

# 2018 National Students as Partners Roundtable Program

2 October 2018 at The University of Queensland

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#studentsaspartners



## Support

Support for this event was provided by The University of Queensland (UQ) and the Australian Office for Learning and Teaching Fellowship funding scheme. The administrative acumen and design creativity of Kelsie Rotert along with the organisational skills of Jill Penridge from the Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation (UQ) supported the success of this event.

## 2018 Co-curators

Two academic staff (Eimear Enright and Kelly Matthews) worked in partnership with two students (Stuart Russell and Catherine Sherwood) to plan, organise, and facilitate the 2018 *National Students as Partners Roundtable*. The student partners received scholarships through the UQ Student-Staff Partnership program.

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# About Students as Partners Practices

*Students as Partners* creates space for students and staff (academic or professional) to work together on teaching, learning, curriculum, and governance.

As a way of thinking, *students as partners* shifts the educational paradigm of learning and teaching as something staff *do to students* to education as a shared endeavour done *with students*.

Increasingly adopted around the globe, *students as partners* has led to the transformation of practices and an array of positive outcomes for both students and staff.

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*The 2018 National Students as Partners Roundtable brings together 150 students, academics, professional staff and alumni from 23 universities.*

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The annual Roundtable is an opportunity to:

- **Share** *students as partners* practices, ideas, and experiences
- **Discover** new ways of considering *students as partners* in higher education
- **Network** with a diversity of *students as partners* practitioners
- **Harness** the creativity of staff and students to address teaching and learning challenges.

This annual event brings together members of the *Australian Students as Partners Network*.

## Stay connected

Join the [Australian Students as Partners Network](#) for more information.

## Previous Roundtables

The annual *National Students as Partners Roundtable* was first hosted by The University of Queensland in 2015 and then again in 2016. The University of Adelaide was the host in 2017.

## 2019 Students as Partners Events

- 3rd annual *International Students as Partners Institute* (ISaPI) at The University of Adelaide from 10-12 July. Read more from [The University of Adelaide](#).
- 5th annual Australian *National Students as Partners Roundtable* at The University of New South Wales on Friday 2 August.
- 3rd *International Collaborative Writing Groups* (ICWG) for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) where students and staff work together to co-author a scholarly publication on a shared topic of interest.

## Research Opportunities

The [International Journal for Students as Partners](#) (IJSaP) explores new perspectives, practices, and policies regarding how students and staff are working together in partnership to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. It is a free, open access journal created and run in partnership that publishes research articles, case studies, reflective essays, opinion pieces, and reviews.

# Program

- 9.00am Registration
- 9.30am Welcome
- 9.45am Keynote with Catherine Bovill: *Students as partners in learning and teaching: Building relationships and belonging*
- 11.15am Morning Tea
- 11.30am Co-Create Keynote: *Letters to those who dare to engage in partnership*
- 12.15pm Sharing Stories: Case Studies
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 12.50pm Sharing Stories: Poster Session
- 1.30pm In Conversation: *#wearetheuniversity at Western Sydney University*
- 2.00pm Parallel sessions
- Partnership enablers (Holt Room)
  - Curriculum partnership (Innes Room)
  - Student-led and student representation (Heath Room)
- 2.45pm Afternoon tea
- 3.00pm Student-led Panel: *Future directions for student-staff partnerships*
- 4.00pm Reflection
- 4.20pm Announcing 2019 events + Special Fringe Festival Performance by Catherine Bovill

# Speakers and abstracts

## International keynote

### *Students as partners in learning and teaching: building relationships and belonging*

Around the world a wide range of students as partners (SaP) work is taking place and students' perspectives increasingly inform and influence learning and teaching. There are SaP examples that demonstrate compelling benefits, but there has also been some criticism of SaP work and there are many challenges to working in collaboration. In this presentation, I will explore the landscape of partnership work, and using examples, I argue that we need to build exemplary relationships between staff and students as a foundation for SaP, and as a way to promote a more human version of higher education that emphasises student inclusion, belonging and more holistic learning experiences.

## Catherine Bovill (@cathybovill)



**Cathy** is a Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement at the Institute for Academic Development, University of Edinburgh, UK and an internationally recognised expert on student-staff partnership.

## Co-creation keynote experiment

### *Letters to those who dare to engage in partnership*

In this co-creation keynote experiment, we share letters from those who dare to engage in the messy, complicated, disruptive, joyful, challenging, and rewarding work of teaching and learning partnerships. Letter writers reveal what 'Students as Partners' means to them, why they engage, how they work, and the complex realities of aspiring to a different way of working in higher education. First two 'composite letters' were penned, authored by Catherine and Stuart (a letter from a student partner), and Eimear and Kelly (a letter from a staff partner). These letters were 'mailed out' to selected 2018 Roundtable participants who responded in kind: Nicholas Carrah, Lisa Fitzgerald with Allyson Mutch, Benjamin Luo, Caelan Rafferty, Sarah Rasmussen, and Darci Taylor. By drawing on the stories and voices of attendees, who co-created the keynote content, we are experimenting with alternative forms of co-curation to provoke new forms of conversation about pedagogical partnerships.

### Eimear Enright (@EimearEnright)



**Eimear** is a Lecturer in Pedagogy in UQ's School of Human Movement and Nutrition Sciences, and has a growing international reputation for her inspiring partnership work.

### Kelly Matthews (@kellymatthewsUQ)



**Kelly** is an Associate Professor in Higher Education at UQ's Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation, and an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow.

### Stuart Russell



**Stuart** is an Honours student in Anthropology, a casual tutor with the Indigenous Tutoring Assistance program, and has ever-growing experience working in local, national and international partnership engagements.

### Catherine Sherwood



**Catherine** is a first-year PhD student in sports history and tutor at the University of Queensland who both engages in, and conducts research on, student-academic partnerships to enrich learning and teaching.



## In Conversation

### *#wearetheuniversity at Western Sydney University*

Here are six of the nine students working as partners on the Western Sydney University 21st Century Curriculum (21C) Project. With Dr Tai Peseta & Dr Jenny Pizzica, these nine students are co-designing a new unit of study (currently titled) #WeAreTheUniversity: students as co-creators of change.

