I've seen a huge growth in the support for strong student voice across the whole university. This year I took a leap and became more involved in representative networking and training events which helped me grow into a more engaged and empowered student rep.

It's been hugely motivational to get to know other student reps and learn more about what sorts of communication, feedback and event techniques they've been using. In that regard the Student Reps Bootcamp was a major standout this year. Taking time to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a rep, deciding on the qualities you want to further develop and brainstorming as a community some solid strategies to work towards your goals was hugely beneficial. It helped give myself and my fellow SCC reps the confidence to transition to a fully student-led committee, organise thorough feedback collection and grow our online student community group. All of this has helped to improve student connectedness and experience in our school.

To all current and future student reps, I highly recommend making time for training and networking events, especially if you are feeling isolated in your role. Come with an idea of what you'd like to gain from the event, be brave enough to talk to new people and ask questions. It'll help you grow more confident as a rep while getting to meet equally engaged students and staff also working to improve the student experience - just like you!

Feature Story
Student Reps Bootcamp

The inaugural Student Reps Bootcamp, co-facilitated by SSP, the UQ Union and student reps; was held in O-Week Semester 2. Student reps from 5 faculties and 19 schools came together for this one-day workshop to build on their skills and network with other student reps.

The Bootcamp was kicked off by Karen Benson (Director, Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation) who emphasised the importance of student representation at UQ, and was followed by a range of interactive sessions including:
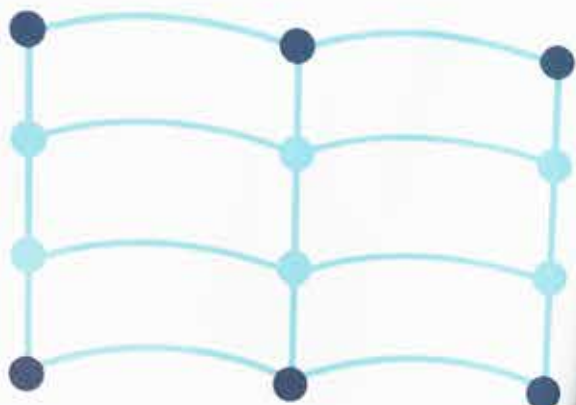
- Making connections with UQ student reps and identifying common traits of reps

- How to be 'the student voice' which explored practical strategies for gaining student feedback. Student reps also collectively developed action plans for the coming semester

- Student representation in action: Current and best practice: A dynamic panel discussion where we heard from academic leaders, UQ Union executive members, and students.

Through the day's experiences, reps were encouraged to develop strategies and connections to maximise their impact in semester 2.

Special thanks to the student co-facilitators for their efforts and contributions: Cindy Bernical, Naima Crisp, Giselle Pickering and Kaiyin Wu!

> **Student reps from 5 faculties and 19 schools came together for this one day workshop to build on their skills and network with other student reps**

Student-Staff Partnerships
Together we create change

Emma Bartle (staff partner, School of Dentistry), Cheryl Chin (student partner, School of Dentistry) & Jia Ru Toh (student partner, School of Dentistry)

The UQ Dentistry cohort comprises of 50% international students, and approximately 45% of our domestic students relocate from interstate. Hence, the majority of our first year students are new to Brisbane and need to adjust into University life and the dentistry program without any family or friend support networks, while also trying to find their feet in a new city. This can be stressful, and many students experience isolation and disconnection, both academically and socially. Since 2017, the School of Dentistry has been running a first-year peer mentoring program, and its success and sustainability is a result of continuous effective Student-Staff

Partnerships to develop, implement, run and evaluate the program. The voice of the student partners has been critical to this project as they have been able to tell us exactly what issues and areas of concerns our new Year 1 students face and how students want to be supported during their transition to university, having experienced it personally themselves! As staff, while we have the best intentions of trying to develop a useful peer mentoring program, the reality is that we are out of touch with what a first year student experiences nowadays, having being awhile since we were one ourselves! Hence working in a Student-Staff Partnership has been terrific as the students have been able to provide input and ideas to create a meaningful program, and staff have been able to support the students to shape these ideas into a program that

is logistically possible to run. The voice of our student partners has played a key role when evaluating and improving the program. The student partners have a good rapport with our cohorts and are usually able to elicit more honest and useful feedback from Year 1 students, than a student may feel comfortable telling a staff member.

