

16 July 2020

SSP Project Evaluation 2019



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Executive Summary

Context and Aims of Report

Building upon Associate Professor Kelly Mathew's research and National Fellowship, along with the 2016/2017 Student as Partners pilot program, the Student-Staff Partnership (SSP) program was established at The University of Queensland in 2018. The SSP program aims empower students and staff to collaborate as equal partners in the enhancement of the student experience. Since its establishment, over a thousand students and staff members have engaged in SSP Projects.

This evaluative report was created to support the continuous improvement of the SSP Projects program, specifically in response to feedback provided by members of the community. Overall, this report explores and unpacks the motivations, impacts and challenges that students and staff partners have experienced through their engagement in a range of SSP projects. Recommended improvements for the program that participants indicated are provided, along with a response from the SSP Project team.

Methodology

A mixed methodology was adopted where students and staff partners participated in focus groups and/or completed a survey. In total, 46 participants provided their insights across 22 focus groups, and 40 respondents completed the survey. The data collected was analysed through an iterative, manual process of independent analysis, and a coding template was collaboratively developed to identify the key themes and sub-themes.

Findings and Recommendations

Four main findings emerged as a result of the research process, including: (1) motivations for joining the SSP Projects program; (2) impacts that the program has had on the personal and professional development of participants'; (3) challenges that participants experienced through engaging in partnership; and (4) recommended improvements to enhance the SSP Projects program¹.

Based on the analysis of the survey and focus group data, coupled with the report co-authors personal experiences of engaging in partnership, five recommendations to enhance the program are identified. These include:

- 1) Provide greater flexibility with the inductions;
- 2) Develop a mid-way survey to check-in with students and staff partners and provide support on demand;
- 3) Create a support resource for current partners, such as a handbook;
- 4) Redevelop the retrospective report; and
- 5) Develop workshops on the partnership ethos.

The SSP Projects team responded to the recommendations provided by the report co-authors, including the measures that have been implemented and future actions that will take place to ensure the continuous improvement of the program².

¹ This report is limited in that it is not an investigation of the SSP program as a whole, but rather focuses on the challenges experienced by the participants of the SSP Projects program. Thus, this report does not extend to reviewing the staffing required for the successful implementation of the program.

² See Table 4 for the SSP Projects team's response table.

Table of Acronyms

Throughout the report specific terminology and acronyms have been used, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Acronyms used in the report

Acronym	Term
BEL	Faculty of Business, Economics and Law
CoP	Community of Practice
EAIT	Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology
HABS	Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences
HASS	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
HE	Higher Education
SaP	Student as Partners
SSP	Student-Staff Partnerships
UQ	The University of Queensland
UQU	University of Queensland Union

Note from the authors

This report is the result of a collaborative work among three student partners and representatives. A member from the Student-Staff Partnership (SSP) team advised the co-authors on the report structure, but was not involved in the data collection, iterative analysis or recommendations.

Introduction

Drawing upon the wide-scale adoption of the SSP program at The University of Queensland (UQ), this report details the main findings of an evaluation of this program completed in 2019. This report explores and unpacks some of the impacts that student and staff partners have experienced through their engagement in a range of SSP Projects. This report consists of: (1) An introduction to the concept of partnership as well as the Student as Partners (SaP) ethos, and an overview of the SSP program at UQ; (2) The methodological approach of the evaluation; (3) The key findings of the evaluation with respect to the motivations, impacts, challenges and recommendations for the program offered by student and staff participants; and (4) A response section in which the SSP team addresses both the measures that have already been implemented and the future actions that will take place based on the report findings. All stakeholders within the Partnerships Community, particularly staff and student partners, are encouraged to read and engage with this report.

1. Background information

This section provides a brief overview on the concept of partnership as well as the Student as Partners (SaP) ethos, and an outline of the historical underpinnings of the SSP program at UQ.

1.1 What is partnership?

SSP practices within the Higher Education (HE) sector is a well-established concept (Bovill, 2019; Healey, 2012; Matthews, 2016). Despite the vast array of literature on the topic, many authors agree on the definition of partnership as a collaborative work among students and staff towards a common educational goal (Matthews, 2016).

Seen as an effective and authentic way to work in collaboration, partnership goes beyond the notion of teamwork. It encompasses the idea of equal contribution, responsibility and, most importantly, mutual learning (Bovill, 2019). Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten (2014, p. 6-7) define partnership as a “reciprocal process”, in which all participants are given space and equal opportunities to contribute. This relies on

staff members relinquishing notions of power and authority as well as embracing that they are also learners in the process. In other words, partnership challenges the widespread assumption of academic staff as “superiors” or sole experts.

A constructivist view of learning is adopted in which staff members’ and students’ roles are uniformly important. Rather than staff acting as leaders, there is mutual commitment and shared responsibility. Students do not simply work for staff and/or provide them with feedback, they participate, co-create and act as change agents (Dunne, 2016). One of the key reasons for working in partnership is based on the assumption that students can achieve enhanced learning outcomes when they are actively involved in their own learning, instead of being passive knowledge receivers (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014).

It is important to highlight that although the notion of equal contribution is supported, partnership recognises members’ different areas of expertise and interest (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014). Each of the partnership team members is encouraged to contribute in accordance with their strengths while working with others and reaching outcomes. Partnership also reinforces the idea of enhancing the overall student experience through a variety of perspectives provided by different partners (Healey, 2012). Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) acknowledges that partnership should expand beyond individual student and staff members to also include the broader HE Community.

Finally, partnership can be understood as more than just reaching an outcome; it is rather a learning process. In accordance with Healey, et al. (2014), engaging in partnership goes beyond the completion of a project. Most importantly, partnership involves the process and the actions taken to the achievement of the established goals. Partnership seeks to reduce the barriers between students and staff, having the potential to transform the perspectives and experiences of partners in the entire process.

1.2 The Student-Staff Partnership program history at UQ

Over the past ten years, there has been increasing recognition of the value and impact of partnership in creating and fostering inclusive learning outcomes (Bovill 2019; Healey, 2012). In 2015, Associate Professor Kelly Matthews was recognised as a leader in SaP, after being awarded an Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching Fellowship into SaP³. This Fellowship sought to explore students’ insights and voices in the reformulation of science course curricula, with the goal of enhancing the learning experience of students.

Building upon Matthews’ body of work, eleven SaP pilot projects were supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in 2017, aiming to investigate what a university-wide SaP program could resemble. At the conclusion of the pilot projects, a business case for the creation of the SSP program at UQ was developed by an external consultant, to be funded through Student Strategy. As detailed in Figure 1, the SSP program was launched and has evolved throughout the years, with funding for the period of May 2018 to December 2020.



Figure 1: The SSP journey at UQ

³ For more information on Associate Professor Kelly Matthew’s work, please refer to this [website](#)

1.3 The SSP program outline

The SSP program aims to create a cultural transformation at UQ whereby students and staff connect as equal partners and collaborators in shaping and enhancing the UQ student experience.

The SSP program consists of three main strands, including:

- (1) [Student Representation](#): This strand aims to enhance the mechanisms of student representation already occurring at UQ through a) providing training for student representatives on committees and working groups, and b) supporting staff in the recruitment of student representatives;
- (2) [Student Voices](#): Support is provided to schools to enhance practices related to eliciting student feedback;
- (3) [Partnership Projects](#): Students and staff collaborate in partnership projects which seek to improve the overall student experience.