### Varun Gopi



**Varun** is studying Medicine/Surgery

### Ashley Beathe



**Ashley** is enrolled in a Masters of Secondary Teaching (majoring in English).

### Hassan Raza



**Hassan** is studying Business/Arts (majoring in Philosophy & Marketing).

### Chinnu Jose



**Chinnu** studies Law/Business.

### Kathy Nguyen



**Kathy** is a third-year student in the Bachelor of Natural Science (majoring in Environment and Health).

### Marisse Manthos



**Marisse** is studying Arts (with a pathway to secondary teaching).

# Parallel session abstracts

The umbrella term 'Students as Partners' encompasses a wide array of practices, projects, and possibilities that span the in-class, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experience. Recognising this exciting diversity and the range of roles that contribute to Students as Partners work in higher education, we offer parallel break-out sessions to further networking at the 2018 National Students as Partners Roundtable. These are an opportunity to network with other participants on specific topics.

## ***Partnership enablers: Managers, program coordinators, project officers***

**Facilitators: Yvonne Oberhollenzer and Sarah Ritchie from UQ**

Are you helping to set up and implement partnership support programs, exploring how to embed the ethos of partnership across one or more projects, or helping others to build their partnership skills? Then you're playing an important role in enabling and influencing others to engage in genuine partnership. We will discuss how we have developed support structures, created induction and training packages, and coached staff and students through this journey. Join us to share your experiences, ideas and practical strategies for enabling partnership.

## ***Student-led and student representative approaches***

**Facilitators: Sarah Rasmussen and Jordin Payne from Murdoch**

In this networking sessions, we will facilitate discussions amongst students and staff interested in student-led partnership approaches and student representation as a form of partnership practice. The focus on student leadership in partnership is an emerging area of interest. We will share practices, exchange stories, and imagine ways forward in this informal session. We will draw on examples of our experiences of student-led partnership projects at Murdoch to get the conversation started.

## ***Curriculum partnership: Doing partnership in classrooms and in curriculum development***

**Facilitators: Wendy Green from University of Tasmania**

This break-out session is for attendees interested in engaging in student-academic partnership in classes, in curriculum development or in assessment. We'll share practices and stories while connecting with colleagues practicing partnership for curriculum and assessment.

# Student-led panel abstract

## *Future directions for student-staff partnerships*

### **Facilitators: Stuart Russell and Catherine Sherwood**

Students share their hopes, dreams, aspirations, concerns and more in this student-led and student-facilitated panel session. Through conversation and open dialogue, attendees will hear how students think about and imagine the future of student-staff partnership in higher education.

### **Nattalia Godbold**



**Nattalia** is a PhD student at The University of Queensland's Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation, and a secondary school educator researching academics' teaching identity, agency and curriculum co-creation.

### **Usma Iftikhar**



**Usma** is a PhD scholar in biomedical science at King Edward University in Lahore, Pakistan.

### **Tayla Mason**



**Tayla** is studying primary education at RMIT University in Melbourne.

### **Imogen McNamara**



**Imogen** has worked alongside academics to create and enhance eLearning tools across 5 course programs. She has also invested time with her peers to create a peer mentoring program that assists both Agriculture and Viticulture students across 4 year levels. Recently Imogen has been accepted into the University's honours program and has also been awarded The Barossa Foundation's Elderton Excellence in Winemaking Scholarship.

### **Liam O'Neill**



**Liam** is the President of the Curtin Student Guild, a role in which he is now concluding his second term. Liam has been driving student partnership activities at Curtin and has served as a member of the Curtin University Council and NUS National Executive.

### **Caelan Rafferty**



**Caelan** is a fourth year Bachelor of Economics/Law (Honours) student at the University of Queensland who has engaged in a number of student-staff partnerships, ranging from audits to pedagogical design.

# Poster abstracts

## 1. RMIT Bachelor of Education Student Staff Consultative Committee

We are trialling a new way of working within the RMIT Bachelor of Education Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC). It is a partnership initiative focusing on projects that students and academics work together to identify and co-deliver. This initiative has changed the way the SSCC operates, departing from its traditional purpose as a forum in which student volunteers gather and report feedback on their program. Instead, project teams are free to set their own goals and ways of working, with some scheduled workshops during the year. We present both the positive outcomes and some of the challenges that have emerged.

Andrea McLagan (Educational Developer, Digital Learning Team and corresponding author: [andrea.mclagan@rmit.edu.au](mailto:andrea.mclagan@rmit.edu.au)), Jennifer Langford (student, RMIT School of Education), Tayla Mason (student, RMIT School of Education), Thembi Mason (Acting Associate Dean, RMIT School of Education), Andrea McLagan (Senior Coordinator, Digital Learning, RMIT)

## 2. “Commitment to collaboration”: What students have to say about the values underpinning partnership practices

Our values shape how we act in student-staff partnerships. However, we don't explicitly address these values very often, nor even identify them. To further these discussions, we asked a large body of undergraduate science students what values they thought were important in partnerships. The commonest values stated in descending order were respect, communication, understanding and responsibility/commitment. Most students perceived these values as mutual i.e. ones which both students and academics should equally uphold. However, when it came to 'understanding', there was a heavier emphasis on academics needing to understand students. Overall, our findings show that more dialogue is needed between staff and students to clarify expectations around partnerships.

Benjamin Luo (second year medical student in the School of Biomedical Sciences and corresponding author: [benjaminluo95@gmail.com](mailto:benjaminluo95@gmail.com)), Kelly Matthews (Associate Professor, Institute for Teaching & Learning Innovation), Prasad Chunduri (Lecturer, School of Biomedical Sciences), University of Queensland, Brisbane

### **3. Building confidence and increasing motivation through undergraduate research**

At the University of Adelaide students are given the opportunity to design a research project under guidance of a research staff. Here we describe the journey of students and staff through a research project and the positive consequences of this research on student confidence and motivation. Encouragement from staff resulted in the students attending the University of Adelaide Undergraduate Research Conference and subsequently the Australasian Undergraduate Research Conference. Both conferences provided a unique opportunity for students to present their work in a professional environment, changing their attitude to their own ability to undertake research and potentially pursuing a research pathway.