> "The voice of our student partners has played a key role when evaluating and improving the program"

Alex Bevan (staff partner, Faculty of HASS), Ha Eun Kong (student partner, Faculty of HASS), Lauren Bozzetto (student partner, Faculty of HASS), Manu Fabila-Hicks (student partner, Faculty of HASS), Daniel Bogossian (student partner, Faculty of HASS), Douglas Kong Ying Tham (student partner, Faculty of HASS), Erika Spanos (student partner, Faculty of HASS) & Eleanor Donald (staff partner, Faculty of HASS)

I (Alex) was tasked with blending Multimedia, the main first-year course I teach each semester. This means moving part of it online while converting other parts to face-to-face tutorials. This required me to seriously rethink the course and how the online version could be student-accessible and student-oriented. In redesigning Multimedia COMU1140, I recruited exemplary students who had already done the course and asked them to design the online learning activities that would appear in the blended version. Having excelled at the group work the course demanded, who better to come up with what kinds of activities would need to move online in order to better facilitate group work in the course's future? We also had a production team that produced a number of videos offering future students course tips that will appear in the blended version of the course. I worked closely with Eleanor Donald in working with the team because we were such a large group. The value in working with students-as-partners is that students provide some of the freshest and most innovative teaching ideas. As teachers, sometimes we get stuck in old patterns of doing things and "this is the way it's always been done" types of thinking. Student partners unsettle our thinking in healthy ways. Teaching is never a uni-directional process but rather it should always endeavour to be a conversation and an exchange of ideas. I see all my students as partners to some extent – we are partners in creating better courses, better learning, better collaboration and better changes in the world.

> **"Sometimes we get stuck in old patterns of doing things and "this is the way it's always been done" types of thinking"**

Seb Dianati (staff partner, School of Languages and Cultures)

Being the lead Digital Curriculum designer and the SSP ambassador at the School of Languages and Cultures, I understand that partnerships are critical not only for our school but they also contribute to the transformation of student and staff experiences at a university-level. I have engaged and collaborated in about 15 partnership projects since the program started at UQ. I continue to promote and get involved in partnership projects as I strongly believe they offer a new democratic approach to teaching, where power is shared, and learning is mutual. New methods of teaching and learning are discussed, planned and elaborated through students' participation as producers rather than consumers of knowledge. Students feel valued, actively gaining academic and employability skills that enhance their learning experience whilst studying at UQ. Partnerships provide new avenues to develop a sense of community and belongingness, where reciprocal, respectful and responsible relationships are built. Furthermore, if compared to the traditional SECAT evaluation forms, partnerships provide a more efficient method to gain deeper insights on students' learning experiences and individual needs. That is, they help staff to see the blind spots in their pedagogical practices. Staff learn more about how to look for new resources and teaching techniques that are more in touch as well as more aligned with what students really need to learn.

> **"I strongly believe they offer a new democratic approach to teaching, where power is shared, and learning is mutual"**

Student-Staff Partnerships 2019
At a glance

The Student-Staff Partnerships program is creating a cultural transformation at UQ whereby students and staff connect as partners, collaborators and consultants on projects and in governance groups that seek to enhance the student experience.

This widespread adoption of the partnership ethos has empowered students and staff from diverse backgrounds and challenged power imbalances that exist between students and staff. Key to this program is the recognition and appreciation that students bring valuable, yet distinct, skills and expertise to the University.

The Student-Staff Partnerships program has three different, but complimentary, sub-programs: Partnership Projects, Student Representation and Student Voice. Below is a snapshot of the key achievements of the program as a whole in 2019, including key figures and statistics.

"Key to this program is the recognition and appreciation that students bring valuable, yet distinct, skills and expertise to the University"

29.3%
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PROJECTS

176
PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

36%
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN STUDENT REPS

59%
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN STUDENT VOICE ACTIVITIES

PROMOTED PROGRAM AT
7+
EXTERNAL EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

649
STUDENT PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS

1066
STUDENTS PROVIDED THEIR VOICE IN STUDENT VOICE INITIATIVES

532
STAFF PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS

1 in 3
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES RECRUITED THROUGH PROGRAM

Feature Story
ITS Advisory Group

Jack Mason (staff partner, IT Services)

Students are at the heart of everything we do, and it's important that they play a part in shaping UQ's digital environment. To give students a voice and a role in this process, Information Technology Services (ITS) and the Student-Staff Partnerships team developed the Digital Environment Student Advisory Group. The group consisted of 10 diverse students from a range of faculties, who met with ITS fortnightly and undertook their own research within the UQ student community.

