



Curtin University

Mentor Benefits

International Student Mentor Perceptions of Interaction Opportunities from a Broad-Scale Mentoring Program

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Overview

- Introduction/Reasons
- Methods
- Interactive statistics game
- Further research
- Recommendations
- Discussion questions



Introduction

- International Student Experience

Lack of interaction with diverse groups of students (Arkoudis et al, 2010: Leask & Carroll, 2011)

Improved experience through increased interactions with diverse groups (Lawson, 2012)

- Multicultural campus \neq Multicultural experience

- Interactions need to be both created and facilitated (Gresham et al, 2013)



Introduction

- Curtin University Graduate Attributes:
 - Recognise and apply international perspectives
 - Demonstrate intercultural awareness and understanding

- Interaction with a diverse group of students is important to International students (Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Arkoudis et al., 2010; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2013)



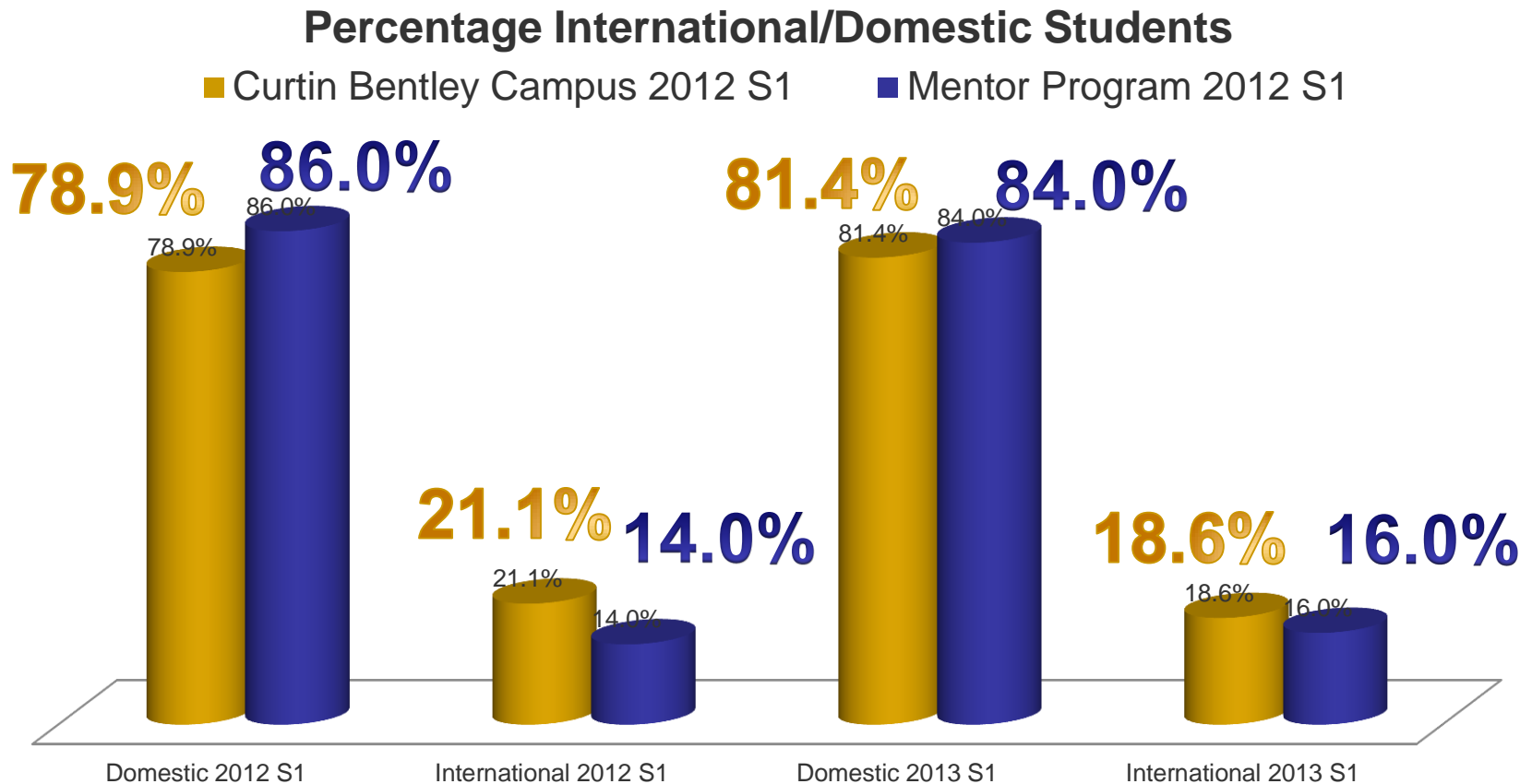
Curtin's Mentor Program

- Across all Faculties on Bentley Campus
 - Approximately 7000 new first year students (mentees) semester 1
 - Semester 1, 2013 = 413 mentors
- Opt-out
- Group program (approx. 15 mentees within course)
- Face to face and email mentoring
- Diverse mentee groups and mentor cohort:
 - International
 - Domestic
 - External
 - Mature Age
 - School leavers
 - Internal



Curtin's Mentor Program

- Discrepancy between international student percentage across Bentley campus and within mentor cohort



Questions

How do we increase international student representation in mentor cohort?

Are there opportunities as a mentor to mix with a diverse range of students?



Is this important to Curtin's international student mentors?

Method

- Mentor program evaluation end of every semester 1
- All mentors are required to complete a survey
- Relevant survey responses sorted into categories



Evaluation Data

What is the most significant way you have benefitted from mentoring?

Category	Description/Example
Helping others	Intrinsic feelings of happiness and personal satisfaction that come from helping others “Joy expressed by mentee when I am able to help them (sic)”
Interaction	Interaction, understanding others, developing networks and connections “Getting to meet a whole new batch of first years...and becoming friends with quite a few of them...”
Curtin Knowledge	Learning more about Curtin and the support services and activities available to students “I have learnt things about services at Curtin that I didn’t know about before...”