Imogen McNamara, Grace Jiranek, Michelle Huckel, Matthew Howard, Beth Loveys (corresponding author: [beth.loveys@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:beth.loveys@adelaide.edu.au)). School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, University of Adelaide, Waite Campus, Urrbrae, Adelaide

### **4. Students as Partners to boost student employability**

The premise of the UNSW School of Chemical Engineering and UNSW Chemical Engineering Undergraduate Society (CEUS) Industry Series was to create a program to facilitate opportunities for our students to stay ahead of the increasingly competitive Chemical Engineering Job Market.

Buddhi Ranasinghe (CEUS Industry VP and corresponding author: [buddhimrana@gmail.com](mailto:buddhimrana@gmail.com)), Dr. May Lim (Senior Lecturer, UNSW Sydney)

### **5. Maturing a culture of partnership: QUT's Student as Partner journey**

This poster presentation illustrates how the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has integrated a student as partners approach into its student support structure. Taking the question "How do you build a university culture in which partnership becomes an integrated way of doing things and becomes 'everybody's business'", we present QUT's model and the phased approach we have used – from a single pilot program to a larger project in a single unit to a whole-of-institution approach – to mature our students as partners approach and the enabling strategies that underpin our model.

Caroline Rueckert (corresponding author: [caroline.rueckert@qut.edu.au](mailto:caroline.rueckert@qut.edu.au)), Jennifer Tredinnick, Corinne Loane, Samuel Pitman. Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane

## **6. An overview of the SaP approach used in Protein Science: Negotiation of curriculum and assessment for increased engagement**

Our Students as Partners (SaP) approach successfully enhanced the engagement of students in Protein Science, a second-year biochemistry course, by allowing them to contribute to the curricula and assessment. The SaP strategy was threefold: 1. To offer students with a choice of topics for part of the course; 2. To create an opportunity for students to design multiple choice questions, with scaffolding, which formed part of the assessment; and 3. To provide a forum for student reflection and evaluation of their partnership experiences. Our poster will provide an overview of the course design and student reflections of their SaP experience.

Christopher Love (School of Environment and Science & Griffith Institute for Drug Discovery, Griffith University and corresponding author: [c.love@griffith.edu.au](mailto:c.love@griffith.edu.au)), Julie Crough (Griffith Sciences, Griffith University, Gold Coast)

## **7. Student partnerships integral to the QUT Course Design Studio approach**

Since 2016, institutional strategic endorsement to grow partnership working with students has fostered a wide range of productive student-staff partnerships at Queensland University of Technology. The rich and positive impact such partnerships have on course development has been evidenced, laying the foundations for ensuring that student partnerships are now formally integrated within Course Design Studio ways of working. Across different stages of course transformation, Course Design Studio teams made up of curriculum and learning designers, learning technologists and other learning support staff work alongside course teams of academics and student partners. The poster showcases these partnership endeavours across different disciplines.

Deanna Meth (corresponding author: [deanna.meth@qut.edu.au](mailto:deanna.meth@qut.edu.au)), Judith Smith. Learning and Teaching Unit, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane

## **8. Students as Partners Framework at USC: Student-led governance**

At USC, we have been developing a holistic SaP framework with the intention of having an overarching Student Senate established by 2019. A bottom-up tiered model has been adopted to encourage authentic student engagement and to establish students as active partners in shaping their learning experiences. To achieve this model at USC, it is proposed that the existing Student Representative Council (SRC) be sandwiched by tiers added to the top; a Student Senate or similar; and bottom; such as a cohort of School Representatives. It is anticipated that students who engage with the USC Students as Partners initiative will transition from consumers to, representatives of the student voice and develop into students as 'change agents' (Jensen & Bennett 2015, p. 41); simultaneously developing their graduate attributes and future employability.

Donna Thompson (corresponding author: [dthomps2@usc.edu.au](mailto:dthomps2@usc.edu.au)), Rhonda Leece, Alison Jaquet.  
University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

## **9. Involving students as partners in LMS review**

Online course design overhaul? 2000 courses? One year? Let's get students involved! The University of Adelaide conducted a comprehensive review of "MyUni", our Learning Management System (LMS) in response to an extensive student feedback and review process. The MyUni Transform Project implemented an entirely new LMS while also enhancing online pedagogy and achieving more consistent use of the LMS in every course. My poster will discuss the evolving students as partner's journey throughout the course redesign process as well as the resulting benefits and challenges.

Ellen Wildman (Learning Enhancement and Innovation, University of Adelaide,  
[ellen.wildman@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:ellen.wildman@adelaide.edu.au))

## **10. Therapaws: A student-led dog therapy program at the University of Sydney**

Therapaws combines dog therapy with the principles of students as partners to create an effective health and wellbeing initiative. From 2016-2018, staff and students have been working together to co-design, co-implement and conduct research on Therapaws. Approximately 2,443-3,500 students participated in seven sessions, with 97% reporting less stress and a 32.34% increase in knowledge of support services after attending two or more sessions. Student volunteers built skills and acted as change agents, with communication skills (84%) and confidence, teamwork and interpersonal skills (71%) most commonly identified, and 91% believing they had made an impact on student health and wellbeing.

Staff: Associate Professor Rebecca Johnke, Karen Walker, Freia Kirkaldy (corresponding author: [freia.kirkaldy@sydney.edu.au](mailto:freia.kirkaldy@sydney.edu.au)), Caitlyn Sinclair. Students: Wing Lam (Kristi) Cheng, Brian Tran, Grace White, Emerald Williamson, Sara Sri Pillai. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sydney

## **11. Peer-Assisted Learning program in Biology: Dynamics of student-staff partnerships**

The Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) program run by Biology at ANU is underpinned by dynamic student-staff partnerships. This program supplements the learning in first and second-year level courses. PAL sessions are developed and facilitated by later year student mentors for students. The different roles and responsibilities of those involved in the program form a unique learning opportunity for students and staff alike. There are reciprocal relationships between Senior and Junior Mentors, Mentors and Students, as well as Senior Mentors and course conveners. These partnerships depend on trust, accountability, appropriate use of power, opportunities for feedback and reflection.