The advisory group helped ITS gain valuable feedback on a variety of projects at different phases of implementation. The processes developed and the lessons learned working with students will help inform future decision-making and serve as a blueprint for additional student engagement initiatives within ITS.

It's tempting to make assumptions when thinking about services for students, because most of us were students at one point in time. However, the student landscape is always changing, and so are their needs, expectations and challenges. Working closely with students helped ITS better understand their audience, have empathy for their journeys, and identify how to better support them.

This initiative also created opportunities for students to learn and grow their skillsets. The student representatives reported the following benefits:

- Increased understanding of the processes, challenges and effort involved in delivering software solutions to students.
- Experience implementing various research techniques (e.g. focus groups and surveys) and learning how to increase audience participation.
- Improved time and priority management.
- Experience adapting to changing plans.
- Experience with tools typically used in enterprise environments (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Slack and Zoom).
- Increased confidence and communication skills.

Overall, the students indicated that they enjoyed working in a diverse and multidisciplinary group which genuinely wanted to use student feedback to improve UQ's services.

> **"The student landscape is always changing, and so are their needs, expectations and challenges"**
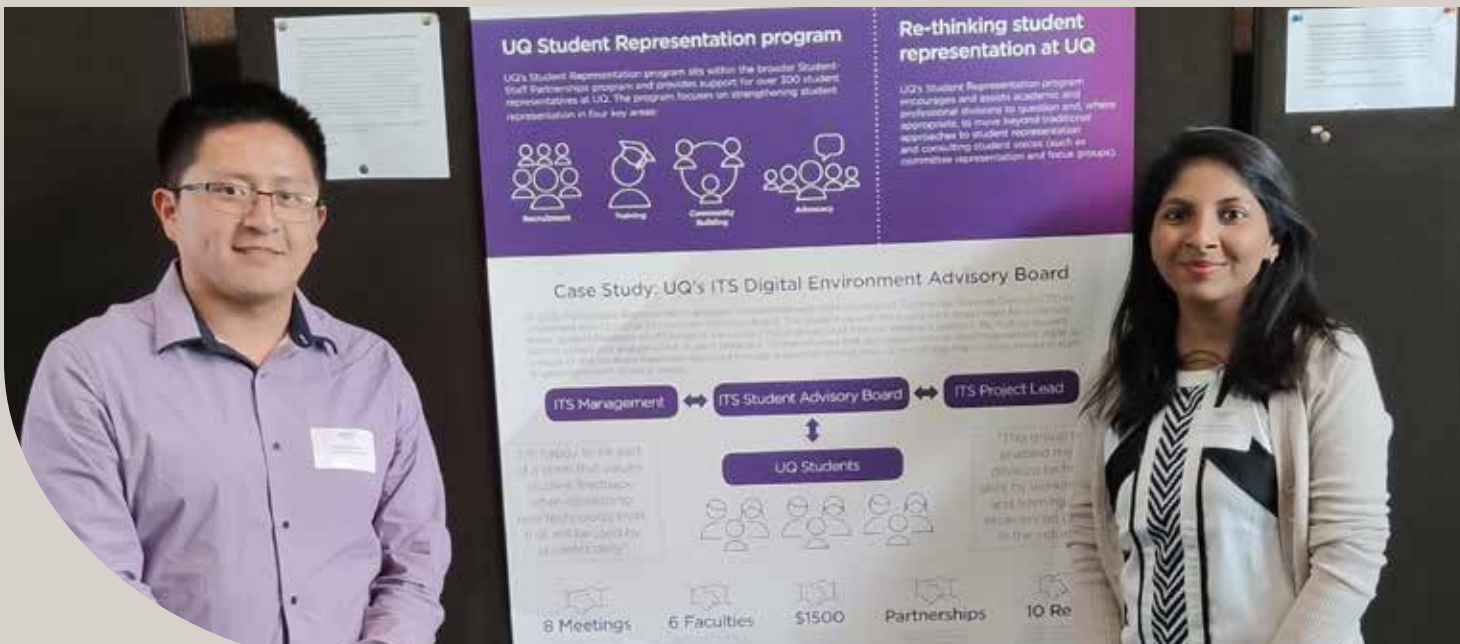
Jose Escobar & Rheaa Thulasi Manoharan, both student representatives on the ITS Digital Environment Advisory Board, presenting at the Student Voice Australia Symposium, October 2019

