



Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

‘Engaging Families to Engage Students’: Exploring how university outreach activities can forge productive partnerships with families to assist first-in-family students navigate their higher education journey.

Final report 2016

Associate Professor Sarah O’Shea  
University of Wollongong,  
2015 National Teaching Fellow

[www.firstinfamily.com.au](http://www.firstinfamily.com.au)

Support for this fellowship has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The views in this fellowship do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted, all material presented in this document is provided under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>.

Requests and inquiries concerning these rights should be addressed to:  
Learning and Teaching Support  
Student Information and Learning Branch  
Higher Education Group  
Department of Education and Training

GPO Box 9880  
Location code C50MA7  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

<[learningandteaching@education.gov.au](mailto:learningandteaching@education.gov.au)>

2017

ISBN 978-1-76051-069-5 [PDF]  
ISBN 978-1-76051-068-8 [PRINT]  
ISBN 978-1-76051-070-1 [DOCX]

# Acknowledgements

My fellowship would not have been possible without the work carried out under a multi-institutional Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) 2014 seed grant. The seed grant supported the *Breaking the Barriers* project. This project included 101 student interviews conducted with first-in-family students and some family members, 173 surveys completed by students and 40 surveys completed by family members. Without this rich data source, the fellowship would have been limited in its reach and impact and so I thank and acknowledge my colleagues: Associate Professor Josephine May, Dr Cathy Stone and Dr Janine Delahunty (Project Manager) for their input into this foundational study.

I would also like to thank all those stakeholders who participated in workshops at various locations throughout New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania during 2015–2016. In total, approximately 500 hundred participants attended sessions that sought to explore approaches to engaging first-in-family students and their family members in the higher education sector. A total of 239 evaluations were completed and a further 21 staff agreed to be followed up for interviews (n=9) and further surveys (n=13). This commitment to the fellowship enabled the development of national principles for supporting first in family students and their families (Appendix B) and an array of online resources. This collaborative input enabled all the materials that have emerged from my fellowship to be both rich in content and immediately applicable to the sector.

My fellowship would not have resulted in such a diversity of outputs without support from the School of Education and the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong; having the opportunity to 'buy-out' my teaching enabled me to dedicate a significant proportion of my time to achieving the promised outputs and to additional activities, which responded to sector need. I particularly want to acknowledge Ms Tracy Creal, who cheerfully assisted with extensive travel arrangements, and Ms Jacinta McNamara, who took over my teaching load. My mentor, Professor Romy Lawson, provided excellent guidance and oversight in the initial stages of the fellowship, whilst my evaluator, Dr Cathy Stone, provided much-needed critical feedback. The evaluation was both formative and summative involving ongoing consultation over the 18 months of fellowship activities. A copy of the final evaluation report has been appended to this document and provides a critical analysis of fellowship outcomes and outputs.

The participants in the 2016 forum *Conversations about Retaining and Engaging First-in-Family Learners and their Families* (FiF Forum) must also be acknowledged; this includes the invited speakers, those who submitted lightning presentations on best practice and, of course, those who attended on the day. The FiF Forum was held over two days (24 and 25 November 2016); a total of 43 attendees participated in the Thursday workshops and 99 attendees in the Friday all-day forum (many of these attended both events).

Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowships also require people who can provide not only high-level organisational skills but also advice and support as the fellowship evolves. I would particularly like to thank Dr Janine Delahunty for her excellent organisational skills, her high-level conceptualisations and her unfailing good humour. Equally, Ms Wendy Firth was able to

translate my blog musings and newsletter updates into accessible and quality social media output – thank you both for accompanying me on this journey with humour and good nature!

# List of acronyms used

ABS:	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW:	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIME:	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
FiF:	First-in-family (generally in regards to first in family higher education students)
SCU:	Southern Cross University
SERT	Student Engagement and Retention Team
UOW:	University of Wollongong
UNSW:	University of New South Wales
UTAS:	University of Tasmania

# Executive summary

## Background

This Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship focuses on those students who are the first in their families to come to university, in order to explore approaches to retaining and engaging this cohort. Of particular interest was the ways in which the family and community of learners might be included in this university journey. This concentration on first-in-family (FiF) students is derived from the recognition that this is a collective category that traverses established equity groupings. Related research has proposed that the FiF category be conceptualised as a ‘supra’ equity category that works across existing equity classifications (O’Shea, May, Stone & Delahunty, 2015). Within Australia, FiF status is currently defined by institutional enrolment data on parental education levels, but this is not reported systematically. This category also currently falls outside Australian equity definitions, so these students may slip through ‘cracks in the system’. Yet, this is a growing student cohort, currently estimated at 51 per cent of the student population (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013) but characterised by substantially poorer educational outcomes (ABS, 2013; AIHW, 2014).

My existing research with FiF students (O’Shea, 2014–2016; O’Shea, Stone, May, & Delahunty, 2015) indicates that their families do not necessarily know or understand the best ways to support these learners once they get to university. For example, students indicate that there are ‘silences’ in the home around their higher education participation (O’Shea, 2014) and family members have similarly described (in surveys and interviews) a lack of knowledge concerning how best to support the higher education participant in the family (O’Shea, May, Stone & Delahunty, 2017). This Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching<sup>1</sup> (OLT) National Teaching Fellowship attempted to ‘upscale’ the resource and knowledge outputs from a previous OLT seed grant (O’Shea et al., 2015). Interviews and surveys conducted with both students and key family members underlined the pivotal role played by those closest to the learner in the enactment of success within the higher education environment. In response to this, the fellowship sought to develop a range of resources and deliverables that would connect with both individual learners and their family or broader community.

A first-in-family student in higher education is the first out of their immediate family, (siblings, parents, main caregivers, life partners and children) to attend university.

## Fellowship approach

Whilst many university outreach and retention programs have been put in place to improve the participation rates of students from equity groups, arguably they are missing a key component essential to the success of these programs — meaningful engagement with the family and community of learners. The consequence is that many outreach programs may not achieve their potential because family members lack awareness of what it means to go to university and how to effectively support students in this journey. In recognition of this, the fellowship worked with university stakeholders across Australia, many of whom were involved with the

---

<sup>1</sup> The OLT ceased on the 30 June 2016; the Australian Government Department of Education and Training continued to support the fellowship through the Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education program.

transition and retention of FiF students. Through a series of workshops and the development of online resources, the fellowship has showcased approaches to fostering connections with the family/community of learners to better sustain student engagement during transition into the university environment. However, the fellowship did not solely focus on university practitioners; it also engaged with family and caregivers to get a sense of their perceptions of university and how they considered the university learner in their family. This engagement formed the basis for the development of the inaugural national principles for engaging with first-in-family learners and their families (see Appendix B). Table 1 indicates the activities planned under this fellowship, their implementation and the various outputs.

**Table 1: Overview of fellowship activities and outputs**

Planned activities	Activities implemented
Collaborate with key stakeholders and leading academics in the field to facilitate the development of national principles.	<i>In total, over 500 key stakeholders engaged and participated in workshops across the country; each participant was invited to contribute to the national principles for engaging with the family and community of first-in-family students (hereafter known as the national principles).</i>
Obtain national feedback on these principles.	<i>Feedback was derived from Twitter; a database of 'critical friends, of the project, blogs and newsletters.</i>
Enact principles within two case study sites.	<i>The principles were enacted at UNSW and SCU.</i>
<b>Output (1): Development of national principles for engaging with the family and community of first-in-family students. Available at <a href="http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-1.php">http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-1.php</a> (and at Appendix B).</b>	
Initiate an action learning cycle at two case study sites.	<i>Two case study sites (UNSW and SCU) translated the principles into interventions with FiF students and their family/community.</i>
Feedback derived from both equity practitioners and the family/students involved in the activities.	<i>I facilitated meetings with staff around the implementation and wrote up summary case studies based on these activities.</i>
Develop an online toolkit to assist equity providers in supporting this learning cohort.	<i>An online toolkit has been developed and is available: <a href="http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/practitioners.php">http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/practitioners.php</a>.</i>
<b>Output (2): A suite of outreach activities targeted at the family/community of learners – including an online toolkit that will assist equity practitioners to design future initiatives in this area. Available at <a href="http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-2.php">http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-2.php</a></b>	
Workshops offered to equity and outreach providers in three institutions.	<i>Fourteen workshops across Australia, which engaged with staff from 18 institutions.</i>
Feedback loop built into the workshop structure and ongoing mentoring offered to other university sites.	<i>A feedback loop comprising an evaluation form, opportunity to be further involved in the project (via sign-up) and ongoing mentoring offered at all locations.</i>
<b>Output (3): Based on evaluations, practical tips and strategies for engaging with the family and</b>	

---

community of FiF students were developed and disseminated at the fellowship's national forum.