This evaluation report focuses on the Partnership Projects (otherwise referred to as SSP Projects) strand only. Projects from this strand typically occur over a 13-week period, and fall within three overarching categories, which consist of:

- [Teaching and learning](#): redesigning or developing curriculum and pedagogical advice/consulting;
- [Student Experience](#): co-facilitating or evaluating activities/programs related to the academic, non-academic and social aspects of the UQ student experience;
- [Governance and Strategy](#): co-authoring university strategies and policies and co-developing support mechanisms for student representatives.

In order to enable conversations among members from the three strands of the SSP program (Student Representation, Student Voices and Partnership Projects), the Community of Practice (CoP)⁴ was created. The aim is to support, discuss and reflect on the implementation of SSP Projects across UQ. At CoP meetings, which convene twice a semester, the Partnership Community is given the opportunity to share their experiences of partnership and representation, pose challenging

⁴ More information about SSP events, including the CoP can be found [here](#)

questions, receive feedback and contribute to the iterative development of the program. In the last CoP meeting of 2019, the mission statement and core values of the SSP program were co-created, as indicated below.

Mission statement:

The SSP 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.

SSP program core values:

Collaboration, Creativity, Engaged Community, Growth and Respect.

2. Methodology

This section details the methodological approach adopted for the evaluation of the SSP program, including a description of the participants, the data collection methods and the analysis procedures.

2.1 Research Approach

In order to elicit feedback from the SSP Community, a mixed methodology was adopted where students and staff partners were invited to participate in a focus group and/or complete a survey. During 2019, 22 focus groups were facilitated, which explored partners' views on the motivations, impacts, challenges and recommendations for the SSP program. These consisted of 9 staff and 13 student focus groups, which had between one to four participants. Different questions were devised for staff and student focus groups schedules (see Appendices 1 and 2, respectively). The facilitators of these focus groups were former student and staff partners. Prior to facilitating these focus groups, the co-facilitators were provided

with the focus group schedule, and met with the lead investigator to discuss the research and evaluation protocols.

Participants were advised that their participation was voluntary and that they were able to withdraw at any time. Apart from being verbally informed on the research purpose, the participants were provided with a project information sheet (see Appendix 3) and a consent form (see Appendix 4). Students completed a demographics questionnaire, which was used to compare the SSP Project experiences for different student cohorts (see Appendix 5). At the conclusion of the focus groups, students received a \$10 UQ Union (UQU) voucher. Staff were not given any compensation for their participation.

A survey was also distributed in 2018 (semester two) and 2019 (semester one and two), which was completed by 40 respondents. The survey sought to elicit partners' perspectives not only on how the SSP program could be improved but also on the challenges and impacts of engaging in a SSP Project (see Appendix 6). The survey completion was voluntary and was disseminated to student and staff partners at the conclusion of their projects. Ethics clearance was obtained for this research and evaluation project (UQ Clearance: 2018001275).

2.2 Participants

Participants of this evaluation included student and staff partners who had collaborated on SSP Projects at UQ, anytime between May 2018 to November 2019. A total sample of 46 participants ($n = 23$ staff and $n = 23$ students), from a diverse range of backgrounds i.e. nationalities, faculties and level of study, among others, engaged in the focus groups.

With respect to the student focus groups, 56.5% of the participants identified as domestic ($n = 13$) and 43.5% as international students ($n = 10$). Of the 23 students, 74% were female ($n = 17$) and 26% were male ($n = 6$). The study year levels of the student participants ranged with 44% of participants in their third year or above ($n = 10$), 39% in their second year ($n = 9$), 13% in their first year ($n = 3$) and 4% who had already graduated ($n = 1$). As illustrated in Figure 2, whilst all faculties were

represented in the student focus group demographics, an extensive number of students were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS).

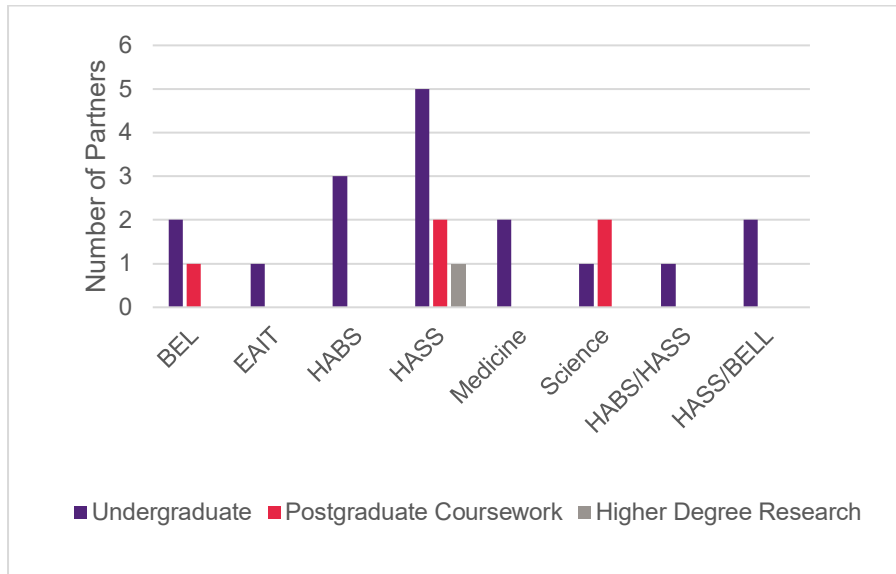


Figure 2: Focus group student numbers across faculties and course levels

From the 23 staff focus groups, 74% of the participants were professional ($n = 17$) and 26% were academic members ($n = 6$). Similar to the numbers from the student focus groups, 87% of the staff were female ($n = 20$), with only 13% male participants ($n = 3$). Staff came from a diverse range of faculties as shown in Figure 3, with Science and EAIT staff not being represented.

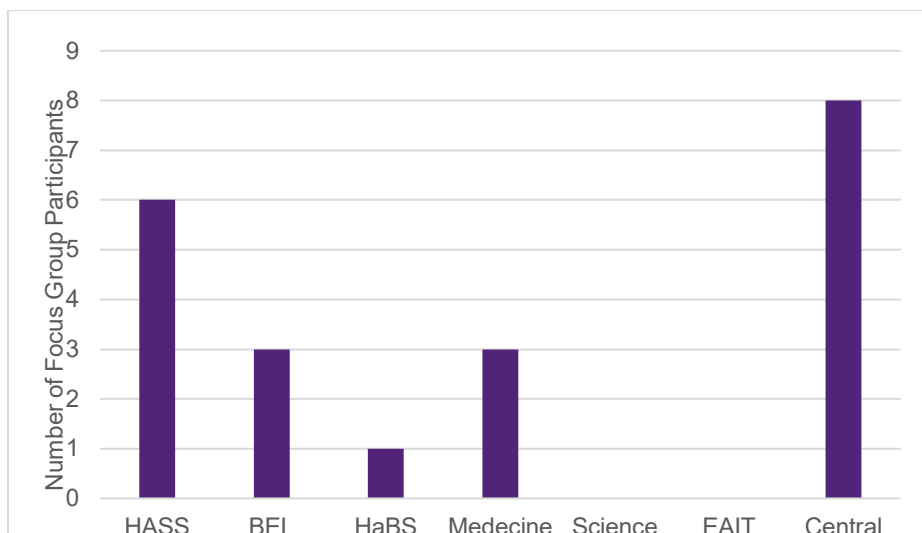


Figure 3: Focus groups staff numbers across different faculties

In terms of the survey participants, 22 students and 18 staff members completed it. Of the student respondents, 12 identified as undergraduate (including honours), 7 identified as postgraduate (coursework) and 3 respondents identified as postgraduate research (including Higher Degree by Research). Of the staff respondents, 14 were professional and 4 were academic staff members.