ENHANCING STUDENTS' DIGITAL EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

James Forde, Julie Peries, Jack Mason, Rheaa Thulasi Manoharan, Jose Ernesto Escobar Lema & Sarah Jeffrey

UQ Student Representation program

UQ's Student Representation program sits within the broader Student-Staff Partnerships program and provides support for over 300 student representatives at UQ. The program focuses on strengthening student representation in four key areas:

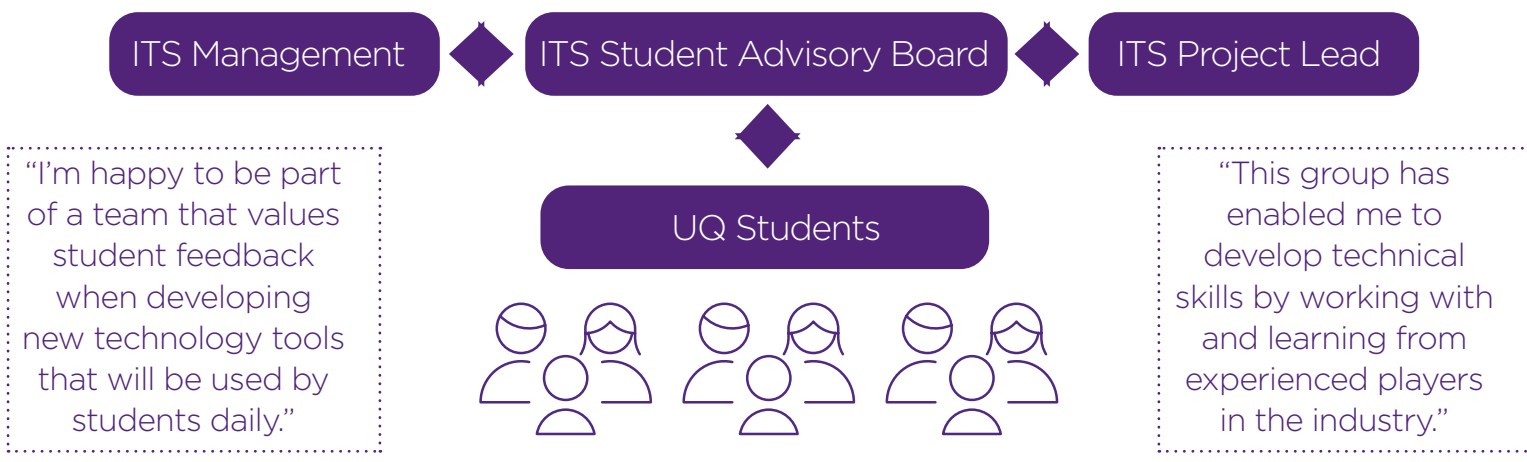**Recruitment** **Training** **Community Building** **Advocacy**

Re-thinking student representation at UQ

UQ's Student Representation program encourages and assists academic and professional divisions to question and, where appropriate, to move beyond traditional approaches to student representation and consulting student voices (such as committee representation and focus groups).

Case Study: UQ's ITS Digital Environment Advisory Board

In 2019, the Student Representation program collaborated with UQ's Information Technology Services Division (ITS) to implement the ITS Digital Environment Advisory Board. The student reps of this board were responsible for collecting wider student feedback on ITS projects via surveys, focus groups and informal feedback sessions. By inviting student reps to collect and analyse wider student feedback, ITS has ensured that any suggestions or recommendations made as a result of this feedback have been provided through a student-centred lens – a crucial step that is often missed in staff engagements with student voices.

ITS Management ◆ **ITS Student Advisory Board** ◆ **ITS Project Lead**

◆

UQ Students

"I'm happy to be part of a team that values student feedback when developing new technology tools that will be used by students daily."

"This group has enabled me to develop technical skills by working with and learning from experienced players in the industry."