Gizem Bilgin (corresponding author: [gizem.bilgin@anu.edu.au](mailto:gizem.bilgin@anu.edu.au)), Papa Amponn-Nyamekye, Angela Stoddard, Emily, Denise Higgins, and Susan Howitt



## **12. Student led observation for course improvement at UQ**

The student led observation for course improvement (SLOCI) team provides alternative forms of feedback for staff and students about curriculum. As a team we have been asked to develop observational protocols and procedures for engagement with academics. Our remit was to engage as observers within courses that were self-volunteered for the pilot program. Our success is evidenced in the broadening of our scope beyond observation and our ability to move into conducting focus groups and surveys as a method to provide students with a voice on course related issues and academics with information they can use during semester.

Melanie Fleming (corresponding author: melanie.fleming@uq.edu.au), Siyu Liu, Ruben Kara-Manning, Ahsin Waris, Misha Lee, Lydia Kavanagh. The University of Queensland, Brisbane

## **13. Students as co-developers: Enlisting digital learners to create modern media formative assessment and feedback tools for anatomy**

2016 student evaluation data demonstrated that second year undergraduate students found the threshold learning for Anatomy difficult to master due to the vast of material covered, students time constraints and perception to “memorise” content. A students as partners initiative to engage students was implemented in 2017-18, with an aim for third year peer leaders to co-develop and create digital content, segregated for learning preferences. We provide evidence on how the reimagination of revision content on preferred social and modern media platforms e.g. Instagram, lightboards, to encourage spaced-and-paced study habits created a collaborative out-of-class learning community, decreased overall course fail rates to 12% and improved course satisfaction measures.

Nicole Williams (corresponding author: nicole.a.williams@student.adelaide.edu.au), Emily Squires, Amy Rees, Daniel Gutschmidt, Nicolene Lottering. Discipline of Anatomy and Pathology, The Adelaide Medical School, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, The University of Adelaide.  
Acknowledgements: Madeline Bessen, Lauren Gauci, Maddison Sims, Emily Baxendale

## **14. Student Partnership @ UNE: A holistic approach**

The need for effective institution-wide student participation and engagement at the University of New England (UNE) was the catalyst for the development of a student-led partnership framework that aims to develop genuine student involvement in teaching and learning. An online portal was built as a student only space moderated by student leaders. They facilitated communication among students and promoted the use of feedback channels to unit coordinators. The portal had over 2654 students directly engaged and a retention rate of 98.67%. These opportunities improved engagement and created new opportunities for student leadership within university teaching and learning processes.

Penny Leary, Koady Williams, Darren Ryder. University of New England. Contact email: [tl-sabl@une.edu.au](mailto:tl-sabl@une.edu.au)

Website: <http://studentvoiceaustralia.com/uncategorized/students-driving-initiatives-student-partnership-une-a-holistic-approach/>

## **15. Student voice and leadership in a WSU campus precinct development**

The Bankstown Student Campus Council facilitates the student voice being heard by the University. In May of 2018, our campus council in conjunction with 10 student leaders from other Western Sydney University Campuses met with representatives of the University's Office of Estate and Commercial to explore the challenges of maintaining sustainability on the vertical campus model that the University is adopting. This push by students to ensure that they have a sustained voice in the construction of this campus precinct since the initial consultation forums, has resulted in the establishment of Bankstown City Campus Committees to include the student voice.

Vicky Renier-Clark, Christos Binos, Oliver Pocock. Western Sydney University Bankstown Student Campus Council. Contact email: [bankstown\\_scc@lists.uws.edu.au](mailto:bankstown_scc@lists.uws.edu.au). Website: <http://westernsrc.org/bccc>

# Case studies

## SaP in curriculum and assessment design, and negotiation of assessment in a second-year biochemistry course

A lack of active participation in lectures and small problem-based classes led to a trial of a Students as Partners (SaP) approach with the aim of increasing student engagement in a second-year biochemistry course. The goals were threefold: to involve students in negotiating a number of topics to form part of the curricula; to design assessment, and negotiate the level of their assessment that should be included in the final exam; and finally, to provide a forum for student reflection and evaluation of their partnership experiences.

Our question was: Would this SaP approach “empower” or offer a “buy in” for students that would lead to increased engagement?

We were surprised at the level of engagement of the SaP in the course and in particular with the reflections provided by students. Of the students who participated in the SaP task, 80.5% indicated that they were engaged (32%) or more engaged (48.5%) as a result of being involved in the course design and assessment. Student reflections provided direct insight into student’s perceptions of the partnership, and endless information about student learning, metacognition, motivation and knowledge construction. The majority of the reflections on the choice of topic related to their future courses or degree programs or topics that they thought would be interesting, for example, “I believe these topics could be of use in my future as a researcher”, and “I chose Protein Therapeutics because I find it fascinating how proteins can be used to treat medical conditions”. With respect to designing multiple choice questions for assessment, students overwhelmingly commented on the difficulty of this task, such as “It was a lot more difficult than I anticipated”. While many suggested that this supported their learning, for example, “it forced me to have an understanding of the content to create questions in which I could ultimately test myself on, further improving my knowledge”. A final student comment is a testament to our successful foray into SaP, “Choosing a topic meant an increase in engagement and interest, and choosing questions for assessment meant I had to filter through what I know, didn’t know, and what gaps I had in my knowledge”.

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University: Griffith University

## The evolution of student-staff partnerships: From co-researching to co-authorship to lead authorship

With the growing Students as Partners movement at UQ, our research asked undergraduate science students what attitudes and values they thought were necessary for partnership. Many of these responders were new to the idea of students and staff working collaboratively. The closest they have previously experienced was an end of semester feedback survey. Therefore, their responses revealed students' preconceptions and expectations of student-staff partnerships.