Organise outreach practitioner's forum on FiF learners.

*A national forum, 'Conversations about Retaining and Engaging First-in-Family Learners' (2016 FiF Forum), was held in November 2016.*

**Output (4):** National forum organised which had over 120 attendees from 30 institutions. Details available here: <https://conversationsfirstinfamilylearners.eventbrite.com.au>

Drawing upon the expertise of the reference group, forum participants, case study sites and institutional workshops, a 'how-to' publication will be written exploring how the community/family of first-in-family students can be better engaged by the higher education sector.

*While not focused solely on OLT-funded work, along with colleagues I have co-authored a publication that drew on a number of related studies conducted with FiF learners. The book was published by Palgrave Macmillan in March 2017.*

**Output (5):** Co-authored book publication entitled: *First-in-Family Students, University Experience and Family Life: Motivations, Transitions and Participation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

---

In addition to the planned activities, additional activities and outputs are detailed below.

- Journal articles and publications (n=8) that sought to both inform understanding of this FiF cohort and highlight the fellowship activities (May, Delahunty, O'Shea & Stone, 2016; O'Shea, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016f; O'Shea, Stone, May & Delahunty, 2016; O'Shea et al, 2017; Stone, O'Shea, May, Delahunty, & Partington, 2016).
- The fellowship utilised social media to raise the profile of this student cohort and attempt to 'change conversations' – this included a regular blog, Twitter and newsletter feed. The blog (<http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog/>) provided an excellent forum for disseminating 'bite-size' messages to a diverse audience. The Twitter account (@Uni\_FiF) is being followed by 154 people comprised of equity practitioners, academics, policy makers and researchers in the field. Finally, a bi-monthly online newsletter maintained the momentum of the fellowship and allowed new resources and innovations to be publicised broadly to the sector.
- An analysis of local and institutional literature on FiF student initiatives internationally provided the basis for recommendations to institutions that wanted to implement innovative FiF strategies.
- Online audio-visual resources were developed for staff at two institutions (Griffith and SCU) to explore the nature of the FiF student cohort and disseminate key points about his cohort.
- Two presentations to Department of Education and Training policy and program officers (Canberra).
- Surveys (n=52) conducted with family members – this, combined with existing family interviews and surveys, formed the basis for the development of *Eight Tips for Engaging and Supporting Family Members of First-In-Family Learners* (<http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-3-1.php>).
- Video vignettes with FiF academic and professional university staff designed to focus on stories of success.



Overall, this fellowship has ‘cleared a space’ for the voices and perspectives of FiF learners and their families to be considered and foregrounded in university discourses. The relevance and timely nature of the fellowship, best attested by the uptake of this work, has appealed to a broad spectrum of people including students, family members and university staff. The last-named has included those working in equity and diversity, outreach, library services, teaching and learning support roles, academic units, researchers and those in leadership roles within the sector. The fellowship has brought this diversity of people together via a mix of workshop sessions, presentations at conferences and research gatherings, social media and online mediums.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of acronyms used .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Background .....	6
Fellowship approach.....	6
<b>Tables .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Figures .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Part 1. Fellowship introduction and overview .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Background .....	15
Fellowship context.....	15
Why focus on first-in-family (FiF) students? .....	16
Why now? .....	17
Fellowship overarching aims and objectives.....	18
How the fellowship evolved .....	18
<b>Part 2. Fellowship activities and dissemination .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Fellowship activities.....	20
Activity 1: Develop national principles for engaging with the family and community of first-in-family students. ....	20
Activity 2: Workshops and sessions offered to institutions across Australia .....	20
Activity 3: International and national presentations .....	22
Activity 5: Utilise social media to engage and collaborate .....	23
Activity 6: Further develop the <a href="http://www.firstinfamily.com.au">www.firstinfamily.com.au</a> website .....	24
Activity 7: Create links and connections to other fellowships .....	27
Activity 8: Provide mentoring and work closely with case study sites .....	28
Activity 9: National Forum: Conversations about retaining and engaging first-in-family learners in higher education .....	31
Forum delivery.....	31
Fellowship dissemination .....	32
Cascading adoption of resources .....	34
Bi-annual forum.....	34
Encourage further ‘conversations’ .....	34
<b>Part 3: Fellowship impact and evaluation .....</b>	<b>34</b>

Case study sites.....	34
Southern Cross University .....	35
University of New South Wales .....	35
Workshop evaluations .....	36
Importance of family .....	37
Strengths-based approach .....	37
Personal agency.....	37
2016 FiF Forum evaluations .....	38
Publications .....	40
Institutional articles to showcase the research and the project:.....	40
National features on the research: .....	40
Newspaper articles on the research: .....	41
Other Media .....	41
Unsolicited stakeholder feedback .....	41
Analytics from the website.....	41
<b>Part 4. Considerations and future directions .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Success factors.....	42
The currency of the project.....	42
The collaborative nature of the activities .....	42
Value for money .....	42
Responsiveness and flexibility: The requests for practical exemplars and activities ....	43
Challenges.....	43
Case study sites .....	43
Organisational constraints .....	43
Longevity .....	43
Future directions .....	43
<b>References.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Appendix A: Certification by Vice-Chancellor .....	47
Appendix B: National Principles for engaging first-in-family students and their families .....	48
Appendix C: Example of Newsletter and Blog.....	52
Appendix D: Summary reflections from UNSW and CSU .....	54
Appendix E: Forum Programs.....	57

Appendix F: Workshop Evaluation Survey .....	59
Appendix G: Gantt chart planner for 2016 FiF forum .....	62

# Tables

Table 1: Overview of fellowship activities and outputs.....	7
Table 2: Timeline for the completion of the fellowship 2015 to 2016.....	19
Table 3: Details of institutions that hosted a FiF workshop .....	21
Table 4: Details of national presentations.....	22
Table 5: Details of international presentations .....	22
Table 6: Details of mentoring and institutional meetings .....	30

# Figures

Figure 1: Steps to the fellowship .....	18
Figure 2: First-in-Family newsletter example .....	24
Figure 3: Overview of the toolkit structure .....	25
Figure 4: Family Quiz opening page.....	26
Figure 5: DET staff and UNSW Aspire staff after the fellowship presentation in Canberra ....	28
Figure 6: IMPEL Framework.....	32-33
Figure 7: SCU’s Welcome card to FiF students .....	35
Figure 8: Workshop activity rating.....	35
Figure 9: Roles held by Forum attendees .....	37
Figure 10: Overall rating of Friday Forum.....	38

# Part 1. Fellowship introduction and overview

## Background

Sometimes in life you are drawn repeatedly to particular areas of interest until the opportunity to enact real change arises. After nearly a decade of researching and writing about the first-in-family (FiF) student experience, this fellowship provided me with the chance both to engage with the higher education sector in prolonged and productive ways, and to produce resources and materials I hope will positively contribute to the educational experiences of this student cohort. My own interest in FiF students is derived from my personal educational biography as well as previous work in academic support services at a regional university. In the latter role, I encountered many FiF learners who were often struggling with understanding the expectations of university, whilst simultaneously experiencing substantial shifts in identity and sometimes assuaging the apprehensions of family and community (O'Shea, 2015).

In order to better understand how these learners manage this significant transition, I commenced a PhD study in 2005 that explored the experience of FiF women who were in the first year of university studies. Following this group of female learners through an academic year provided rich insight into the types of strengths and capabilities they drew upon, as well as the transformations that resulted (O'Shea, 2014a, 2011; O'Shea & Stone, 2014; Stone & O'Shea, 2012). In the following years, I conducted a number of small-scale projects that, while focused on this cohort, equally recognised the intersectionality of these learners in terms of economic status, maturity and cultural background. These studies culminated in the receipt of a multi-institutional OLT seed grant titled *Breaking the Barriers: supporting and engaging first-in-family university learners and their families*. This study (hereafter *Breaking the Barriers*) provided the foundations of this fellowship and so will be detailed in the next section in order to provide necessary context.