8 Meetings
THE ADVISORY BOARD MET ONCE A FORTNIGHT FOR 16 WEEKS

6 Faculties
STUDENTS RECRUITED FROM ALL 6 FACULTIES INCLUDING DOMESTIC, INTERNATIONAL, UNDERGRAD & POSTGRAD STUDENTS

$1500
$1500 GRANTS OFFERED TO ALL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Partnerships
STUDENTS AND STAFF WORKED IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER TANGIBLE AND PRACTICAL OUTCOMES

10 Reps
10 STUDENT REPS WERE CHOSEN TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

Students collaborated on the following projects

UQ SPACES:
A mobile app that allows students to find study spaces on campus

STUDENT SERVICES WEBSITE:
The group helped redesign this essential website, to make it easier for students to navigate

FUTURE PROJECTS:
The group were approached by other divisions for their guidance on future projects

Student-Staff Partnerships
Learning & growing together

School of Information, Technology and Electrical Engineering (ITEE)

Stephen Viller (staff partner, School of ITEE) & Lorna Macdonald (staff partner, School of ITEE)

Following the introduction of the Bachelor of Computer Science in 2017, the School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering (ITEE) recognised the need to reduce the amount of overlap between the two programs and to shift the core of the Bachelor of Information Technology (BInfTech) curriculum towards a stronger focus on the Design of IT solutions. We wanted to engage more directly with students in the design of this curriculum, to get a better understanding of their

perspective on the new focus for the BInfTech.

Students are the key stakeholders in the design of a curriculum that should equip them for the future – in specialist knowledge and for life-long learning. Working together with students we can appreciate what it means to be on the other side of the teaching fence.

Co-designing with students, experts on what it means to be a student, ensures their insights and experiences are front and centre during the renewal process. As staff we have a richer appreciation of

the challenges students face, how they navigate their studies and the negotiations they make with the competing demands of their lives. We have discovered much about the decisions, trade-offs, concerns and hopes of students from and through our student partners.

Co-designing with staff, our student partners have a richer appreciation for the contexts academics operate within and the factors involved in curriculum development

> **"Working together with students we can appreciate what it means to be on the other side of the teaching fence"**

Faculty of Science

Emily McGuren (student partner, Faculty of Science)

I first heard about the Student-Staff Partnership program through my student partner who had told me about their previous project, which supported students on committees within the Faculty of Science. Following this, I became a student partner because I wanted to be engaged with a project that was going to directly impact my peers. Once commencing my first project, I quickly became aware of the opportunity our partnership team had to enhance the student experience. I have now been a part of two congruent projects that focused on creating resources to support the recruitment, induction and selection of student committee members, and support materials for committee chairs. Both of these projects have adaptability university-wide and we have already seen implementation of our projects, which has been a truly rewarding aspect of the partnership.

Although the prospect of collaborating with staff was initially intimidating, being a part of Student-Staff Partnerships has allowed me to develop a plethora of professional skills in order to achieve strategic and governance objectives. It has been an empowering experience to contribute to the functioning of the Faculty of Science as an undergraduate student. These projects have been a truly unique experience in which I have learnt to value my voice as a student, and gained the skills to tangibly enact change.

> **"It has been an empowering experience to contribute to the functioning of the Faculty of Science as an undergraduate student"**

Faculty of Medicine

Judit Kibedi (staff partner, School of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine)

Flexibility, being open minded and adaptive in our approach to a project, are, I believe, crucial for how we engage in authentic partnerships. There are a wealth of possibilities in what a partnership can look like, more than just what we may envisage when formulating a project idea. I realised this whilst participating in my second SSP, which culminated in Student Partners taking on three different roles as the project evolved: consultants, co-creators and co-researchers. From what I initially thought students would contribute, to the broader expertise I found they

could actually bring, by being flexible we elevated the value of this project beyond its initial conception. At the same time, it is important to have a clear goal that is articulated in the first place, and which you as an academic, know will be overall feasible to achieve. So, in designing a potential project, take into account the operational and logistical constraints, and funnel the scope of your project idea to within the range that students will be able to contribute and co-create.

Flexibility is also crucial, given our partnerships are as much about forming relationships as the project outputs. At some stage in a project, we may all experience feelings of Imposter Syndrome,

both students and staff, and even students amongst each other. For example, I wondered, will students really allow me into their world? Meanwhile, one of my student partners wondered this about his fellow students! Effectively navigating through the initial stages of a project to establish meaningful relationships will lead to a much more genuine investment by both partners.