It is worth mentioning that whilst the participants sample size was relatively small both in the focus groups and the surveys, this evaluation captured the overall diversity of those engaged in the SSP Projects program.

2.3 Data analysis

Two independent research assistants undertook the data analysis to ensure the inter-rater reliability of the evaluation. Staff members of the SSP team were not involved in the analysis process so that the evaluation was not biased. The data was analysed through an iterative, manual process of independent analysis. This process consisted of (1) Independent coding of five randomly selected transcripts in order to identify the main themes and; (2) Meetings to discuss and cross-check the emerging themes. From the comparison between the analysers, four main themes emerged (1) motivations, (2) impact, (3) challenges and (4) recommended improvements for the SSP Projects program. A coding template was collaboratively developed, where key themes, sub themes and sub-sub themes were identified. Notes were also taken throughout the process to highlight any salient themes.

A Summer Research Scholar later joined the team. The scholar's role included: ensuring the inter-rater reliability of the process; thematically code the survey qualitative responses; and co-author the evaluation report.

2.4 Limitations

Three main limitations of this evaluation are acknowledged by the report authors. Firstly, the small sample size ($n = 46$ focus groups participants and $n = 38$ survey participants) might have limited the range of the SSP Project participants' views of

the program. However, despite the small population, the demographics were representative of the broader SSP Project Community at UQ in terms of study areas, gender and discipline, among others. Secondly, an inconsistency in the quality of the focus groups facilitation was also evident, which could have impacted the responses and the data analysis. This could have been due to a lack of experience or knowledge of focus group facilitation. The final limitation was related to the survey design. A lack of demographic questions resulted in shortcomings on the data analysis due to limited ability in profiling the participants.

3. Findings

This section details the main findings related to the (1) motivations (2) impact (3) challenges and (4) recommended improvements for the SSP Project program that the participants indicated in the research.

3.1 Motivations

In the focus groups and survey, student and staff participants identified different factors that led them to join the SSP Project program. These motivations ranged from: personal and professional reasons; being recommended by their peers/colleagues and; the external support available through the SSP Project program framework. In contrast to the findings of Acai et al. (2017), this evaluation revealed that staff's and students' motivations for joining SSP Projects overlapped in many different ways. This is indicated in Figure 4, which demonstrates the key motivators for students and staff in joining SSP Projects. In responding the survey question "what was your motivation for becoming a student or staff partner", it was significant to note that students' and staff's most frequently selected options were "collaborating to enhance the student experience" and "impacting the student experience". For staff respondents, the third most frequently selected response was "shaping the curriculum". It is unsurprising that whilst 40% of students indicated "financial support" was a motivation, staff respondents did not select this option.

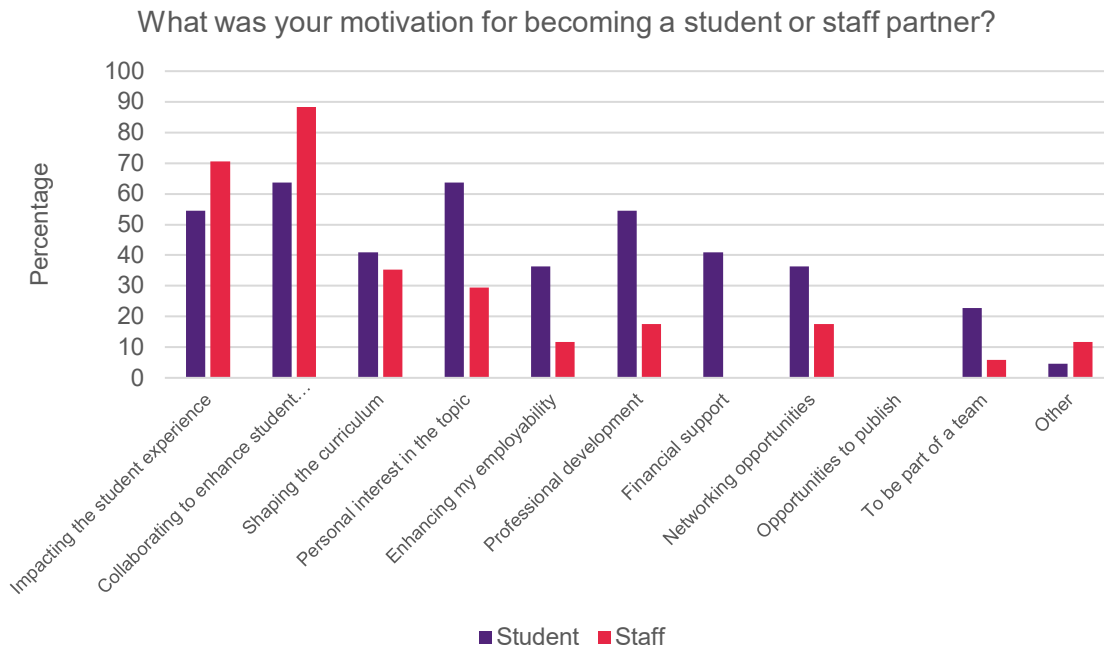


Figure 4: Students' and staff's survey responses on their motivations to join the SSP Project program

One of the most notable findings of this evaluation was that across the survey and focus group responses, both students and staff indicated intrinsic, extrinsic and pedagogic motivations as a critical reason for their involvement in the program, which aligns to the findings of Acai et al. (2017) and Healey et al. (2014). This often manifested as students and staff participants discussed about their personal aspirations to provide insights to projects related to improving teaching and learning practices. The participants were compelled to utilise their skills and expertise to the enhancement of the student experience and to make the HE more accessible and inclusive.

In the focus groups, students expressed that having an influence on the improvement of courses, programs or university-wide initiatives that they had been dissatisfied with in the past proved to be a meaningful opportunity. According to them, rather than simply complaining, the SSP Project program enabled them to actively and constructively engage in the revision and/or the reconstruction of different teaching and learning practices and leave a legacy that would impact their future peers. Students noted that their engagement in the program allowed them to make a tangible difference in ensuring that students' main needs were targeted, and that services and curricula were developed from a student-centered lens.

Similar to the findings of Healey et al. (2014), staff claimed that their involvement in the SSP Projects was due to their desire to enhance not only the student experience but also to create more meaningful and student-oriented materials, courses and initiatives. They understood SSP Projects as a learning space, where they were able to better understand and reflect upon how to cater to students' real struggles, necessities and interests. Staff indicated that they were inclined towards partnership due to its safe and friendly approach, in which students were able to freely express and discuss their ideas and perspectives in the revitalisation of courses and content.