This project involved Kelly Matthews, Prasad Chunduri, and myself, and I'm surprised that I ended up as lead author. I began as a volunteer, who just wanted some experience in data analysis. As a volunteer, I helped code the students' responses. Afterwards, I was asked to help write the method and result sections, which I agreed. Eventually, I was offered the chance to write the entire manuscript. I am grateful that my supervisors explicitly asked me to become more involved as I would not have had the initiative on my own. Their inclusivity allowed for a genuine student-academic collaboration and made me feel like I was making meaningful contributions. I now have more confidence to take initiative in future projects.

Based off my experience alone, I offer two suggestions to other staff in student-staff partnerships:

1. If appropriate, offer students the chance to become more involved (as students may not offer themselves)
2. A few words of genuine empathy when the student faces common research obstacles (e.g. writing manuscripts and facing deadlines) goes a surprisingly long way, even if the words are just over email

For students, I highly recommend seeking out ways of joining a partnership. It may be as simple as asking an academic to volunteer on a project, as was the case for me.

Name: Benjamin Luo

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University: University of Queensland

## Students as co-creators: Constructing an engaging learning community for millennials through modern media

**Problem Statement:** Based on 2016 Student Evaluation data, students found the threshold learning concept associated with anatomy difficult to master, as content can be overwhelming due to the perceived need to memorise a large volume of material. Student feedback suggested increased anxiety, potentially resulting in academic underperformance and/or high attrition rates during the first weeks of semester. Since 94% of the second year, Musculoskeletal Anatomy cohort were aged 24 years or younger, unique barriers of teaching digital learners included the need for instant gratification and immediate rewards.

**Initiative Purpose:** Consistent with Dunne and Zandstra's (2011) model for students-as-change agents, I developed the 'Peer2Peer Alliance in Anatomy' Program, in which the most substantial contribution was co-creation to promote a learning community, through embedding peer-teaching into the curriculum and facilitating active learning through co-design of revision content by 3rd year high achieving students. The peer leaders transformed the digital strategy, under a Teaching with Technology Framework, to create an inclusive student experience, based on learning preferences and social media integration to change interaction patterns between learners and teachers.

**Methodology:** Deployment of VARK demonstrated that 63% of students were kinaesthetic/visual learners; inspiring the design of visual experiences in blended classrooms. Youtube (84%) was the preferred online content interface, followed by Echo360 (83%) and quizzes (74%). Such data informed the utility of social media for the pastoral care component of the modified Flipped Classroom model, co-created pre-class videos, post-class quizzes and revision podcast, and modern media streams. Specifically, the lightboard has been embraced by co-creation quality enhancement projects across Medicine and Dentistry Disciplines.

**Contributions:** The program's success was attested to by improvement in overall student satisfaction in course facilitation and improvement in academic performance. Fail rates decreased from 36% in 2015 to 14% in 2018. 93% of students reported an increased sense of community evidenced by "I really loved having the peer leaders in this course. It was great being able to ask them questions and gain useful advice from them, since they've already done it before" (Focus Group, 2017); while student engagement improved, with 73% attending lectures. The retrospective design of the Students as Partners model saw students develop leadership qualities, resulting in empowerment, inclusivity, and improved communication skills to prepare them for STEM related careers

**Name:** *Dr. Nicolene Lottering*  
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**University:** *The University of Adelaide*

## A student mentor community of practice

Inspired by the UK's recent Realising Engagement through Active Culture Transformation (REACT) investigation of student engagement, in 2017 Deakin University established a student peer mentor community of practice to support the student mentor voice. It provides a structure for Deakin student mentors to work alongside Deakin's professional peer coordinators who have their own, long-established community of practice. They work in tandem, exchanging knowledge and ideas, with all growing from the learning that ensues.

Experienced and trained mentors from all peer support programs are invited to participate and two from each program may be nominated by program coordinators.

Some examples of the projects that these student mentors have participated in are:

- training coordinators in Deakin's staff development program
- working on Deakin's mentoring Reward and Recognition project
- contributing to the Peers 4 Peers Newsletter (STARS interest group)
- working with staff to revise Deakin's peer mentoring Best Practice Principles
- advising Health and Wellbeing staff on a possible peer health mentor program
- co-presenting with staff at AALL and ANZSSA conferences

Those involved have benefitted from the dynamic, ever-changing roles that both the student mentors and the peer support coordinators experience when working as partners—one moment supporting the others' learning, then being learners themselves. It is not students as staff, but students as students who are partners with staff—and that is where the value lies. It is this very interaction that challenges the idea of "the expert" and shows how we are all learners—always.

*Name: Dawn Jones*

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*University: Deakin University*

*Website: [www.deakin.edu.au/students-helping-students](http://www.deakin.edu.au/students-helping-students)*

## Curriculum transformation for cultural competence: Students and academics working in partnership to embed a new graduate quality

The University of Sydney launched a renewed education strategy with 'cultural competence' as a new quality of our graduates. As a result, the university has embarked on an intense period of curriculum renewal to embed cultural competence at degree and unit levels. We drew on the concept of decolonising higher education as a way of bringing together the literatures and values around cultural competence and Students as Partners.

We worked in partnership as six undergraduate students, together with five unit coordinators, and two academic developers to: develop and curate digital resources about students' experiences of cultural competence, and to collect a selection of students' narratives of learning about cultural competence to provide evidence of how it has been developed as a graduate quality. The five individual projects were in the disciplines of Project Management, Education, Physiotherapy, History, and Geology.

The five projects were evaluated in different ways (e.g. focus groups, surveys, interviews). We also evaluated the overall initiative in several ways drawing on 'critical friend' feedback from an international Students as Partners expert, reflective writing by each person at the end of the project, and a project report by each student ambassador (with input from the unit coordinator).

The evidence we collected shows positive impact on the development of cultural competence for students in the five units. In addition, the student ambassadors gained skills in areas such as research design and analysis. The unit coordinators reported gaining deeper insights into embedding cultural competence in their units.

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## Building an equitable digital environment: Understanding accessibility through students-as-partners

The Students as Partners program is integral to the operations of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) (PVC(E)) digital uplift at UNSW. The students participate across a range of areas, enriching projects by contributing current and authentic knowledge on learning at UNSW. One project that has been very successful was centred around accessibility.