## Fellowship context

As mentioned, this fellowship grew out of research and materials that were developed under the auspices of an OLT seed grant. The *Breaking the Barriers* project involved three institutions, namely University of Wollongong (lead), University of Newcastle and Open Universities Australia, with FiF participants recruited at each institution at various stages of their programs and studying in both face-to-face and online modes. The project also included family members in the research cycle in order to produce a deep analysis of the impacts higher education had on both learners and those closest to them. Family members were invited to participate in either an interview or a survey to reflect upon the ways attendance at higher education impacted upon those closest to the learner.

The major outputs from the *Breaking the Barriers* project included a wealth of research data that deeply engaged with the experiences of FiF learners and their significant others; a website

that hosted a range of resources for learners, some family members and teaching and learning staff; and a dissemination forum that attracted 113 attendees from across Australia. Each of these outputs (research data, website and forum) were further up-scaled under the auspices of the fellowship as follows.

**Research Data:** Given the depth of the research data generated under Breaking the Barriers, this data was further capitalised upon in order to enrich the resources produced under the fellowship. For example, during the development of the tip sheets for engaging with family and community, I returned to the coded interview data to further substantiate the findings that had been proposed. This data also formed the basis for a co-authored book publication as well as team-authored journal publications (n=3) published in 2016.

**Website:** The website was well received across the higher education sector, so the fellowship continued the dissemination and reach of this resource by both producing new materials and publicising the website in workshop presentations. Additionally, fellowship funding was used to update sections of the website and conduct ongoing site management.

**Forum:** At the 2015 Breaking the Barriers Forum, participants were asked to indicate whether they wished to hear more about work on FiF students; those who responded in the affirmative became the initial audience for fellowship activities. This group was also invited to both contribute to the first draft of the national principles and provide initial feedback on these principles. This first Forum also provided an excellent forerunner to the organisation of the fellowship forum, held in November 2016.

## **Why focus on first-in-family (FiF) students?**

There is no doubt that this fellowship derived momentum from activities initiated under the Breaking the Barriers grant, but there were other factors that made the 'climate of readiness' (Hinton, Gannaway, Berry & Moore, 2011) for this proposal so palpable. Some of these factors were the growing proportion of students who are first in their families to come to university, currently estimated at 51 per cent (Spiegler & Bednarek 2013), the higher departure rates attributed to this group and the reported poorer educational outcomes (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2014).

This situation is not unique to Australia; the growth of this cohort and the lower retention rates are replicated across a number of countries. High departure rates are particularly noted in countries such as the United States (Chen, 2005) and Canada (Lehmann, 2009), where statistics on this student cohort are collected systematically. There are many reasons why the FiF cohort is particularly vulnerable to attrition and disengagement from university. For example, one UK study argues that the lack of a higher education imprint within the family, or 'transgenerational family scripts' (Ball, Davies, David & Reay, 2002, p. 57), impacts the educational preparedness of learners. In my own research (O'Shea, 2016d), commencing FiF students reported 'feeling isolated and lonely, feelings that were exacerbated by uncertainty related to university language, expectations and protocols of behaviour' (p. 62). When they have little or no parental or family history of university attendance, or come from a community where



attending university is not the norm, both students and their families experience a steep 'learning curve' upon arrival (Stone & O'Shea, 2013).

## Why now?

As mentioned, the last decade has seen enrolments in Australian universities grow at an unprecedented level, and this participation is only set to increase given the establishment of a demand-driven system (Universities Australia, 2016). While the Australian higher education sector has been very successful at attracting students from a greater diversity of backgrounds, this growth in enrolments is not matched by similar high rates of completion. Departing early from university has significant and long-term financial, emotional and social repercussions for both learners and their families (Pitman, 2013), particularly amongst those students who may be the first in their family or community to attend university (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Often this cohort falls into multiple equity categorisations<sup>2</sup> and, as such, has an increased risk of attrition (Edwards & McMillan, 2015).

One of the key findings that emerged from the Breaking the Barriers project (2014) was the proposal that the category 'first-in-family' be recognised as a collective or amalgamated grouping. This suggestion was based on the recognition that FiF status frequently incorporates other equity identifiers and, also, the fact that it not currently defined in equity terms. The team proposed that FiF should be regarded as a 'supra' equity category that traverses recognised classifications of low-SES, regional or remote status, gender, disability and Indigeneity (O'Shea et al., 2015). This intersectionality of FiF students, combined with the fact that identifying as being FiF does not have an implicit negative or deficit value (often associated with equity classification), means that FiF status can be regarded as a form of celebration, with targeted support and outreach framed in a positive sense.

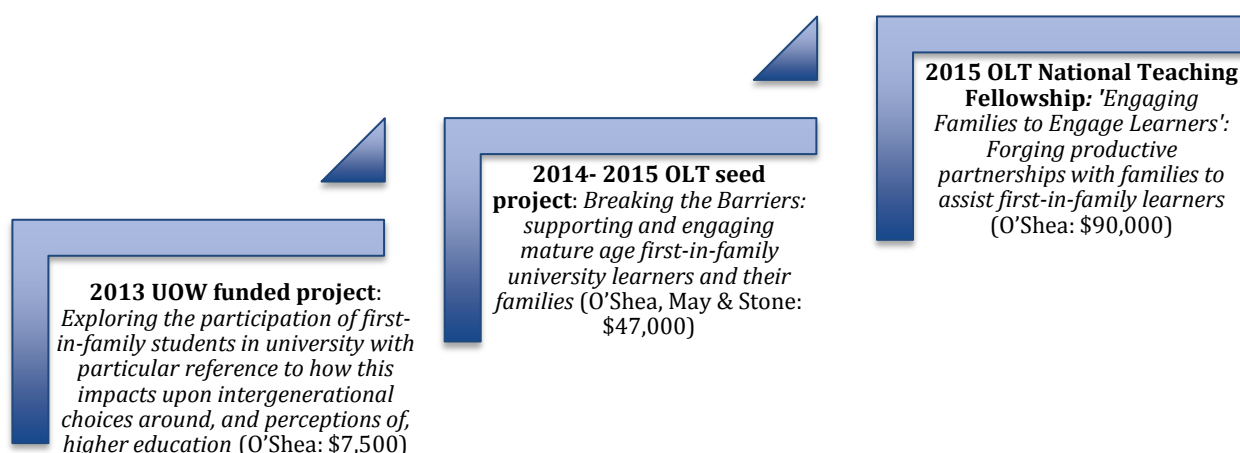
Aside from the celebratory value of this FiF identifier, the Breaking the Barriers research also indicated how the family and significant others of these learners can play key roles in the enactment of success. Like the work of Gofen (2009), our research suggested that the family of students should not be considered as a 'constraint' but rather recognised as a 'key resource' (p. 114). In the surveys and interviews conducted with learners, it was the voices and actions of these significant others that were repeatedly alluded to when students reflected upon this educational journey. However, whilst perhaps providing forms of support (which are not necessarily always positive in nature), these significant others may not know much about the higher education sector and may also lack confidence in their abilities to support their family member (O'Shea et al., 2017). It was this 'gap' in knowledge that prompted this fellowship's focus on approaches to fostering meaningful connections with the family/community of FiF learners, in order to sustain student engagement as these learners transition into the university environment.

---

<sup>2</sup> Australia currently has six equity groups, including people: *from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; from rural and isolated areas; with a disability; from a non-English speaking background; women in non-traditional areas of study and Indigenous people.*

## Fellowship overarching aims and objectives

As the previous sections have made apparent, this fellowship emerged organically from a series of previous research projects and activities. The contextualised and strongly empirical nature of its development resulted in very clear aims. The following diagram, Figure 1, indicates how fellowship objectives were grounded in a series of funded research stages or steps.



**Figure 1: Steps to the 2015 National Teaching fellowship**

Based on the knowledge and learning derived from these projects, this fellowship aimed to:

- Work with equity and outreach providers across Australia to explore approaches and develop strategies for engaging with the family and community of the learner.
- Develop or identify teaching and learning activities that target both FiF students and family/community members.
- Provide workshops and interactive sessions that seek to start 'collegial conversations' about FiF learners and ways to better support or engage with this cohort.
- Create principles and strategies that can underpin future initiatives and provide an evidence base for activities in this regard.
- Facilitate cross-institutional collaboration and networking to innovate best practice in supporting and engaging this cohort.
- Conduct surveys and interviews with a range of stakeholders to deepen understanding of this area.