The SSP Project program was also seen as an opportunity to participate in professional development activities, which is consistent with other literature in the field (Healey et al., 2014). Student partners showed to be highly engaged with SSP Projects as a way to search for new and meaningful ways to interact with the university and its staff members. Student participants explained that the engaging and collaborating with experienced staff members was critical to their learning experience at UQ. Additionally, joining SSP Projects was compelling as it provided students with a unique opportunity to enhance their skills by having a practical experience before entering the workforce. In fact, students identified that since their partnership experience, they have a desire to further engage with the UQ Community in order to create positive and fruitful relationships with other students and staff. Bovill (2019) claims that the creation of positive relationships through partnerships result in a greater experience and an enhanced sense of connection with the university community.

Student and staff participants indicated that knowing other people who had previously been involved in partnership Projects was also a great incentive to join the program. Whereas staff reported that hearing positive experiences from colleagues would make them more inclined towards SSP Projects, students would often be encouraged by their lecturers' or friends' positive experiences as former partners. Additionally, participants explained that during some of the events hosted by the SSP team they were encouraged to join the program by hearing about the experiences of other partners and their inspiring projects.

Finally, external support was seen as an incentive for both students and staff. The financial support provided to students through the grant payments was considered as a complimentary motivator, often in parallel with other factors. Students revealed

that although being driven by monetary factors at the first instance, the experience and the opportunity to improve their work and field-related skills was more influential. Interestingly, staff participants of the focus groups also identified that having the means to financially support students was an important motivator. Moreover, staff identified that the administrative scheme and support offered by the program were other key factors in their decision to become involved. According to the staff participants, having an official partnership framework was important to offer students an authentic way to be engaged within university initiatives.

Evidence of some of these motivations are exemplified in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' and staff's motivations sample quotes

Staff partner	Student partner
<p>A common question is, well, what do the students think? And student-staff partnership was an awesome way for me to work directly with students and co-create with students something that would be more effective and more meaningful and more useful for them.</p>	<p>I think just to make a difference. That's my biggest reason why I probably want to do it, is to make a difference at the university and for other students who now can have opportunities that I didn't get.</p>
<p>I decided to become a staff partner because of that event last year where we saw so many examples about revitalizing projects and revitalizing courses. And we were going to redo [a course] with a new textbook and a new online presence. So, I thought it would be great to get students' voice and learn from them as well.</p>	<p>But for me personally it was just still being engaged with the UQ Community and obviously engaging with teachers who are now staff partners with me, that really helped me.</p>
	<p>I like to know I get to leave my little input in the slides that a student is going to be seeing for a long time.</p>

3.2 Impacts

In the survey and focus groups, student and staff discussed about the positive impacts of partnership. Describing it as a singular and rewarding opportunity, the participants illustrated how their participation in SSP Projects had affected them both personally and professionally. Similar to the positive outcomes of partnership discussed by Bovill (2019) and Cook-Sather (2014), students and staff revealed their overwhelmingly positive experiences, ranging from more personal reasons, such as the development of empathy, relationships and confidence to more tangible outcomes such as employment opportunities and skills development.

The focus group participants expressed that the development of SSP Projects has had notable impacts in the university system, referred as a 'cultural change' by Matthews et al. (2018). According to students and staff participants, their involvement in SSP Projects has represented a significant shift in traditional educational pedagogy approaches, which is consistent with the literature in the theme. As Healey and Healey (2019) and Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) argue, partnerships challenge the traditional power hierarchies that exist within the HE sector, creating a sense of equality between students and staff. This was revealed by participants who discussed experiencing shifting roles within their partnership teams; as their collaborative work evolved, staff were able to recognise students as valuable collaborators, on the same level as their professional colleagues. Student participants spoke of the pride that they felt from having a course or orientation programs they had co-designed integrated into the university. Students further elaborated on how this involvement in the university life allowed them to develop a sense of identity and perceive themselves as "more than just a student", which aligns with the findings of Cook-Sather et al. (2014).

Another impact revealed by the focus group participants was related to the breakthrough of long-established assumptions. Staff reported to have had their beliefs about students' contributions challenged by engaging with students in an authentic and open manner. This often related to preconceived ideas about the experiences of students, how they learn and what they expect from their university experience. The reflection on their partnership experience allowed staff to notice that students have to be acknowledged as unique individuals, whose skills may differ and

may even rest outside of what is expected from them. For students, their involvement in SSP Projects allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of the processes, policies and procedures that govern university operations. Student participants identified to have gained valuable insights into the behind-the-scenes work that staff undertake at university and appreciated gaining a greater understanding of the rationales for why certain actions are taken. As Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) argue, partnerships promote an increased sense of collegiality between students and staff whereby both parties develop a better understanding of the other's experiences, perspectives and roles.

The impact of the SSP Project program to the culture of the wider university community is well cited by the survey and focus group participants. Both staff and students mentioned the repercussions of making the difference in the university, and how their involvement augmented their sense of belonging to the UQ Community, which can be comparable to the findings of Healey et al. (2014). There was also an emphasis on how the networks made with other staff and students transformed how they interacted with the university and their sense of "community" in general. Furthermore, participants acknowledged how they took the partnership ethos with them into their own practice outside of the program. For instance, staff mentioned that the partnership model and mindset was not only influential in the scope of their project, but that they will also continue to reflect on the ways that they engage with students and other staff in the future. While interviewing 16 students and staff working in SSP Projects across 11 different Australian universities, Matthews et al. (2018) found that partnerships that are grounded in a mutual learning model, do result in a shift in partners' identities and an enhanced ability to articulate their thoughts, perspectives and work-related goals.

One of the most salient outcomes of the SSP Projects discussed by both the students and staff participants was the development of students' employability capabilities and graduate attributes, which is similar to the findings of Dickerson, Jarvis and Stockwell (2016) and Mello (2017). Students spoke of their partnership experience as an ideal place for collaborative and mutual learning. Not only did they collaborate with others, but they also gained greater confidence in their personal and professional capabilities. Students claimed to feel more prepared to tackle the next steps after their graduation, and staff also observed students' growth both in their

own self-assurance and competence during the course of the project. The survey participants identified a wide range of employability capabilities developed through their involvement in SSP Projects, including: *Confidence, communication skills, critical thinking, digital skills, field-related skills, flexibility and adaptability, leadership, negotiation skills, planning, presentation skills, problem solving, responsibility, teamwork, time management, work with diversity and writing skills.*

The networks established through the SSP Projects were highly valued by student and staff partners. Students explained that apart from having their staff partners as their professional references, they have also created a great relationship with other highly engaged and competent students. Student partners placed particular value on these networks as they were often the first professional contact they had been able to establish. Staff also reported the value of the personal relationships that arose from the partnerships and how this has provided them with opportunities for mentorship as well as changed their own sense of belonging at the university. One interesting impact that arose from the focus groups was the particular impact that SSP Projects involvement had on international students. According to these students, the partnership enabled them to create individual connections that helped them become more aware of the Australian culture, particularly related to work-related norms and expectations. They consider the SSP Projects as a safe and friendly approach to be exposed to the Australian workforce for the first time.

Although much of the literature on SSP highlights the impacts of partnerships on students' professional development (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Dickerson, et al. 2016; Mello, 2017), interestingly, staff participants acknowledged the significant influence that partnerships have had on their own work-related skills. Staff participants discussed that through engaging in SSP Projects they had an opportunity to develop their leadership and feedback capabilities. Additionally, staff explained that the SSP Projects encouraged them to adopt new forms of communication styles and methodological approaches, ensuring that their courses and communications were more inclusive for all students, particularly international students.