The UNSW 2025 Strategy (2015) includes the ambition that the university be recognised as an international exemplar in equity, diversity and inclusion. This was reiterated in the university's recent Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2018), which stresses the need to make the university's digital environment accessible to all staff and students no matter their difference. This of course is a legal requirement outlined in the Australian Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and is also contained in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

In response to this, the PVC(E) digital uplift has prioritized accessibility by employing a PhD candidate, Abigail Jayasuriya, to work as a student-as-partner expert. Abigail is legally blind. Since commencing work at the PVC(E), she has audited a number of projects using screen readers for PC and Mac and also trained staff to use these devices. This in turn led to workshops and a film resource to help educational developers and convenors produce accessible lecture slides. Far reaching consequences of this partnership are that there will be systematic accessibility testing of resources such as Echo360 lecture recordings, UNSW The Box recordings, and Moodle navigation. UNSW Library will also consider enabling OCR on their digital resources.

It has been an invaluable experience to understand first-hand the frustrations of the digital environment as a blind student. We intend to continue to work with Abby and other students-as-partner to achieve the goals outlined in the University's 2025 Strategy and Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

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## Student Partnership @ UNE: A holistic approach

The need for effective institution-wide student participation and engagement at the University of New England (UNE) was the catalyst for the development of a student-led partnership framework. This student partnership aims to include genuine student involvement in decision-making processes from start to finish, increase and create value in student contributions, develop ownership of institutional decision making, and provide and support student leadership opportunities.

Driving this project are the UNE student leaders, Penny Leary and Koady Williams, who both have a portfolio of positions that engage them in University decision-making. Behind these students is a motivated team of staff led by Professor Darren Ryder – Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning) within the Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law (SABL) assisting with resourcing, project development and mentoring.

A student-led Pilot Project was designed, led and implemented by students with the aim of increasing student engagement through a peer-to-peer online portal that included feedback mechanisms on unit quality. The portal was designed as a student only space within our existing learning platform (Moodle). Appointed unit Student Leaders facilitated communication among students and promoted the use of feedback channels. The portal had over 7684 initial enrolments, with a retention of 98.67% and over 2654 students engaged with unit portals. Student feedback on unit quality was achieved by providing thematic fortnightly feedback to Unit Coordinators via an independent Faculty learning designer. Early interventions could resolve issue communicated to students through Moodle within unit delivery, rather than traditional evaluations that delay feedback until the next offering.

The aims of increasing student engagement, the timely provision of feedback on unit quality, and increased opportunities for student leadership were all achieved. The pilot project fits a university wide strategy to increase student participation in governance and decision making through a partnership model. These opportunities will increase students' individual and collective ownership of their learning experience, and improve engagement of students with university teaching and learning.

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## **HASS Connect Mentoring Program: Build confidence. Broaden Understandings. Make Connections.**

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Student Futures team are working in collaboration with three student partners to co-create and implement a brand new Industry Mentoring Program that is being piloted in semester 2, 2018. This program will connect later year undergraduate students in the HASS Faculty with HASS alumni in a supportive environment in which students can feel comfortable exploring their career options and goals.

The objectives of the HASS Connect Mentoring Program are:

- To establish positive mentoring relationships that are mutually beneficial
- To build HASS students confidence in identifying potential career pathways
- To encourage professional networks and relationships
- To broaden understandings of transferable skills

In order to achieve these objectives, the project team (one staff member and three student partners) first defined what it meant to them to work in partnership and established clear expectations for their team such as respecting each other's ideas, understanding your role and responsibilities and the method and frequency of communication. The project team decided to meet on a weekly basis and designated tasks between team members based on their area of expertise or an area they would like to develop their skills in. This has included:

- Co-facilitating workshops/meetings with students, staff and alumni
- Designing guidelines and resource materials
- Designing tools for evaluation
- Matching mentors and mentees
- Event management

The project team have identified two key learning outcomes so far including: recognising and incorporating the expertise and collective decision making of people regardless of their 'level' or 'role' in order to better inform innovative project decision making and to acknowledge and celebrate key achievements along the way.

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## HASS Crew: A student-led initiative creating leaders, community and belonging

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Student Futures team are working in collaboration with nine student partners in 2018 to co-create and implement activities focused on:

- Facilitating meaningful and regular peer-to-peer interaction between commencing and continuing undergraduate (and postgraduate) students
- Provide information and guidance to students in determining study pathways that align with their own career and life aspirations
- Inform a sustainable approach to welcome and induction activities within the HASS Faculty.

The project team, including one staff member and nine student partners are building on the work undertaken in 2017 by implementing previously successful events and activities, and piloting new initiatives aimed at international and postgraduate student engagement. Key activities include:

- Student-led and student run interactive O-Week events
- Roll out of successful 2017 HASS Crew Activities including Battle of the Schools Debate and 1,5,10 Alumni Careers Night
- Pilot new initiatives for international and postgraduate students with a focus on community building including HASS Scavenger Hunt, Postgrad Pitch Night, and HASS International Picnic

Student partners are recruited and inducted for two main roles, Event Coordination and Communications, at the commencement of each semester, and work closely with staff to clearly define expectations and project objectives. Regular meetings are organised in which the design and planning of events are undertaken and clear tasks allocated between student partners and staff. Student partners are also invited to attend a series of personal development workshops focussed on developing project management skills, leadership skills, and identifying strengths.

Through collaboration, shared experiences, and team work, the project team has been able to deliver three full day orientation events and six mid-semester events to engage over 2000 HASS students in an engaging format that is student designed, led, and implemented.

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## Students as Partners in academic governance: Enhancing student-staff partnership in governance and decision making

Supporting authentic student engagement in academic governance and decision making processes is a common challenge facing many universities. At the same time, there is growing recognition of the affordances of working in partnership with students to drive improvements in teaching and learning. At the end of 2017, the University Learning and Teaching Committee endorsed a proposal from the Students as Partners in Academic Governance team. This proposal outlined a series of enabling strategies to strengthen the existing formal structures of student representation in academic governance and provide opportunities for staff and students to work in partnership.