## How the fellowship evolved

As mentioned, the fellowship's activities were carried out over a twelve-month period and Table 2 provides an overview of how the activities occurred throughout the year.

**Table 2: Timeline for the completion of the fellowship 2015 to 2016**

ACTIVITY	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Appoint fellowship Project Manager. Conduct preliminary planning meeting with case study sites. Complete and submit ethics.														
Design survey instruments for staff and family.														
Survey family members on campus.														
Develop Blog and Twitter site for the fellowship.														
Conduct workshops and presentations on FiF students across the higher education sector.														
Collate all suggestions for national principles and thematically analyse all responses.														
Conduct interviews with staff who have indicated consent on evaluations.														
Develop draft Principles - circulate for feedback.														
Finalise Principles and place these online.														
Review of international literature on support mechanisms for first-in-family students														
Dissemination at Open Universities (UK), SRHE Forum (Invited Speaker), SRHE conference and Dundalk Institute (Ireland).														
Dissemination at NCSEHE and STARS conference where I convened the inaugural SIG on FiF learners. Dissemination at AARE (Nov).														
Design and develop online tools, quizzes and equity toolkit.														
Planning and delivery of Forum: 'Conversations...'														
Work with two case study sites on implementing FiF initiatives.														
Ongoing dissemination activities including publications.														
Final reporting.														

While Table 2 points to the diversity of activity that was undertaken, it cannot accurately capture the various modifications and adaptations that occurred. In the next part of this report, details of how each of the activities progressed (often in unpredictable ways) are provided, as well as the forms of dissemination, both planned and unplanned, that evolved throughout the year.

## Part 2. Fellowship activities and dissemination

### Fellowship activities

At the beginning of a journey you can never predict exactly where you will end up, or the various detours or interruptions that might occur during your travels – this fellowship was no exception. As Table 2 indicates, the fellowship period was productive, but to effectively capture the diverse and unexpected outcomes of this period, the following sections provide short narrative overviews of each of the activities undertaken. This level of detail is only possible due to the fellowship diary kept throughout, which proved to be an invaluable resource in this endeavour.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Activity 1: Develop national principles for engaging with the family and community of first-in-family students.***

The process for developing the national principles actually commenced in February 2015, at the *Breaking the Barriers* Forum. At the day's conclusion, participants were asked to identify one principle they considered to be important in engaging with FiF learners and their family members. From this activity, nine draft principles were defined; these were used as exemplars for further input and feedback. During workshops held between August 2015 and April 2016, participants were encouraged to add to the principles; contributions were largely group-based and transcribed onto butcher's paper.

The final iteration of the Principles/Strategies was then based upon feedback and input derived from six workshops conducted nationally. These workshops provided a forum for over 330 participants to contribute ideas and perspectives to this evolving list. At the end of each workshop, this input was entered into a data-management system, culminating in an analysis of both feedback and suggested principles. After thematic analysis, the seven principles (with suggested strategies for implementation) were developed and placed on the FiF website (<http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-1.php>). Feedback was invited via the fellowship blog site, Twitter account and at subsequent workshops; all feedback received was integrated and the final hard-copy version of the national principles was distributed at the 2016 *Conversations about Retaining and Engaging First-in-Family Learners and their Families* Forum (2016 FiF Forum). Appendix B provides details of how the Principles evolved; written in June 2016, this was an extended reflective diary entry created to properly capture this process of development.

#### ***Activity 2: Workshops and sessions offered to institutions across Australia***

The demand for the workshops far exceeded expectations, as the initial fellowship proposal indicated that a total of three workshops would be offered to identified institutions (James

---

<sup>3</sup> With thanks and acknowledgement to Prof Romy Lawson for providing examples of a fellowship diary and evaluation tool both of which I borrowed for this project

Cook University, University of the Sunshine Coast and University of Newcastle). However, requests for workshops relating to the engagement and retention of first-in-family learners were received from across Australia, as Table 3 indicates.

**Table 3: Details of institutions that hosted a FiF workshop**

Host Institution	Date of workshop	Attendance numbers
Griffith University	August 2015	70
Queensland University of Technology	October 2015	52
Charles Sturt University	November 2015	35-40
University of Wollongong – WATTLE	November 2015	20
The University of Sydney	February 2015	30
University of New South Wales	April 2016	30
Federation University Australia (2 sessions)	June 2016	80
Victoria University	June 2016	35
NCSEHE (Curtin University of Technology)	June 2016	30
University of Canberra	August 2016	25
Southern Cross University	Sept 2016	25-30
University of Wollongong (UOW) College	September 2016	35
James Cook University	October 2016	15

While workshops were hosted at 12 locations, a number of these events were open to staff from other institutions, such as the workshop hosted by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), which included participants from Curtin University, Edith Cowan University and Murdoch University. This increased the reach of the fellowship to additional institutions and interested stakeholders, ensuring greater impact and dissemination.

Each of the workshops was tailored to the specific needs and requests of the institution – for example, Federation University Australia requested two workshops, one targeting professional staff and one research-based session targeting academic/research staff. While including a range of focuses, institutions commonly requested workshops that would provide insights into the FiF cohort, suggest approaches to supporting and engaging these learners and, importantly, encourage staff to consider practical applications within their own professional contexts. To this end, each of the workshops had a series of practical group-based activities that encouraged participants to apply their new knowledge to their own institutional situation. A total of 239 participants completed evaluations of these workshops and details of these are provided in Part 3 of this report (Fellowship impact and evaluation). However, worth noting here is the large number of participants (85.5 per cent) who indicated they were *likely or most likely* to apply ideas derived from the workshop to their professional context. Only two participants indicated that they were *unlikely* to do so, with the remaining being *unsure* (14.5 per cent). The latter score was attributed to uncertainty over work contracts, constraints of the institution or the ideas not being directly relevant to their current work situation.

The range of outcomes participants identified as being derived from the workshops included:

- providing an evidence base for work in relation to this cohort,

- recognising the need for a welcome to FiF learners (in lectures, publicity material and orientation),
- supplying a framework for developing resources for the family and community of learners,
- providing ideas for approaches to engaging with FiF residential students,
- suggesting ways to manage peer learning and peer mentoring to better engage the FiF cohort, and
- offering a needed space for reflection and discussion on this topic.

A total of 204 participants took the time to provide qualitative comments detailing how the workshops would inform their professional context, and also furnished examples of these practical applications, which provide evidence of the impact of these dissemination activities.

### ***Activity 3: International and national presentations***

In addition to national institutional workshops, the fellowship included a number of international and national presentations that both disseminated the research from the OLT seed grant (2015) and presented on the activities and resources developed under the auspices of the fellowship. These sessions generally differed to the workshops in both content and duration, being shorter (30-45 minutes) and focussing on theory or empirical findings. The following tables provide details of both the national and international presentations, which have included peer-reviewed papers, invited presentations and submitted colloquia.

**Table 4: Details of national presentations**

<b>National Presentations</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of session</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) Conference: Hobart, TAS	December 2015	Workshop (1.5 hours)	37
Australian Tertiary Education Managers (ATEM) Conference: Sydney, NSW	March 2016	Invited presentation on mentoring initiatives for FiF learners	60
Students, Transitions, Achievement, Retention & Success (STARS) Conference: Perth, WA	June 2016	Convenor of the inaugural First-in-Family Special Interest Group	40
Australian Council of Deans of Science Conference, UTS: Sydney, NSW	October 2016	Invited Presentation	80+
Australian Association of Research in Education (AARE) Conference: Melbourne, VIC	December 2016	Peer reviewed paper presentation	10+

International presentations resulted from both invitations from institutions and peer-reviewed conference presentations.