Evidence of some of these impacts are exemplified in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' and staff's impacts sample quotes

Staff partner	Student partner
<p>The connection to the student view is invaluable. While we researched as part of the project, I personally got just as much learning through speaking with my team each week.</p>	<p>[SSP] generates mutual trust, collegiality, a sense of belonging to the university, respect among peers and staff, insight into other people's perspectives and experiences.</p>
<p>Collaborating and co-creating with students has brought fresh ideas and creativity to the project. As a staff member, I have grown in terms of my leadership capacity and ability to provide constructive feedback. It was also rewarding to help and watch student partners grow and develop their employability skills throughout the project cycle.</p>	<p>This program has so many benefits. Not only does it develop professionalism and other attributes that are vital for the corporate arena, but it also enhances student employability by providing student partners with a competitive edge. Furthermore, the program enables a student voice in bettering the wider UQ student experience, which is vastly rewarding.</p>
<p>I think the only thing that's really changed would be what I understood or what I perceived the students would bring to the partnership has been a lot broader and deeper than I expected.</p>	<p>[...] The SSP initiative is really why I feel confident that I can take that next step after I graduate. [...] because of this initiative I have gained so many employable skills, I feel confidence in myself that I can do things, that I can approach people, talk to them, network, write reports, run focus groups [...]. For me, it's been less about building the skills and maybe more about knowing that I have got the skills and giving hard examples to future employers.</p>

3.3 Challenges

For staff, students, and indeed, the university itself, a variety of challenges have been experienced while navigating through partnership, which is consistent with previous studies (Bovill, 2019; Cook-Sather, 2014; Healey et al., 2014). Despite the diversity in the nature of the challenges raised by both the survey and focus group participants, many were recurrent and overlapped in several different aspects.

One of the main challenges posed by both students and staff was related to time poverty. Given the time and effort necessary to establish a trustworthy partnership and develop a successful project, partnerships indeed take student and staff partners a great allocation of their time and energy. In fact, if insufficient time is given, the partnership dynamics and/or the projects outcome might be negatively impacted (Marquis, Black, & Healey, 2017). Issues such as incompatible and busy schedules as well as the absence of a realistic scope were seen as the most frequent challenges encountered by the participants. Both students and staff reported the challenge of completing projects within the typical university semester dates and juggling work and study-related commitments in conjunction with their SSP Project. Students explained that the slowdown of communication and productivity among team members around exams, and the lack of engagement of the wider student body at certain times of the semester or year were sometimes obstacles to their project success.

Connected to the challenge of time management, participants often spoke about the difficulties in communicating with each other and external stakeholders/collaborators. Students and staff explained that locating a suitable communication and sharing-file tool for all the parties was usually a complex, time-consuming and even frustrating task. While the use of emails was a burden to the partnership nature of work and collaboration, the adoption of social media caused discomfort and a sense of unprofessionalism. This was augmented with the presence of team members from different backgrounds, whose access to specific digital tools and social media platforms usually varied to a great extent.

The collection of feedback from the wider student body was a recurring challenge for the participants. Students reported their struggle to receive responses from the community and other students and, consequently, the difficulty to complete their

projects. The absence of UQ official platforms for feedback collection (i.e. people not trusting their private Facebook accounts to be legitimate or trustworthy), the lack of understanding of the most appropriate times for student engagement and the difficulty in procuring incentives for participants were some of the factors that impacted their SSP Project development.

A variety of expectations and misconceptions held by staff and students were another common challenge for participants. This was often manifested when partners mistakenly understood their partnership as a staff-led process or an employment contract. As Marquis et al. (2017) argue, the unfamiliarity with the partnership process and difficulty in deciding who is going to take more responsibility in the project may cause tensions within the group, resulting in partners' dissatisfaction. This was revealed when staff expected students to have certain skills that they sometimes did not, which often impacted the outcomes of the project. Students also identified that relinquishing power dynamics was sometimes difficult, especially when staff expressed desirable outcomes, expectations and deliverables in which they disagreed.

Conversely, similar to the findings of Marquis et al. (2017), participants also reported that in other circumstances there was a misconception that the project was to be student-led, which relate to the findings of Marquis et al. (2017). While staff admitted having purposefully stepped back to enable the student partners to drive the projects, students often interpreted this as the staff member's disinterest and/or shortage of time. This led to students feeling frustrated with the lack of guidance and support provided by some staff partners. Students affirmed that although they were willing to take ownership of their project, they wanted the mentoring, contributions and feedback of the staff partners. Similar to what Healey et al. (2014) argues, both students and staff suggested that a lack of alignment in the project deliverables, the leadership and task sharing framework could create tension and a sense of disappointment within their team.

A recurring challenge to partnership teams was the presence of external parties (specifically course coordinators) within the partnership dynamic, especially relating to relations and communications. Participants often spoke of their positive and fruitful experiences within their teams, which were disrupted by the addition of an external party. For instance, participants explained that after working together and producing

something that they were proud of, it was demotivating to see it rejected or overridden by the external party, who had their own ideas for the direction of the project. According to the students, stakeholders who are not familiar with the project and the partnership ethos may have a negative impact on the process and outcomes of the individual SSP Project teams.

Another key challenge for teams was ensuring that diversity of perspectives and backgrounds were included within the partnership team. Staff often acknowledged wishing for greater diversity within their teams after the completion of their project. They explained how choosing three or four students from similar backgrounds was not as helpful as originally thought, and that they would take this lesson with them to future SSP Projects that they may be involved in. This was backed up by partners who spoke of the value that diverse teams had on the outcome of their projects. However, some staff partners who did search for diversity from the beginning found that they had few options and had to choose whichever diverse students were available.⁵

The issues of working together with new and different groups, having to navigate new dynamics and the challenges of taking sides and bringing new people into the partnerships were also prevalent. Clashing personalities, group members not doing their share, and having different visions and goals for the projects were some of the challenges reported by participants. Surprisingly, this theme was more prevalent in the surveys than in the focus groups, which could be possibly interpreted as partners feeling more comfortable to pose issues within their teams through this research method.

There were also a number of challenges reported on the SSP Program itself. In terms of the induction, both students and staff noted the difficulties in attending the same induction as their fellow partners, and the lack of flexibility with an online induction. For many of the participants it was difficult to find an induction time that suited all the team members' schedules. Multiple staff partners raised the issue of attending multiple induction sessions for different projects as they felt that they were redundant and not necessary. Other participants also spoke of the misunderstanding

⁵ For more information on how to tackle diversity issues, please refer to [Szucs & Judd, 2019](#).

of whether a student would be banned from the entire initiative if they could not attend the induction⁶.

Students and staff reported the lack of clarity in some of the processes within the SSP Projects program. Students explained that the technical requirements of the program could be sometimes confusing, especially for those who were new to certain processes. For instance, participants identified that when a research approach was adopted to their project, it was not always clear whether ethical clearance was necessary or not. Apart from that, staff posed the challenge of having their projects extended and the difficulty of knowing the feasibility and the most appropriate way to complete it.