This project now sits with the Student Success Group (in the Student Partnership and Leadership Development Portfolio; SPLD). In April, two student partners were appointed to work alongside staff from the SPLD team to progress implementation and evaluation of the following enabling strategies;

1. Create a Student Representative Network (virtual and physical)
2. Define roles and responsibilities for student representatives (including connecting representatives with existing and additional opportunities for training and leadership development)
3. Sustain engagement of all stakeholders across the university.

Despite a requirement for student representation on university level committees and some faculty committees, there is great variation in the way staff and students engage in academic governance. In partnership with key stakeholders across the university, including student representatives, QUT Guild, and staff from Governance and Legal Services, we aim to identify and highlight best practice with the view to standardise approaches to recruitment and training across the university accordingly.

To ensure the outcomes of this work are relevant and accessible for the intended audience, both now and into the future, we have partnered with current student representatives to discuss their experiences on committees, with the intention of co-designing training resources and professional networks. In this way, we aim to provide contextualised support and resourcing that meets the needs of staff and students working in the governance space, and facilitates greater recognition and awareness of their role in the wider university community.

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## Therapaws: A student-led dog therapy program at the University of Sydney

The Therapaws program is a partnership between students and staff at the University of Sydney which combines dog therapy with the principles of Students as Partners to create an effective health and wellbeing initiative. Therapaws aims to:

1. Contribute to a healthy learning environment for students by reducing stress
2. Facilitate peer-to-peer messages regarding health and wellbeing and connect students with information about health and wellbeing and support services
3. Increase student engagement and build a sense of community in our Faculty
4. Create opportunities for students to act as change agents and gain graduate qualities

Therapaws began in 2016, with staff and students working together to co-design, co-implement and conduct research on the program. Sessions consist of two key components: dog therapy, provided by our partner Delta Society, and peer-to-peer conversations between student volunteers and student participants, which are centered around a student-produced 'Health and Wellbeing Handout'.

Approximately 2,443-3,500 students participated in the seven sessions held to date, with evidence suggesting student partnerships were effective in driving the impact of Therapaws against our four key aims. A majority of 97% of student participants surveyed (n=156) felt less stressed after attending a Therapaws session. Students who attended two or more Therapaws sessions increased their knowledge of student support services by 32.34% relative to students who had attended just one session. 92% of student participants reported feeling more confident that the University of Sydney was invested in their welfare after attending, and 89% enjoyed connecting with other students. Student volunteers (n=63) reported believing that they had made a positive impact on student health and wellbeing (91%), and that they increased a range of skills, including communication skills (84%) and confidence, teamwork and interpersonal skills (71%). Research co-conducted by students and staff was most notably presented at the 2017 HERDSA conference.

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## Peer mentor program: For students by students

At the University of Adelaide, in two degree programs, Bachelor of Agricultural Science and Bachelor of Viticulture and Oenology, the 1st year of the degree is undertaken at the main Adelaide City campus. Students then transition to a remote campus, The Waite, in 2nd year. This geographical transition combined with the increased intensity of 2nd year results in increased stress for students. Staff at the Waite campus were motivated to explore ways to make this transition less stressful for students.

The Peer Mentor Program grew out of results of a survey of more than 250 students at two remote campuses of the University of Adelaide (Waite and Roseworthy). Students indicated that their experience of the transition from 1st to 2nd year would have been improved if there had been a peer support network in place to provide student centred advice. An academic staff member invited students from 2nd and 3rd year to attend a planning session to begin implementation of a Peer Mentor Program at the Waite campus. The students who responded to the invitation became the inaugural cohort of peer mentors and determined how the Peer Mentor Program would work. The intention being that a program designed by senior students would have more traction with junior students. The key requirements identified by students were: an informal setting, food, mentors to be contactable and visible, and use of a Facebook page for communication.

The program started in March 2018 and runs regular drop-in sessions in the Student Hub during a common lunchtime. In addition the program runs events; a highlight was peer-peer “speed-dating” evening where junior students could meet senior students and ask quick fire questions. The peer mentors have also been key to O-day activities and collaborations with the campus post-graduate association.

Feedback from both mentors and mentees has been overwhelming positive: “Fantastic concept and great for both Mentors and Mentees. I wish this was available in my first year.”

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## Students as partners to boost student employability

The initial premise of the UNSW School of Chemical Engineering and Chemical Engineering Undergraduate Society (CEUS) Industry Series was to create a program to facilitate opportunities for our students to stay ahead of the increasingly competitive chemical engineering job market. And who better to co-develop a program to empower young chemical engineers than the students themselves! The former industrial training coordinator Dr. May Lim initiated contact with then CEUS President Emma Daniels in 2016.

The purpose was clear. The role of the society would be to develop a strong relationship with the students and the role of the school would be to advise the society to develop a program that could support students to find industrial training. Throughout 2016, the society hosted a number of events which boosted its reputation among students, thus creating a strong member base. It was at the end of 2016 that the school-society partnership kicked off. Both parties now brought something unique to the table which complemented one another. CEUS now had strong student engagement and the school had a large network in industry.

The Industry Series was piloted as a two year program (2017 – 2018). The Industry Series hosted over a dozen events which connected students, staff and industry. The events included two flagship Industry Nights hosting over 75 professionals, site visits, soft skill development workshops amongst the mix. Further, this program resulted in the creation of a Chemical Engineering Careers Guide for incoming future students.

In addition to the array of events, this series has strengthened the relationship the society has with professional bodies like the Engineers Australia Chemical College and the Institution of Chemical Engineers. This Students as Partners initiative has opened doors for further school-society collaboration and created an opportunity to add value to one another.

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## Students as Partners in the construction of a sustainable vertical campus precinct: Western Sydney University Bankstown CBD campus

The Bankstown Student Campus Council facilitates the student voice being heard by the University. The members on the BSCC are advocates for issues specific to our campus and are expected to uphold a procedural non-bias in ensuring these issues are raised at monthly meetings. Each Western campus has an SCC comprised of 11 members. Each SCC elects 3 representatives to sit at the SRC, which is our peak representative body for all Western Students.