**Table 5: Details of international presentations**

<b>International presentations</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of session</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Open Universities Centre for Inclusion and	October	Invited Presentation on	55+

Collaborative Partnerships: UK	2015	FiF learners (via Skype)	
Open Universities: Access and Widening Participation Conference: Milton Keynes, UK	April 2016	Paper (Peer reviewed)	30+
Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE): Access and Widening Participation: London, UK	April 2016	Invited presentation on <i>Re-thinking 'family' in relationship to higher education</i>	25
Dundalk Institute of Education: Ireland	April 2016	Invited staff presentation on FiF Learners	20+
Society of Research in Higher Education (SRHE): Exploring freedom and control in global higher education: London, UK	December 2016	Peer reviewed paper presentation on older FiF learners	10+

Alongside these presentations were also a series of meetings with staff, as well as mentoring relationships – these will be detailed under Activity 8.

### ***Activity 5: Utilise social media to engage and collaborate***

As well as face-to-face dissemination activities, the fellowship also disseminated outputs via a range of social media tools including an e-list, a blog site, regular online newsletters and a dedicated Twitter account (@Uni\_FiF).

#### ***E-list***

The e-list largely comprises stakeholders who participated in fellowship events, as the evaluation form included an 'opt-in' for those who wished to receive regular updates. At the end of the fellowship, this e-list included over 500 participants from institutions and organisations across Australia. This e-list proved invaluable both for disseminating regular updates about the fellowship and for circulating the regular blogs and online newsletters.

#### ***First-in-family blog site (<http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog/>)***

The blog site was designed to complement the FiF website by including a similar look and design elements; the blog site was also fully integrated with the website and Twitter account. The goal was to provide a seamless social media presence that had distinct branding and allowed interested parties to move between mediums as required.

The main objective of the blog was to engage stakeholders in providing feedback on the Principles; three of the blog posts referred explicitly to the development of the Principles. The blog also provided an excellent forum for posting regular updates about fellowship activities, which were then distributed to the fellowship e-list. A total of 20 blog posts were written between October 2015 and November 2016; each of these was then distributed via email and/or Twitter and also formed the basis for each newsletter.

#### ***FiF online newsletters***

The newsletters were designed to provide newsworthy snippets from the fellowship and each newsletter was delivered bi-monthly via email to interested stakeholders (n=500+). The newsletters each contained live links to additional information or relevant sites. Generally these newsletters were 1-2 pages in length, with imagery and further information available, an

exemplar is shown at Figure 2. The number of unsolicited requests to receive the newsletter from colleagues or associates of those on the stakeholder list demonstrates the high level of interest in both the publication and its focus. There were no requests to be removed from the newsletter, blog or e-list. Examples of newsletters and blogs are available in Appendix C, and can be viewed at [www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog](http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog).



**Figure 2: First-in-Family Newsletter example**

### ***Dedicated Twitter Account***

Throughout the fellowship, new developments and activities were publicised via Twitter – this proved to be an excellent way to disseminate undertakings in a timely manner. The Twitter account quickly grew to 154 followers, with messages (Tweets) relating to details of upcoming events, images from the workshops, impromptu feedback from participants at workshops and information about fellowship outputs. The Storify link ([https://storify.com/Uni\\_FiF/an-olt-odyssey](https://storify.com/Uni_FiF/an-olt-odyssey)) provides an overview of one particularly busy month and gives a flavour of how Twitter assisted in dissemination.

### ***Activity 6: Further develop the [www.firstinfamily.com.au](http://www.firstinfamily.com.au) website***

The website was established under the auspices of the OLT seed grant but, with the commencement of the fellowship, a new page tab was included to showcase outputs specific to the fellowship. In addition to the national principles (detailed earlier), a number of resources were developed under the auspices of the fellowship. These resources included an online toolkit; a ‘Uni-lingo’ quiz; an online family members’ quiz; tips for engaging family and community of FiF learners and; video vignettes featuring FiF university staff.

### ***Online toolkit for equity practitioners***

The online toolkit was designed to provide teaching and learning staff with a framework for designing strategies to engage with FiF learners and their significant others. The toolkit refers to the work of Alf Lizzio (2006), who proposed a lifecycle approach to program design. The concept of a student lifecycle recognises that individuals move through various stages in their



university journey or, as Lizzio explains, embrace a ‘constellation of evolving identities, needs and purposes as students enter into, move through and graduate from university’.

The toolkit is represented diagrammatically as a series of intersecting cogs that intersect each other; the idea is not to assume a linear transition through university but, rather, a somewhat circuitous one. Each of the ‘cogs’ (please see Figure 3) is a live link to further information and resources designed to assist equity practitioners to consider how best to support and engage this student cohort. Importantly, this model recognises that the ‘flourishings’ of a graduating/alumni FiF cohort are embedded within the pre-arrival and transitioning of FiF students. This recognition also informed the fellowship work conducted under the auspices of a *Students as Partners* framework, which will be detailed under the section on video vignettes.



**Figure 3: Overview of the toolkit structure**

#### ***Uni-lingo quiz for parents and students***

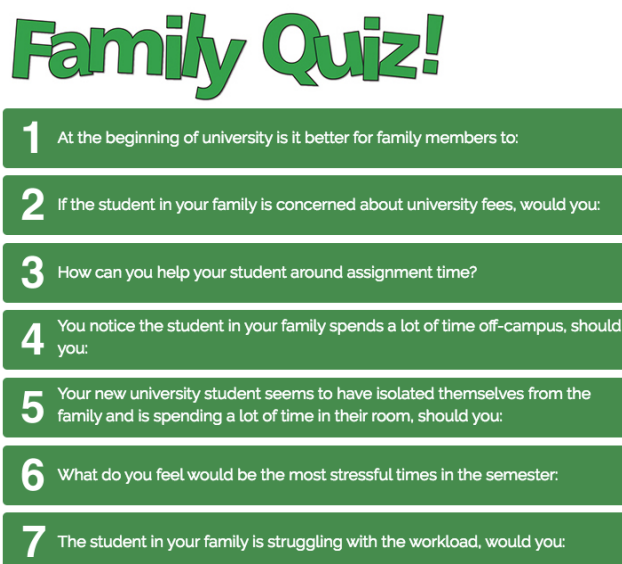
The Uni-lingo quiz was an additional resource developed under the fellowship, largely due to the difficulty locating an existing online quiz that adequately demystified university language. While these quizzes exist in hardcopy, or may be available at an institutional level, there are currently no existing quizzes on university language available on a free-access basis within Australia. Hopefully, this quiz (<http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/familydragdrop.php>) will fill that gap.

The premise of the quiz is relatively simple and grew out of interviews with FiF students, who referred to university as having a ‘different language’. The quiz includes common university terminology and definitions – the participant chooses a word and then drops it into the correct definition box. If correct, there is an option to learn more about the term; if incorrect, the word simply ‘floats’ back over to the list. The quiz has a broad selection of words and can be reloaded to enable new words to be included randomly.

#### ***Online quiz for family members of FiF students***

Similar to the Uni-lingo quiz, this resource targets the family of FiF learners and addresses some of the questions family members had referred to in surveys and interviews (O’Shea et al., 2015;

O'Shea, 2016e). Figure 4 reproduces the opening page of the Family Quiz. One key element of this quiz is that there are no incorrect or wrong answers, simply variations of right. The quiz is deliberately strengths-based and uses language very carefully to avoid any perception of condescension toward respondents. Instead, the main objective of this quiz is to normalise both information and help-seeking behaviours.



**Figure 4: Family Quiz opening page**

***Eight tips for engaging and supporting family members of First-in-family learners.***

The *Eight Tips* emerged from workshop evaluations, where participants in the initial workshops requested practical ideas and suggestions for engaging with family and community of learners. The Tips were based on surveys and interviews conducted with various family members and first-in-family university students (O'Shea et al., 2015; O'Shea, 2016e), including:

- surveys with family members of first-in-family students currently undertaking university studies (n=40),
- surveys with family members of prospective university students (n=53), and
- Interviews/surveys with current first-in-family students (n=274).

A printed version of this resource was circulated at workshops and a PDF version can be downloaded at <http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-3-1.php>

***Video vignettes of FiF university staff members***

To increase the visual nature of the website, a series of short video vignettes was made with FiF university staff members (both academic and professional staff). These video resources were an additional output to those initially promised in the fellowship application. The impetus for the development of the staff video vignettes emerged from the number of workshop participants who identified as being first in their families to come to university.