Students and staff also reported the difficulty in knowing who the appropriate person was to contact and discuss queries and issues with. There was a perceived lack of a feedback loop between partners and the SSP Projects team, mainly in terms of the reports partners are expected to complete at the start and conclusion of their partnership projects. Students claimed to be, at times, frustrated about not receiving any feedback from the staff members or the SSP Projects team, even after the submission of their retrospective report. This could be explained by the fact that students and staff revealed to be slightly unclear about the purposes of the retrospective report. Staff also revealed that the retrospective report was not an appropriate and sufficient space for either providing students with feedback or for ensuring the accountability of student partners.

Evidence of some of these challenges are exemplified in Table 4.

⁶ It is worth mentioning that students are not banned from the induction if they cannot attend the induction.

Table 4: Students' and staff's challenges sample quotes

Staff partner	Student partner
<p>The logistics were the biggest challenge, particularly finding time for all 5 of us to meet. It was resolved chiefly via the goodwill and commitment of the students, with a smaller contribution from the use of technology.</p>	<p>I love being a part of student engagement and improving the student experience and I saw this project as an awesome way to be a part of that and being my final semester I was like yes, this is literally the last opportunity that I have and to then not have it clear and have the scope so broad and not having the support that I needed but I didn't know that, I didn't really know how to encapsulate it.</p>
<p>We asked them [students] to do something and we wanted it done as good as possible. As the leaders, we knew what was best for the project.</p>	<p>[Interviewer]: "Do you know where to look for help on this or where you could go to ask for support on this?" [Student partner]: "Not really".</p>
<p>And, for the staff member, if you're involved every single semester, it'd be a bit of monotony attending it [induction] every single semester.</p>	<p>There wasn't any sort of confirmation that you've now done this report, we've got it, and it's completed. So there wasn't, sort of, any kind of feedback, in that regard.</p>
<p>I would say it's best for us staff to sit back and get students to taking charge.</p>	<p>And I think a platform is really essential. Because I know when I do group assignments, that you know we have, Facebook Messenger, which is ideal, because it's live and you can have group chats and stuff. But emailing is professional, yes. But it's not the best platform, I think. There are other platforms that you can use.</p>

3.4 Recommended improvements for the program

Since engaging in partnership, students and staff provided recommendation to enhance the SSP Projects program. Reflecting on the process of partnership, many students and staff identified the need to ensure that team as well as the individual partners were accountable for the project. Being concerned with team members' individual and collective performance, students and staff suggested the idea of having a space to be able evaluate their fellow partners. An alternative was to have mid-way check-ins to ensure the feasibility of the project as well as team cohesion⁷. Staff further elaborated on the value of having a space where they could provide students with feedback, which could be utilised for their future employment ventures.

In order to tackle challenges related to time poverty and scope misunderstandings, students and staff identified the need to bring further clarity around the hours, expectations, individual tasks and responsibilities involved in the project. Participants suggested that future partnership teams could enhance their teamwork and outcomes by having a logbook of hours, setting expectations at the beginning of the project and clarifying the tasks involved in the project hours. Participants also suggested the possibility of having longer project timelines.

With respect to communication challenges, both students and staff identified the importance of streamlining communications and having suggested platforms to use. Platforms such as [Slack](#), [Trello](#), [Asana](#), [Padlet](#), timetabling applications and a calendar of events, among others, could be suggested by the SSP Projects team and incorporated into the student partner workflows. Students identified the need for other platforms and clearer processes when it comes the collection of feedback. Apart from UQ feedback platforms, students participants also stated that they would appreciate more information on how to access other sources of funding and university resources that could assist them with the collection of feedback.

Participants also suggested a frequently asked questions resource sheet with details on past projects and previous partners' experiences. Both staff and students have identified that it would be useful to be able to look at past projects, what they have

⁷ The SSP Projects team delivered these 1:1 mid-point check-in sessions, however, they were not well attended.

achieved and what they involved. They suggested that this would not only help come up with new project ideas, but also to help problem solve during current partnerships and learn from other partners' experiences. Staff also expressed that it would be helpful to be informed of professional development opportunities on offer not only for themselves, but to encourage their student partners to go along.

Students and staff identified four particular areas in the project stages where the SSP Projects team could clarify and streamline some of the processes or even provide greater flexibility:

- (1) The initial application and the recruitment process could be improved by the inclusion of more explicit and specific information on the different project scopes, the time commitment expected of both students and staff, and the benefits of being involved in this type of projects i.e. enhancement of employability capabilities;
- (2) A mixture of a blended-type induction could be provided in which both students and staff were not only encouraged to think about what partnership means but also how to frame their project goals and tasks;
- (3) More clarity on the retrospective report purposes, its length and the team members who should be involved in its creation. Having some feedback provided by the SSP Projects team on this report completion would be also highly valued by the participants;
- (4) Simplify the process of extending projects and have further information on how to complete it.

Based on the analysis of the survey and focus group data, the recommended enhancements to the program offered by the participants, and their personal experiences as former student partners, the co-authors of this evaluation propose five key recommendations for the program, these include:

1) Providing greater flexibility with inductions, ranging from:

- Delivering blended (or Zoom) inductions in special circumstances to enable greater flexibility for student and staff partners;
- Delivering different types of inductions based upon the project stream so that information can be contextualised in accordance with partners' different types of projects and needs;

- Splitting the inductions into two sessions. Session one could delve into what partnership is, partnership principles and ethos and on information about the SSP program and the SSP team. Session two could be dedicated to the development of the project plan, the choice of a good communicative tool and the delegation of tasks;
- Dedicating part of the induction to detail the supports that are available for student and staff partners and how to contact the SSP team;
- When contacting partnership teams with the induction times, suggest that they utilise [Doodle](#) to find a mutual induction day and time;
- Providing social events prior to the induction for student and staff partners to connect and get to know each other.

2) Developing a mid-way check-in to check on project's progress and processes. This could be a short survey to be sent to participants approximately halfway through their project. The purpose of this check-in would be to enable students to flag issues with the SSP Projects team and to provide clearer mechanisms for student partners to seek support. All participants should be assured that their responses will not be shared with their partners or anyone outside of the SSP Projects team. In order to ensure partners' participation, this could be a compulsory element within the Student Partner Workflow.

3) Creating a support resource for current partners, such as a handbook. This could contain information on previous SSP Projects, how to access further funding and university resources, how to navigate through partnership and how to tackle challenging issues. This resource could also have a section with frequently asked questions. Ideally, this handbook would be circulated at the inductions and be sent through email. This support resource could be further developed with the inclusion of a section where partners could fill in with their project details as they progress.

4) Redeveloping the retrospective report. Allow a more blended personal and group retrospective report, with the inclusion of a section where partners can reflect on their project challenges. It would be really beneficial if partners could have a section where they could individually reflect on the own and other's progress without the concern that it will be shared with the partnership team.

The inclusion of a space where partners could provide each other with feedback would be also very beneficial. For instance, staff could write comments about students' contribution in the project that could be used in their future job endeavours.

5) Developing workshops on the partnership ethos. These workshops could target common issues faced by previous partnership teams and address possible solutions. For instance, students and staff could be involved in discussions about differences between SSP Projects and employment contracts.