Skills Development	Developing skills such as leadership, communication, time management, patience and self-reflection “I have been able to improve my leadership and communication skills...”
Confidence	Developing confidence “By being a mentor, I have built up my confidence...”

(Beltman & Schaebe, 2012)



Evaluation Data

What is the most significant way you have benefitted from mentoring?

International Student Mentors		Domestic Student Mentors	
Category	Average S1 2012 & S1 2013	Category	Average S1 2012 & S1 2013
Helping others		Helping others	
Interaction		Interaction	
Curtin Knowledge		Curtin Knowledge	
Skills Development		Skills Development	
Confidence		Confidence	
	100%		100%

2013
2012



Evaluation Data



What is the most significant way you have benefitted from mentoring?



Evaluation Data

Do you have any suggestions/comments on how we can improve the Mentor Program?

Category	Description/Example
Mentor Role	Tasks mentors undertake, role boundaries, meetings with staff members, support information provided <i>"Let mentees know that mentors...don't help with academic matters "</i>
Program Structure	Opt-in instead of opt-out, when and how mentees are assigned to mentors, mentor/mentee meetings, orientation activities, mentee numbers <i>"Perhaps providing us access to the students at an earlier date before the beginning of semester started..."</i> <i>"Perhaps allocating less mentees to each mentor."</i>
Social Events	Social and networking events <i>"A mentor organised dinner with the whole first year and mentors,..."</i>
Communication	Mentee responses, emails to mentors from mentor coordinator, advertising and PR <i>"At the start of semester get all the new students to send an email to their mentor."</i>
Training Changes	Changes to the mentor training both face to face and online <i>"Bit more role playing and real life situations in the training."</i>

Evaluation Data

Do you have any suggestions/comments on how we can improve the Mentor Program?

International Student Mentors	
Category	Average S1 2012 & S1 2013
Mentor Role	<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 25px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>43% 6%</p> <p>0% 26%</p> <p>25%</p> </div>
Program Structure	
Social Events	
Communication	
Training Changes	
	100%

Domestic Student Mentors	
Category	Average S1 2012 & S1 2013
Mentor Role	<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 25px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>10% 3%</p> <p>46% 13%</p> <p>28%</p> </div>
Program Structure	
Social Events	
Communication	
Training Changes	
	100%

2013 \$
2012 \$



Evaluation Data



Do you have any suggestions/comments on how we can improve the Mentor Program?