To foreground this staff FiF experience, a survey was sent to each of the five University of Wollongong faculties. The survey was addressed to staff who were the first in their families to come to university. A total of 218 staff members responded to questions about their university experience, their reasons/motivations for attending university and advice for future FiF students. The final question asked if respondents would be willing to participate in a short video and over 60 participants indicated a willingness to be involved; of these, 16 staff members actually committed to participating. These interviews have been edited into a series of 'bite-size' video narratives that seek to provide advice to FiF learners and also to celebrate with those who have completed the journey.

The video project was a collaborative venture between the fellow and two students (one of whom was FiF). The collaboration adopted a 'students as partners' framework which allowed the students to be deeply involved in planning the project and creating the video resources. As students acted as co-producers of the video outputs, the results were both authentic and accessible. In recognition of the partnership elements of this project, the fellow and one of the students were invited to present at Kelly Matthews's Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship Roundtable on Students as Partners (October 2016), detailed in the next section.

For further details and descriptions of all the resources that emerged from the Fellowship please see: <http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/OLT-2.php>

### ***Activity 7: Create links and connections to other fellowships***

This fellowship also sought to forge links across various concurrent activities also funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. There were particular synergies between my fellowship and the following activities/events.

- **Dr Kelly Matthews:** Students as partners: reconceptualising the role of students in science degree programme curriculum development (2015 OLT National Teaching Fellowship).
- **Dr Jessica Vanderlelie:** Partnering with alumni to enhance graduate success in the health science disciplines (2015 OLT National Teaching Fellowship).
- **Dr Katelyn Barney:** Pathways to postgraduate study for Indigenous Australian students: enhancing the transition to research higher degrees (2014 OLT National Teaching Fellowship).

As previously mentioned, I was also invited to participate in Kelly Matthews's symposium on Students as Partners, presenting with a student ambassador on how this partnership framework can usefully be applied to the field of university access and participation. Each of these three fellowships are also referenced in the online equity tool (detailed under Activity 6). Such cross-fertilisation extends the reach of these fellowships by providing additional avenues for dissemination.

Finally, in addition to the aforementioned Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowships, connections have also been made with the National Centre for Student Engagement in Higher Education (NCSEHE) Equity Fellowships. This has included presenting at a NCSEHE Forum and planned future collaborations with 2016 NCSEHE Fellows Associate Professor Erica Southgate and Dr Cathy Stone.

### ***Activity 8: Provide mentoring and work closely with case study sites***

The fellowship application also detailed an intention to work with two case study sites in an action learning cycle, a process designed to trial the draft national principles as these apply to actual outreach environments. The two case study sites that elected to be involved were Southern Cross University (SCU) and University of New South Wales (UNSW). Stakeholder consultation commenced early in 2016 and included site visits to UNSW and SCU, as well as Skype meetings and teleconferences as required.

The action learning model allowed for planning, acting, observing and reflecting on different approaches to supporting and engaging FiF learners, a process informed by my research-based knowledge of this field. This approach enabled outreach staff to initiate change in a measured and critically reflective way, and for this change to be contextually embedded. Both locations provided critical feedback on the national principles, and also implemented various strategies that responded to these principles. For example, SCU implemented national principles 1 and 4 by exploring approaches to targeting FiF learners in their mentoring program, sending out welcome cards to all commencing FiF learners and exploring different approaches to bringing the family and community of learners onto campus. Similarly, UNSW focussed on principle 1 and, as a team, we explored ways this could inform the ASPIRE Community Hub program (UNSW, 2015), which involved two members of staff being located in the western suburbs of Sydney and working closely with the family and community in relation to higher education access and participation. This partnership and its results were discussed in a presentation given to staff within the Australian Government Department of Education and Training in Canberra in August 2016.



**Figure 5: Department staff and UNSW Aspire staff after the fellowship presentation in Canberra**

Appendix D provides excerpts from the fellowship diary that provide summary reflections on the main outputs from key meetings with the staff from UNSW and SCU as well as suggested recommendations that could be implemented by attendees. In addition to the two case study sites, a number of meetings, as well as mentoring, were organised across institutions and departments. Table 6 provides an overview of these activities.

**Table 6: Details of mentoring and institutional meetings**

<b>Location / Date</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Further information / Outcomes</b>
Department of Education (Canberra), August 2015	Members of staff across the Department	Shared FiF survey documentation with staff and provided an overview of the fellowship's objectives.
UNSW, September 2015	Dr Ann Jardine	Discussed ways to work with UNSW, particularly around the ASPIRE Community Hubs. Organised staff workshops to share research and practice.
University of Tasmania (UTAS), December 2015	Prof Sue Kilpatrick et al.	Liaised with the parent engagement staff at UTAS and discussed approaches they had adopted to engage with the parents and family of students.
University of Wollongong (UOW), December 2015	UOW In2Uni team	Discussed approaches to running mentoring training and ways to engage with parents. Permission to survey parents of Year 6 students in the new year. Agreed to be involved with the mentor training in the new year.
Department of Education, March 2016	Members of the Indigenous Policy area, Equity Policy area, HELP Information and Services sections as well as OLT staff.	Discussed the fellowship outputs to date. Included participants on the interested people list so that newsletters and the like could be received.
Southern Cross University (SCU), May 2016	Meeting participants: Alison Graham – Manager Student Engagement and Retention Team (SERT) Nadine White – Projects Co-ordinator SERT Celine De Bellis – Welcome Call co-ordinator SERT Maree Jeffery – Student Success Advisor Co-ordinator SERT Katrina Alexander – UniMentor Manager	Phone conference with staff at SCU to discuss first-in-family peer mentoring program they are setting up and to provide advice on a university-wide transition/engagement strategy. Discussed ways to welcome their significant FiF cohort. Sent the draft national principles and details of motivations to attend higher education as derived from FiF surveys.
UNSW, June 2016	Met with the ASPIRE Community Hubs team.	Provided mentoring to both team members to enable them to reflect upon their particular approaches and develop approaches and strategies to engage with families and communities that are evolving from the 'ground up'.
Southern Cross University, September 2016	Met with SERT team (as above) and discussed approaches to evaluating the approaches adopted and planning for 2017	This was a face-to-face meeting with staff involved in various aspects of student transition and retention, including mentoring and orientation.

		Details can be found in Appendix D.
James Cook University (JCU), October 2016	Met with staff involved with supporting and teaching first-in-family learners via face-to-face and Skype meetings.	A workshop and series of face-to-face and Skype interviews were offered to staff at JCU Townsville and Cairns campuses. Both locations have significant numbers of FiF learners and staff had questions about how to support this cohort.

### **Activity 9: National Forum: Conversations about retaining and engaging first-in-family learners in higher education**

The final dissemination activity planned under the auspices of the fellowship was a national forum. Planning for this event commenced in March 2016 and drew upon the strategies and approaches adopted for the 2015 Breaking the Barriers Forum (see Appendix G for 2016 FiF forum Gantt chart). To extend the reach of the forum, and to maximise the budget, I partnered with my ARC Discovery project team (Harwood, Chandler & O'Shea, 2014-2016) to propose a two-day forum that would also showcase work completed with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME). The two projects were separate but complementary, so this collaboration provided the opportunity for greater audience reach and made fiscal sense.

As with the Breaking the Barriers Forum, a free online application called Eventbrite was used to manage the forum registrations and website and to maintain a database of participants. The Eventbrite application provides an online registration facility and a basic web space (<https://conversationsonfirstinfamilylearners.eventbrite.com.au>), which was then populated with text and images

The link was sent to a range of e-lists (eg Ed-Equity) and online newsletters (i.e HERDSA notices/NCSEHE news/ALTF news) and was disseminated via the fellowship blog and Twitter account. By the date of the Forum, there were 203 registrations across both days (some participants had registered for both days), which resulted in 43 attendees on Thursday and 99 attendees on the Friday. A total of 30 universities were represented, from all states and territories (except NT), as well as from New Zealand. Attendees represented a range of academic and professional roles including advisors, managers, directors, career counsellors/welfare officers, equity practitioners, librarians, student support officers and project managers/officers, as well as students and research fellows.

#### **Forum delivery**

The Forum was designed to showcase the current research and best practice in relation to FiF students. The structure of both days was designed to encourage and facilitate *conversations*; to foster these conversations, the forum provided a range of opportunities for practitioners and researchers to showcase best practice (see Appendix E for the 2-day forum program). The Forum commenced with an overview of the AIME program, narrated by one of the AIME presenters and a former AIME participant. This was a personal account of how AIME impacts on the lives and aspirations of young Indigenous people. The second session on the first day showcased a virtual online mentoring tool that has been used to connect with a remote Indigenous community. Attendees were able to access this tool and converse with each other

virtually (a video of this project can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgOJhIhbg-0>).