In terms of the SSP evaluation and research, the co-authors suggest some improvements, including:

- **Focus groups:** facilitators should be trained to avoid inconsistent focus groups schedules and data;
- **Survey:** the questions should be carefully designed and planned, with the inclusion of demographics questions that allow the ability in profiling the participants. The survey could be also included as a compulsory element to the SSP Workflow to allow a higher engagement of participants;
- **Data analysis:** more training and instructions should be provided to the research assistants in terms of the data analysis process and how the data will be utilised for evaluation purposes.

SSP Project team responses

As indicated below in Table 5, the SSP Projects team have responded to the recommendations delivered by the co-authors of the SSP Project Evaluation Report.

Table 4: SSP's team responses

Recommendations by co-authors	SSP Project Team response
<p>1. Provide greater flexibility with inductions, ranging from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver blended (or Zoom) inductions; • Deliver different types of inductions based upon the project stream; • Split the inductions into two sessions; • Outline supports offered during Inductions; • Suggest the use of doodle polls to teams; • Provide social events prior to Inductions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of COVID-19, in Semester 1, 2020, the SSP Projects Team commenced delivering online inductions. This will be continued to be offered in Semester 2, 2020. • In early 2019, the SSP Projects Team offered stream inductions, however in effect, this limited the number of inductions available for teams to attend. This is always discussed too with the Partnership Induction Team (membership includes student partners), and we have made a conscious decision to make all Inductions the same. However, the intention is to also continue to develop a suite of workshops to support diverse partnership teams. • The SSP Projects team also include a section in the Inductions where we highlight the social events and supports available. We also send a follow-up email to partners with these resources. • We now include a link and recommend for teams to utilise doodle poll to find a suitable induction timeframe. • This is a great idea to host social events prior to the Induction. Pending budget and staff workload (because a lot of time and energy goes into designing the Inductions and workshops), this would be a great addition to the program!
<p>2. Develop a mid-way check-in to check on project's progress and processes</p>	<p>In 2019, the SSP Projects team provided 1:1 mid-point check-in's that were available for student partners. However, a limited number of partners took part in this support. As of Round 1, 2020 the SSP Project team included a mid-way check-in survey into the student partner workflow to see how everything is going for the partners, and to ensure that partners are provided with follow-up support if wanted/required.</p>

	<p>The student representatives that sit on the SSP Operational Group have also facilitate two virtual coffee catchups. Invitations are sent via email to all student partners and reps to attend these catchup's and can serve as a space where they can seek further support or advice from their peers.</p>
<p>3. Create a support resource for current partners, such as a handbook</p>	<p>In addition to the Projects Handbook, the SSP Projects team, in collaboration with a student partner, created a two-page hand-out that was delivered at inductions, and sent via email following the inductions. This hand-out included information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available workshops and support resources (including workshops by the Library and information on how to contact the SSP Operational Group student reps) • A description of the reports that are required to submit by student partners, along with the URLs to submit these reports • Upcoming social events, with URLs.
<p>4. Redevelop the retrospective report</p>	<p>The Retrospective Report continues to be iteratively developed and is now organised more clearly with separate student and staff member sections for contributions. The SSP Projects Team are currently working on amending the Student Hub form where students submit their reports to ensure that they can submit personal reflections within the form, instead of with the team, if they so choose.</p>
<p>5. Develop workshops on the partnership ethos</p>	<p>In 2019, Associate Professor Kelly Matthews co-facilitated, with a student partner, a workshop on the partnership ethos. The SSP Showcase and Community of Practice meetings also serve as a key forum for these conversations to take place. However, the SSP Projects Team are more than happy to host further workshops on the partnership ethos.</p>
<p>6. SSP evaluation and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups; • Survey; • Data analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of 2020, focus group facilitator training has been provided. For example, SLOCI facilitated workshops to the research assistant, and this was also open to student voice leaders and student partners. • The SSP Projects team agree with respect to the survey being re-created. This is currently being worked on by the team. • As of 2020, SLOCI provided training on data analysis. Further training is also being developed on evaluation and distilling recommendations that are evidence-based.

Useful links/further resources

Associate Professor Kelly Matthew's Fellowship site:

<https://altf.org/fellowships/students-as-partners-reconceptualising-the-role-of-students-in-degree-program-curriculum-development/>

SSP website: <https://employability.uq.edu.au/student-staff-partnerships>

SSP Project streams and categories: <https://employability.uq.edu.au/SSP-Project-Streams>

SSP events information: <https://employability.uq.edu.au/get-experiences/student-staff-partnerships/student-staff-partnerships-event-information>

Partnership In Action booklet:

https://employability.uq.edu.au//files/110381/Web_PartnershipsInAction_booklet_2020.pdf

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Appendix 1 – Staff focus group questions

Staff Participants Interview and Focus Group Questions

Project Title: Implementing Students as Partners at scale: A whole-of-institution case study at The University of Queensland

Ethics ID: MJ00982

Investigators: Madelaine-Marie Judd, Anna Richards, Dr Dino Willox, Naima Crisp, Brooke Szucs, Franciele Spinelli, Julia Groening, James Forde, Shelley Kinash, Beata Batorowicz

1. Please introduce yourself (name, faculty, role).
2. Was this your first student-staff partnership?
3. Tell me about your current partnership project (what was the scope of the project, duration, deliverables and personal role in project).
4. How would you define student-staff partnerships? (What is involved?)
5. Paint me a metaphorical picture of what partnership means to you.
6. Has your understanding of partnerships evolved throughout the project?
7. Why did you decide to become a staff partner? (What were the perceived benefits of this initiative?)
8. Do you believe that the partnership has shaped your understanding of the UQ student experience? If so, how?
9. What were the challenges that you encountered throughout the process and how did you overcome these challenges?
10. What did you learn from engaging in partnership?
11. How did you navigate power dynamics?
12. What are some needed improvements to the initiative or further supports that are required for student or staff partners?
13. Other comments?

Appendix 2 – Student focus group questions

Student Participants Interview and Focus Group Questions

Project Title: Implementing Students as Partners at scale: A whole-of-institution case study at The University of Queensland

Ethics ID: MJ00982

Investigators: Madelaine-Marie Judd, Anna Richards, Dr Dino Willox, Naima Crisp, Brooke Szucs, Franciele Spinelli, Julia Groening, James Forde, Shelley Kinash, Beata Batorowicz

1. Please introduce yourself (name, faculty, degree, and year of study).
2. Was this your first student-staff partnership?
3. Tell me about your current partnership project (what was the scope of the project, duration, deliverables and personal role in project).
4. Why did you decide to become a student partner?
5. Who made the decisions in your project? How was group consensus achieved?
6. What were the challenges that you encountered throughout the process and how did you overcome these challenges?
7. Has this partnership led to a heightened sense of belonging to the UQ Community? If so, how?
8. How would you define student-staff partnerships? (What is involved?)
9. Paint me a metaphorical picture of what partnership means to you.
10. Has your understanding of partnerships evolved throughout the project?
11. What did you learn whilst engaging in partnership?
12. What did someone learn from you?
13. Do you believe that the partnership enhanced your employability or key capabilities? (If so, what and how?)
14. What are some needed improvements to the initiative or further supports that are required for student or staff partners?
15. Any other comments?