In May of 2018, our campus council in conjunction with 10 student leaders from other Western Sydney University Campuses met with representatives of the University's Office of Estate and Commercial to explore the challenges of maintaining sustainability on the vertical campus model that the University is adopting. Students have identified with the assistance of the Manager for Sustainable Futures, Jen Dollin, that they would like to see sustainability initiatives incorporated into the vertical campus model. These conversations came about as a result of the existing Bankstown campus closure in 2020 and student concerns in relation to loss of green space, connections to place, as well as caring about country. Further concerns related to such things as:

- Questions about impact: construction, demolishing existing spaces – where does all the demolition materials go?
- Use of environmentally friendly or recycled materials in the construction of spaces
- Reflection of \$\$\$ over environment
- Need for Indigenous Consultation as traditional custodians of the land

This push by students to ensure that they have a sustained voice in the construction of this campus precinct, which was not afforded to them with the construction of the Parramatta City and Liverpool City campuses, since they were first invited to initial consultation forums with planners for the campus in February 2018 has resulted in the addition of the student voice in the project through the establishment of the research and external partnerships, people and change, community engagement, design, development and delivery, as well as academic steering committees which all have a student representative in conjunction with a project control group changing the way that the University approaches construction and implementation of new campuses within our network.

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## **Incorporating students as contributors of online dermatology content**

Aims: To include students in the discussion process in formulating a diagnosis in an informal way and to assess their background knowledge through the feedback.

Dermatology consists of largely visual content. A spectrum of diseases is seen in the Dermatology outpatient and inpatient. Teaching students uncommon and rare conditions involves showing slides and photographs. There are frequent online resources available for students. However, in order to ensure student participation, an online blog was created for students to themselves take photographs of their patients, upload these photographs, and have the rest of the cohort comment on them.

Dermatology residents (year 1-4) are invited to upload photographs and the other students are requested to comment upon them. Differential diagnoses of diseases were discussed. Any out-of-the-box comment was welcomed. The responses were then graded and level of efficiency assessed. The online blog provided a platform for students to interact and provide input without fear of assessment of formal examination.

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## Translating the principles of partnership to the classroom

I wanted to open up the curriculum through partnership to enable students (class of 64 people) in a fourth-year education course to take ownership for learning and teaching. The subject is a 'capstone subject', Teaching as Professional Practice, intended to draw together knowledge from across year levels through a translation process preparing students for professional work as primary teachers. To this end, teachers as researchers guides the subject where students collaborate in groups of 3-4 to imagine, plan, design, and report research conducted while on a practical placement in schools.

Focused on co-creation in the curriculum that involves all students in a form of pedagogical partnership, I considered several ways to open up learning, teaching, and assessment. This included:

1. Negotiating assessment deadlines and weightings in the first week of class
2. Students selecting groups, topics, and methods for their research projects
3. Introducing the language and values of partnership through the practice of professional learning conversations
4. Students curating resources for the class
5. Introducing self-assessment of written research outputs completed in groups
6. Self-evaluation and class evaluation activity with students analysing results before negotiating changes in the class in the first weeks

Negotiating assessment weighting and deadlines took longer than anticipated because no clear consensus emerged in the first class. Opportunities for more discussion were required including time for everyone to consider options between classes. Through dialogue, we all accepted the decisions that arose from the process. The student curated resource list did not work that well (only a handful of students added resources to the list). Ownership for the research topic and process, supported by professional learning conversations, unfolded without issues.

Overall and to-date, the process of co-creation appears to be enhancing active student involvement and ownership. One source of evidence is engagement. There was no attendance or participation requirement (was assessed in prior years) yet 97-99% students attended and worked together in workshops and tutorials. There were no marks attached to specific activities (e.g. post research questions online), yet all students completed the activities. Another source of evidence is observed actions. For example, no students sought extensions for tasks. Student self-assessments were typically aligned with the tutor's mark, signaling effective evaluative judgement.

Not radical pedagogical acts, but certainly risky praxis, these small steps to bring co-creation into the classroom engendered a sharing of responsibility that blurred the lines between students and teachers.

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## Ensuring fair access and recognition for student partners: the logistics behind Course Design Studio student-staff collaborations

In their concluding remarks, Shaw et al. (2017) rightfully note that ownership, autonomy and context-specific processes are key to the success of student partnership activities at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). However, they further note challenges related to logistics and fair access to such opportunities. As awareness and appreciation of student partnership grows, the logistical challenges and risks to ensuring fair access also increase. Whilst tolerated as a necessary evil, systems and processes can improve as well as create barriers to meaningful, equitable, and accessible collaborations, in particular where students are concerned.

Course Design Studios (CDS), formally introduced in 2017, enable 'central' curriculum, learning, and technology design staff to partner with faculty course teams and students. With the formalisation of such ways of working, there has been a need to examine consistency of the often hidden recruitment and onboarding processes related to student partnerships. This task was undertaken as a partnership between staff from the Student Success Group (SSG) and a Learning Designer from the CDS through the process of recruiting students for developmental work related to the new Bachelor of Design. Important areas for consideration included:

- **Clear role classification and line management responsibility** – aiming for consistency in compensation; students as casual professional staff; 'Student Associate for Course Design' as distinct from other unpaid or voluntary roles, and paid roles with other titles.
- **Equal access to opportunities** – ensuring a fair recruitment and selection process was key. This included: a carefully-toned and worded advertisement with clear selection criteria; ensuring a suitable advertising platform for the roles, and background system to capture data related to students' applications; showcasing wider opportunities for student development and leadership, in particular for students who might not meet the criteria, or were unsuccessful in their applications; and a fair scoring process for shortlisting.
- **Induction and onboarding** – led by Jen Tredinnick, the Coordinator, Peer Leader Support in SSG for student and staff partners together, discussing the fundamentals of partnership working, and jointly defining a way forward for the design project.
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Shaw, N., Rueckert, C., Smith, J., Tredinnick, J. & Lee, M. (2017) Students as Partners in the Real World: A Whole-Institution Approach, A Whole of Institution Case Study International Journal for Students as Partners 1 (1)

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