The second day combined invited speakers with a series of lightning presentations – the overall objective was to provide a mix of research findings, best practice and take-home strategies to cater to a broad audience. The lightning presentations were 15-minute sessions that had been selected via a call for submissions. A total of 12 submissions were received; these were peer reviewed, with constructive feedback sent to the speakers and, once the revised submissions were received, the presentations were confirmed. A total of ten lightning presentations were scheduled for the second day, with topics that related to both research with FiF students and practical initiatives designed to support and engage this cohort.

In addition, a number of well-known speakers were invited to present various perspectives on supporting, engaging and retaining FiF students. The first invited speaker was Dr ‘Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki from Auckland University, who reflected upon the ‘talanoa’ (telling stories) methodology for researching with FiF students. A team of speakers from South Australia (Associate Professor Sharron King, Associate Professor Ben McCann and Dr Ann Luzeckyi) followed this session; this combined presentation focussed on findings from a NCSEHE funded study on FiF students across a range of disciplines. Dr Cathy Stone (2016 NCSEHE Equity Fellow) provided insights into the experiences of FiF learners in an online context, while Ms Kara King (Charles Sturt University) concluded the Forum with an array of video materials that sought to foreground inspirational stories of those who are first in their families and community to attend university.

## Fellowship dissemination

The fellowship promised multiple forms of dissemination and the following Impact Management Planning and Evaluation Ladder<sup>4</sup> (IMPEL) chart documents these. The entries in red have all been achieved, while plans for furthering the reach of the fellowship over the coming years are detailed later in this report.

	Anticipated changes at:			
	Project completion	6 mths post-completion	12 mths post-completion	24 mths post-completion
<b>(1) Team members</b>	An online toolkit that team members use when designing future outreach initiatives. Develop leadership and management expertise.	Produce a range of class and workshop resources that will inform outreach activities that target FiF learners and their families and improve retention in higher education institutions.	Further develop activities in this field by way of an OLT Innovation and Development Grant with key stakeholders. Use the Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows (ALTF) as a stage for national dissemination of findings – this network of scholars will be key to ‘spreading the word’ about this fellowship and its objectives.	

<sup>4</sup> The IMPEL model provides a framework for describing different types of change that can be achieved through educational development projects. Each stage, or ladder rung, is incrementally broader in impact than the last. IMPEL is resources offered by the Department to assist and fellowships in maximising the impact of their work.



	Anticipated changes at:			
	Project completion	6 mths post-completion	12 mths post-completion	24 mths post-completion
(2) Immediate students	Students and family members have access to a range of on-line resources to assist in the transition to university and support learners whilst at university. Students are provided with necessary “insider knowledge” to assist their success in university. Family members of students are provided with tangible ways to support the learner in their family (who may be a daughter/son, sibling, partner, parent) which can be enacted both before and after enrolment		Cascading adoption of resources will lead to additional resources/ case study sites for others to draw upon in their work (including T&L practitioners/researchers in the field/other educational sectors (Schools/VET).	Embedded activities in all outreach programs nationally that engage with FiF students and caregivers. National recognition of the key role played by family in the enactment of educational success and further dissemination of resources to school and VET sector.
(3) Spreading the word	Explore the use of social media and existing networks to disseminate the key outputs from this fellowship.  National Principles and resources are available on the website and publicised in the sector.  Maintain the active engagement of UOW’s Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) through regular reporting and meetings.	A journal article themed on family participation in higher education engagement targeted at Studies in higher education.  Work closely with the ALTF network to plan disseminate and publicise outputs.  Liaise with NCSEHE and use this centre as a platform for dissemination of resources.	One book publication targeted at outreach and equity practitioners .  Anticipated cascading influence into the school and VET sectors via bi-annual forum (organised from the first Forum) and also the online resources and toolkit.  Encourage further conversations amongst the larger community by drawing upon ‘just-in-time’ media ( <i>The Conversation</i> /radio interviews/social media outlets).	
(4) Narrow opportunistic adoption	In2Uni program (UOW) and Aspire program (UNSW) embed the strategies into new and existing programs.  The online toolkit for assisting providers to develop and implement support for FiF students and their families is accessed and utilised.	Case study sites and workshop sites formally acknowledge FiF students as an equity group.  Other university sites take up the offer of mentoring from the Fellow in the implementation of strategies designed to proactively engage the family/community of these learners.	In2Uni / Aspire program managers host the second Forum devoted to outreach practitioners and themed on a relevant and developing issue within the field.	
(5) Narrow systemic adoption	University-wide recognition of the importance of engaging with the family and community of first-in-family learners embedded in the strategic priorities of both UOW and UNSW, with core funding directed to these types of productive relationships.			
(6) Broad opportunistic adoption	Forum provides the impetus for outreach practitioners to recognise the importance of engaging with parents/community within their programs in a systematic and meaningful way. Opportunity for workshops at other university campuses.		Other higher education institutions embed contextualised activities within their programs.	
(7) Broad systemic adoption	Incorporation of a first-in-family identifier within the equity categorisation and funding targeting this group.			

**Figure 6: IMPEL Framework**

At the conclusion of this fellowship (December, 2016), it is apparent that most of the anticipated changes proposed for six months after completion have already been achieved. A number of other developments are also occurring, as detailed below.

### ***Cascading adoption of resources***

The website will continue to be updated and further enriched over the coming years; this will include the addition of video resources from FiF university staff members. These videos will not be branded and so will be available as a resource for other institutions to link to and utilise. These video vignettes offer an innovative way to engage with the FiF cohort and their significant others by dispelling possible notions of 'elitism' that may be associated with tertiary education. Instead, these resources offer alternative perspectives of the institution narrated by FiF staff, both professional and academic. Such resources will hopefully prove to be popular amongst educators across all levels of education.

### ***Bi-annual forum***

At the conclusion of the 2016 FiF Forum, participants were invited to consider coordinating the next forum on related topics. This has resulted in suggestions for two further events planned for 2017 or beyond.

- 1) The New Zealand delegates are planning a day of 'Talanoa' or 'telling stories' (in Auckland), which will focus on the FiF cohort in the NZ context. The organisers have requested some assistance in regard to planning this event and also publicising it.
- 2) Federation University Australia indicated that they were eager to host the next Australian FiF Forum in 2017, an initiative that has tentative approval from the university's executive.

However, at the time of writing this report (March, 2017) there are no firm plans in place for holding these events.

### ***Encourage further 'conversations'***

The Fellow continues to take advantage of any opportunities to write about the FiF student cohort and has utilised a range of media/publications to reach greater audiences. The most recent invited piece was titled *Engaging first-in-family university learners* and was published by University World News, a global online newsletter (O'Shea, 2016f). Similarly, I have contributed to research blogs (*Educating Nurses... Transforming Lives*, at <http://www.proftlj.com>), an edited book collection and practitioner pieces that target international and national audiences. Such a range of publications assists in dissemination of this fellowship's findings and resources; and provides a platform to facilitate further dialogue and impact.

## **Part 3: Fellowship impact and evaluation**

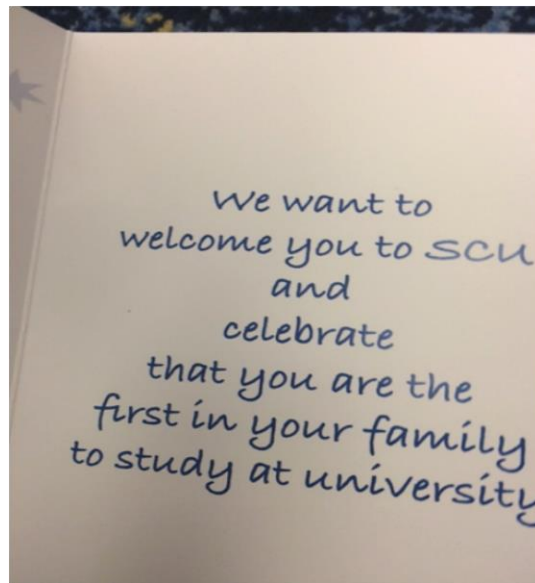
### **Case study sites**

As previously mentioned, my fellowship worked closely with two sites to enact the national principles developed in collaboration with stakeholders. Both sites indicated that this

relationship was productive and contributed to approaches for engaging and retaining first-in-family students. A brief summary of the main activities that occurred under the auspices of this fellowship are detailed below.