> "There is a wealth of possibilities in what a partnership can look like, more than just what we may envisage when formulating a project idea."

Art by Bradley Parfrement (2019)

School of Languages and Cultures

Franciele Spinelli (student partner, School of Languages and Cultures)

Hello everyone, my name is Franciele Spinelli. I am a student partner who has engaged in three different partnership projects across the School of Languages and Cultures. Very recently, I have joined the second Student-Staff Partnership Showcase, where I collaborated in opening the event and presented about one of my partnership projects. The main theme discussed throughout the showcase was how to empower students and staff through partnerships. Within this topic, there were presentations, workshops, grouping activities and networking moments to discuss the advantages and challenges partnerships might have, as well as how to approach partnerships in a more effective way. I can highlight that the opportunity to participate in such an inspiring event helped me feel more empowered and confident to participate not only in the university community, but also at the Australian society. I was

definitely encouraged to speak up and position myself and I felt as a valued student/society member even though I am not from Australia and my first language is not English. This was definitely a valuable experience to reflect, share and, most importantly, co-construct knowledge while building my communication, academic and professional skills. I learnt more about which and how the skills gained through partnership can build my professional profile and enhance my employability competencies. I also had the chance to network with Shelley Kinash (University of Southern Queensland) as well as students and staff from different backgrounds. Their ideas about partnerships are inspirational and strengthen my own understanding of what SSP projects involve. After the event, I feel more motivated to continue engaging in partnerships and contributing to the transformation of the university where I study and the community that I am currently part of.

Feature Story
The SSP Showcase

On 30 September 2019 the Partnerships team hosted the annual Student-Staff Partnerships Showcase at the St Lucia campus, which saw over 40 UQ students and staff present.

This event hosted 95 students, staff and community members from The University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Griffith, Swinburne and Tel Aviv University, and shone a light on practices that can build the abilities of staff and students to engage in truly meaningful partnerships; and, crucially, to ensure that these partnerships have a lasting and sustainable impact on a university.

The Showcase hosted 95 students, staff and community members from across Australia

Student-Staff Partnerships
Learning to lead

Upendo Lisa Mseka (student representative, School of Public Health)

Attending the Student Voice Summit this year was a great experience for me as a student representative. Through the various activities organised, I learned what it means to be a student leader, the qualities of a good student leader and the importance of student input into decision-making and partnerships. I was also able to share my experiences from my current student-staff partnership with other student representatives and learn from theirs as well.

After attending the summit, I was more confident in communicating with my peers as well as with the faculty members within our committee. The workshops allowed me to look at different, more authentic and effective approaches to student partnerships, in order to enhance the student experience. I could draw on the features of partnerships in other institutions and apply them to the partnership that I am involved in.

Having the opportunity to share this experience with other student leaders and engaging in conversations and discussions, allowed me to further develop my communication and interpersonal skills. A fair share of the workshops required us to work as a team with people from different backgrounds. As a future public health practitioner, I will be involved in multi-sectoral and culturally diverse collaborations and this gave me insight into effective teamwork and communication.

> **"I learned what it means to be a student leader, the qualities of a good student leader, and the importance of student input into decision-making and partnerships"**

> **"The SaP project has further affirmed my understanding of students as innovative thought leaders and tomorrow's change agents"**

Kristen Lyons (staff partner, School of Social Science)

Our Students as Partners (SaP) project aimed to develop Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities for students enrolled in the Master of Development Practice (MDP). The student partners led research with students, alumni and industry professionals to ensure introduced WIL experiences will align with students' needs and aspirations. They also designed and led qualitative research to identify what students' practice-based experiences are appropriate to support students' professional development.

The five student partners have flourished over this semester; as organisers, facilitators and researchers. It has been a delight to step back from my typical role as research leader and project manager, and in so doing create space for students to lead, and to watch them and myself be transformed through this process. By having a critical group conversation at the beginning of this program, we were able to learn about each of our current skills, as well as where each of the student partners wanted to be pushed to their edge to cultivate new skills and competencies. Through this conversation, I was given permission to encourage students as they stepped into what were sometimes uncomfortable and/or stressful roles to enable them to develop new skills.