Interview Data: International Student Mentors

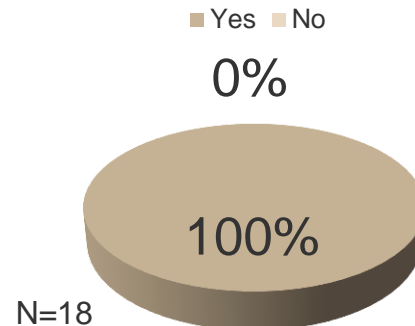
- International student mentors from Asian, Pacific and African countries responded
- Questions regarding
 - Reasons for mentoring
 - Benefits of mentoring
 - Types of interactions involved in mentoring
 - Value attributed to interactions with diverse range of students



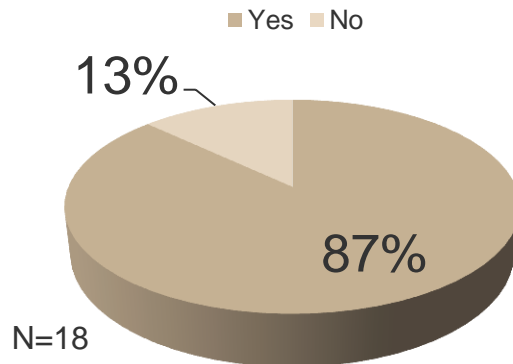
- Only 1 volunteered specifically for the “chance to interact with more domestic and international students”

Interview Data: International Student Mentors

In your role as a mentor, did you interact with both domestic and international students?



Was this interaction valuable to you?



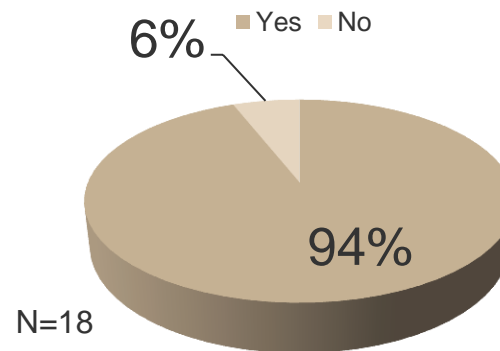
“Yes. It is because I learn different cultures from others.”

“Yes - It assisted in improving my interpersonal skills with people of a different background from mine.”

“I met a bigger diversity of friends and friends are the most important people when I am away from my family.”

Interview Data: International Student Mentors

Is interaction with both domestic and international students a valuable part of your university experience?



“Yes, being able to speak to international students, I could relate my experiences to them. Being able to interact with domestic students allows me to learn about their culture and their knowledge.”

“Yes. It was a great experience to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures. I was so glad that we had the chance to share our opinions and learning experiences together.”

“Yes, it is as Australia is a pretty diverse country. So, being at ease with everyone helps me integrate the country better.”

Opportunities for Further Research

- Analyses are very broad
- Differences between academic years, course cohorts, genders and cultural groups could be examined
- Larger interview groups
- Investigate the benefits to domestic students in this area as well as benefits to international students

Conclusions

Are there opportunities as a mentor to mix with a diverse range of students?

YES

Is this important to Curtin's international student mentors?

YES

How do we increase international student representation in mentor cohort?

Promote these results at recruitment



Recommendations

- Incorporate more social events into mentor program
- Promote the interactive opportunities in the mentor program to international students during recruitment
- Utilise the idea of enhancing the international student experience in mentor program reports and funding applications



Discussion Questions

- Do you have a similar experience in your own organisation?
- Could you create opportunities for this sort of interaction between diverse student groups in your own organisation? How would you create and facilitate them?
- How would you promote these interaction opportunities to your students?



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Thanks to Kate Gresham, Mentor Program Coordinator and Ebonee Lynch, Senior Mentor Program Coordinator, Curtin University for their support and guidance.

Thanks for
attending!



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