Appendix 3 – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

- Project Title:** Implementing Students as Partners at scale: A whole-of-institution case study at The University of Queensland
- Ethics ID:** MJ00982
- Chief Investigator:** Madelaine-Marie Judd, Student Employability Centre, The University of Queensland
- Co-Investigators:** Anna Richards, Dr Dino Willox, Naima Crisp, Brooke Szucs, Franciele Spinelli, Julia Groening, James Forde, Shelley Kinash, Beata Batorowicz

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research. The aims of this research are to greater understand: how Students as Partners approaches can be embedded across an institution; the perceived employability capabilities that are developed throughout a partnership project; and shifting perceptions of partnerships.

What does this study involve?

This research seeks to investigate university-wide approaches to student-staff partnerships, drawing upon the wide-scale adoption at The University of Queensland of the Student-Staff Partnerships initiative. The project team are seeking to elicit student and staff partners' perspectives on their experiences of partnership, and recommendations for the continuous improvement of the initiative.

Participants can be involved in this research through multiple ways:

- Pre and post surveys – These surveys should take no more than 10 minutes each, and seek to greater understand motivations for partnering on projects, perceived employability skills, and sense of belonging to the UQ Community. All surveys are on StudentHub, and participants will be emailed a link inviting them to participate in these surveys.
- Interviews / Focus Groups – Interviews / Focus Groups will be facilitated by the Principal Investigator, and should take no more than one hour. All interviews / focus groups will be conducted on campus, in a booked meeting room.

What are the anticipated benefits of this research?

The data collected as part of this research project will be used for the continuous improvement of the UQ Student-Staff Partnerships initiative, and to contribute to student-staff partnership literature (e.g. conference presentations, research articles). All participants will be provided with an opportunity to reflect upon their partnership experience, and their insights will be integral to the refinement and development of the Student-Staff Partnerships initiative. Participants of the study may access results through research articles and papers. All participants will receive an email with a link to the results, and links will also be provided within the website:

<https://employability.uq.edu.au/student-staff-partnerships>

What are the potential risks and mitigated strategies?

There are no potential risks envisaged as a consequence of this research due to the nature of the questions. Whilst participants will be invited to contribute their perspective through pre and post surveys, and interviews or focus groups, it is at the discretion of the individual (relative to their commitments) as to whether they participate. Therefore, neither the nature of the questions nor the time allotment required constitute a risk for participants. Furthermore, there will be two streams of focus groups (one for students, one for staff), to ensure that students and staff feel comfortable to share their perspectives on the experience.

Confidentiality – ethical conduct and privacy statements

The survey will be de-identified, and all focus group/interview/survey data will be anonymised prior to analysis and dissemination of results. Interview and focus group participants will be provided with an opportunity to review / provide feedback to verbatim quotes. Participation in this study is voluntary, and participants may withdraw their consent for this study at any time. In such circumstances whereby consent is being withdrawn, participations are asked to contact the Principal Investigator. In cases of survey data, the Chief Investigator will re-identify the survey (mapping the survey code to a spreadsheet within the system) to ensure that the correct survey data and accompanying information is deleted. There will be no negative impact or penalty of withdrawing consent from this study.

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process at The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on m.judd@uq.edu.au), if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinator on 3365 3924 or via email humanethics@research.uq.edu.au

Contact Details

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Madelaine-Marie Judd via m.judd@uq.edu.au or on +61 7 3443 1385.

Appendix 4 – Participant Consent Form



Implementing Students as Partners at scale: A whole-of-institution case study at The University of Queensland

The University of
Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072
Australia
Telephone (07) 3345
4615
International +61 7
3346 XXX
Facsimile (07) 3365
XXXX

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Chief Investigator: Madelaine-Marie Judd

Co-Investigators: Anna Richards, Dr Dino Willox, Naima Crisp, Brooke Szucs,
Franciele Spinelli, Julia Groening, James Forde, Shelley Kinash, Beata Batorowicz

Ethics ID: MJ00982

I have read the information sheet relating to this research project, and give my consent to participate in this study based on the understanding that (tick box):

- I am aware of the general purpose, methods and demands of the study, and
- My participation in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study or refuse to take part at any time, without any negative consequences, and
- All information that I provide will be kept confidential and will not be identifiable to anyone other than the research team and
- I meet the criteria for participation in the study.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you.

Madelaine-Marie Judd

Appendix 5 – Demographics Questionnaire

Student-Staff Partnerships Focus Group

Type of program	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate coursework <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Degree Research <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate coursework/research
Year of program	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> BEL <input type="checkbox"/> EAIT <input type="checkbox"/> HaBS <input type="checkbox"/> HASS <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Science
Nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic <input type="checkbox"/> International Country of origin:
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> X
Age range	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 – 19 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 – 54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55+

Appendix 6 – Survey Questions

UQ Student-Staff Partnership Projects: Post Survey Questions

Q1 Please provide your student/staff number.

Q2 Are you a student or staff partner?

Q3 Gender

Q4 What was your motivation for becoming a student or staff partner?

- Impacting the UQ student experience
- Collaborating with staff or students on enhancing the UQ student experience
- Shaping the design of curriculum at UQ
- Personal interest in the project topic
- Enhancing my employability
- Professional development
- Financial support
- Networking opportunities
- Opportunities to publish
- To be part of a team
- Other (please specify)

Q5 Have you participated in a Student-Staff Partnership before?

- Yes
- No

Q6 How did you hear about Student-Staff Partnerships?

- Website
- Social media
- Flyers
- Peers / Colleagues
- Other (please specify)

Q7 Please describe what Student-Staff Partnership means to you. How has your understanding of partnership changed throughout the lifespan of your project?

Q8 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

- Leadership was appropriately distributed across the project team
- The group dynamics were based on equal partnerships
- I felt responsibility for my tasks
- I was able to engage in open and honest discussions with my team members
- I felt that my contributions were valued by team members

- I felt that I made making a positive difference to the UQ student experience

Q9 Please describe your perceptions regarding the key benefits of Student-Staff Partnerships.

Q10 Please describe the challenges encountered either as a team or personally throughout the partnership? How did you overcome these challenges?

Q11 Please describe the employability capabilities that you developed throughout the partnership and how were these developed?

Q12 Based upon your experience collaborating on a project team, please indicate your perceived levels of confidence for the following capabilities:

- I have the ability to collect, analyse and organise information to convey my ideas clearly.
- I have the ability to communicate my opinions with influence.
- I have the ability to adapt to different environments.
- I have the ability to work independently and take initiative.
- I have the ability to develop innovative solutions to problems.
- I have the ability to work effectively in a team environment.

Q13 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- The grant was sufficient to support my contribution to the partnership
- There was a sufficient number of team members on the project
- There was a sufficient amount of time for me to contribute to the project
- There was sufficient support provided to enable me to complete my work
- The Student-Staff Partnerships team clearly explained the purpose of the partnership approach.

Q14 What could be improved for the Student-Staff Partnerships initiative? Are there any other supports that could be provided?

Q15 Would you participate in another Student-Staff Partnership Project?

- Yes
- No
- Unable (due to graduation, etc.)

Q16 Has your partnership impacted your perception of belonging to the University Community? If so, how?

Q17 Do you have any other comments or feedback?

Contact details

Franciele Spinelli

E f.spinelli@uq.edu.au

Brooke Szucs

E b.woodward@uq.edu.au

Naima Crisp

E n.crisp@uq.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Number 00025B