Our SaP experience has affirmed to me the benefits that come from letting go from the need to control the research process, and centering those who will be most impacted by research outcomes. In this instance, this meant enabling students to drive research to identify how, and what, practice based experiences can best support professional development for students enrolled in the MDP. As part of this student driven approach, including ensuring appropriate attribution to all those involved in the production of knowledge, the student partners are also invited to co-publish the research derived from this project. This SaP project has further affirmed my understanding of students as innovative thought leaders and tomorrow's change agents for social and environmental justice.

School of Biomedical Sciences

Victor Hasa (student partner, School of Biomedical Sciences)

Engaging in Student-Staff Partnerships has enhanced my employability in many different ways. Personally, they enhanced my teamwork skills, along with allowing me to develop my time management skills in balancing working part-time and my final year of study. Additionally, I was able to draw upon my experience of Student-Staff Partnerships in the interviews I conducted towards the end of my degree with potential employers. These partnerships are unique in the sense that they do not necessarily need to be related to a particular field of study, therefore making them great not only for personal development, but also as an addition to any resume.

A lot has happened since finishing being a student partner, along with finishing my degree. I was honoured to have been awarded the Kelly Services Future Scientist award in Queensland at the end of 2018, and upon graduating, I have gone on to work at KPMG in a field that is vastly different from my degree (Bachelor of Science (Hons)). Reflecting on the Student-Staff Partnership experience, I have a lot of fond memories of my time spent planning events and brainstorming and implementing new ideas into the partnerships I was involved in.

If you're a student looking to make change whilst at university, or a staff member looking for student insights regarding the student experience, I highly recommend getting involved in a Student-Staff Partnership, not only for the personal benefits they have provided me, but also in the benefits they bring to the UQ community as a whole.

> **"If you're a student looking to make change whilst at university, or a staff member looking for the student insights regarding the student experience, I highly recommend getting involved in a Student-Staff Partnership, not only for the personal benefits they have provided me, but also in the benefits they bring to the UQ community as a whole"**

Student-Staff Partnerships
How to get involved

1. Student Involvement

Be a student representative

Opportunities to become a UQ student representative exist across many of the school, faculty and operational units at the University.

As student reps usually serve on their committee, advisory board or working group for 1 year (over two semesters), recruitment for 2020 will take place in February/March of 2020.

You can find opportunities advertised on the SSP website[1] or via UQ Union's Academic Advocacy Network[2]

Alternatively, if your program, school or faculty already has a student representative, talk to them directly to find out how they got involved!

Be a student partner

Each year there are four rounds in which students can either submit a project idea in partnership with a staff member, or apply to be a partner on already approved projects.

Students can complete an application via our website to apply for a project in which they would like to partner. Student applications are then reviewed by the project lead, before shortlisted students are made an offer.

You can find more information on timelines and what it means to be a student partner by visiting our webpage.

2. Staff Involvement

How to recruit student reps

Staff members can contact the SSP team to discuss the best methods of how students might be representatives within your school, faculty or division.

For example, you may want to work with student representatives on your committee or advisory group, or you may be considering a representative system for a course or program of study.

To submit a request for recruitment, please complete the short application form found on our webpage

Or for guidance on what system of student representation may be most appropriate, contact the SSP team: SSP@uq.edu.au

How to become a staff partner

Staff (and students) can submit project ideas for four project rounds in 2020. The projects will seek to enhance the overall UQ student experience in either of the following three streams: Teaching and Learning, Governance and Strategy or Student Experience.

Project ideas are submitted via an application form on our webpage, and the timelines for each round (including submission deadlines) can be found via the SSP website.

If you would like to discuss your project idea further, please contact the SSP team by emailing SSP@uq.edu.au.

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1. Student-Staff Partnerships Website: https://employability.uq.edu.au/student-staff-partnerships
2. UQ Union Academic Advocacy Network: https://www.uqu.com.au/representing-u/academic-advocacy-network

Good listen!
God at communical

"Student-Staff Partnerships are a launchpad for students with an idea to improve the UQ community as they encourage direct collaboration between people that may not have had the opportunity to otherwise partner on large-scale projects. I feel very fortunate to have been involved in a large variety of partnership projects within my first two years of study as I strongly believe in the sense of empowerment and connection that the SSP program gives to the student community."

Shaun McAnally, Student Partner & Representative, Faculty of Science

UQ Student Affairs Division

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