### ***Southern Cross University***

SCU estimates that nearly 48 per cent of its university population is the first in their family to come to university. Members of the Student Engagement and Retention Team (SERT) first made contact in March 2016 after I had presented at the Australian Tertiary Education Managers (ATEM) conference in Sydney. From this initial contact, a number of Skype/phone meetings were planned to consider ways to engage with FiF students (detailed in Table 6).



**Figure 7: SCU's Welcome card to FiF students**

As a result of these meetings, and based on team members' perspectives of the particular contextual and geographical contexts of SCU's student cohort, it was decided to send a welcome card to all commencing FiF students. As Figure 7 shows, the card included a message of celebration and was followed up with a welcome phone call. In addition to this, changes were proposed to an existing mentoring program to account for the needs of this cohort. In September 2016, I visited SCU to conduct a workshop for staff and participate in follow-up meetings with SERT staff, the latter resulting in a series of reflections and suggestions for activities in 2017. The details of these meetings and the various outputs from this relationship are further detailed in Appendix D, and these activities also featured as one of the lightning presentations at the FiF Forum.

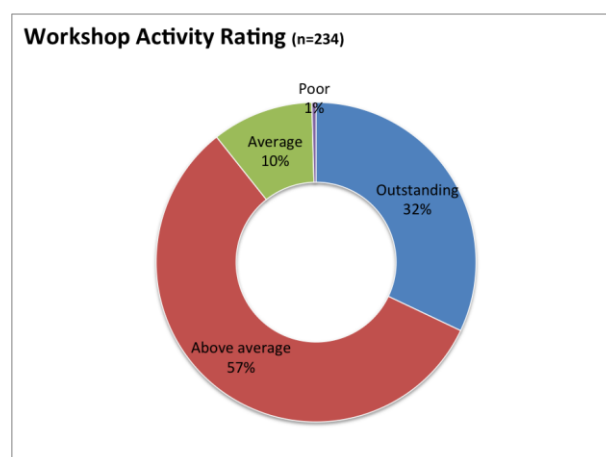
### ***University of New South Wales***

Initial contact with UNSW occurred in September 2015, and I visited the campus to meet with Dr Ann Jardine (Director, ASPIRE program) to plan collaborations throughout 2016. At this initial meeting, it was decided that the fellowship would work closely with ASPIRE's new Community Hubs model, particularly the staff involved in establishing these hubs, which are located in the western suburbs of Sydney. Of particular interest was the ways in which the hubs could work with the community and, particularly, how staff might engage with parents and

other family members. I conducted a staff workshop on first-in-family students in April 2016 and then met with staff in early June 2016 to discuss activities that could be implemented in the hubs. At this meeting, we discussed the possibility of participating in community events and having a presence at various locations, such as community language centres, youth centres, religious centres and libraries. The outputs of this meeting have been summarised in Appendix D, and ASPIRE Community Hubs staff (Jennifer Eaton and Rosie Westland) also presented a lightning presentation at the Forum.

## Workshop evaluations

A total of 239 workshop evaluations were completed, which is an approximate return rate of 50 per cent of all participants who attended workshops. As UOW Human Research Ethics (HE15/361) had approved the evaluation survey, the initial section provided information about the research and a participant consent form. The survey comprised ten question items, which combined closed responses with open questions and qualitative comments (see Appendix F for an example survey).



**Figure 8: Workshop activity rating**

Overwhelmingly, the respondents found the workshops to be useful to their work, with 89 per cent indicating that this activity was either *outstanding* or *above average*. Some of the comments that elaborated on this response included recognising how the workshop provided 'solid, meaningful, helpful' research (#89), 'networking opportunities' (#34) and the opportunity for 'reconnecting with colleagues' (#36, #229). A number of respondents pointed to relevance about 'my work with students' (#51, #69, #241) and how attendance provided a better understanding of the FiF cohort, which is 'huge... but not always specifically considered' (#53). The range of material presented was also commented on, as this provided 'lots of information to think about' (#90, #234) a 'opportunity to hear ideas of colleagues and those from other universities' (#200) which all helped to 'confirm thoughts and experiences' (#243).

The majority of attendees (89 per cent) rated the workshop activity to be *outstanding* or *above average*; Figure 8 (above) indicates the breakdown of responses. The workshops were considered to have helped participants increase their knowledge of how to engage FiF learners and their families, with 97 per cent of respondents (n=227) strongly agreeing/agreeing with the

statement: *The information presented has increased my knowledge in this area.*

When the qualitative comments were analysed thematically, three common themes emerged around what respondents ‘took away’ from this participation; these included a new understanding about the importance of family, recognition of the need for a ‘strengths-based’ approach, and a sense of personal agency. Each of these themes is discussed in more detail below.

### ***Importance of family***

The workshop’s focus on inclusion of family members as a significant form of support for FiF students caused many participants to re-think ideas and strategies concerning this cohort. New perspectives were opened up, as some participants had not considered the ‘significance of family and community’ in any depth prior to attending the workshop (#8), nor how family might be included in strategies for engaging and supporting a FiF family member. The idea of ‘family capital’ (#79) as a positive way of thinking about the strengths these students bring to this educational environment was also mentioned as a significant take-home concept.

### ***Strengths-based approach***

Workshop participants commented extensively on the usefulness of the focus on strengths rather than obstacles. Reconsidering focus on ‘strengths of students as opposed to identifying weaknesses’ (#81) was considered one of the most useful aspects of the workshop. Some found the workshop useful for highlighting the ‘variety of issues this term engenders’ (#20) and others commented on the usefulness of new ideas such as ‘mov[ing] away from the “employability” catch phrase to focus on personal transformation’ (#83). Participant #42 summed this theme up succinctly, writing ‘[I] love the concept of drilling down to SUCCESSES and ENABLERS! - more useful!!!’.

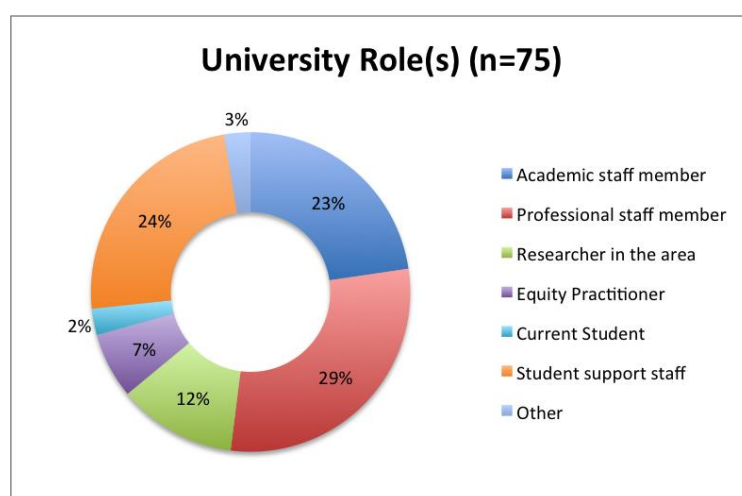
### ***Personal agency***

The workshops also seemed to contribute to the personal agency of participants, which further indicates the possible impact of these activities. For example, Participant #157 described how the workshop ‘made me consider the major issues facing these students and how I can help them’. Similarly, Participant #114 indicated that ‘discussing ideas with other colleagues from the same university made me aware of challenges our students are facing’. As the workshops included opportunity for reflection and discussion, this seemed to have allowed some to ‘think of FiF in a new way’ (#242), with another respondent commenting: ‘Our sharing between groups and the suggestions made by the presenter on how to reach the group allowed us to really think about action’ (#207).

Respondents also provided suggestions and feedback on how workshops could be improved; these suggestions included clearer demarcations between various cohorts of FiF students (for example between mature-aged students and school leavers), more specifics on the particular contextual constraints of students, and more practical applications. Indeed, the last of these suggestions provided the impetus for development of the resource: *Eight tips for engaging and supporting family members of first-in-family students*, which is available on the first-in-family website.

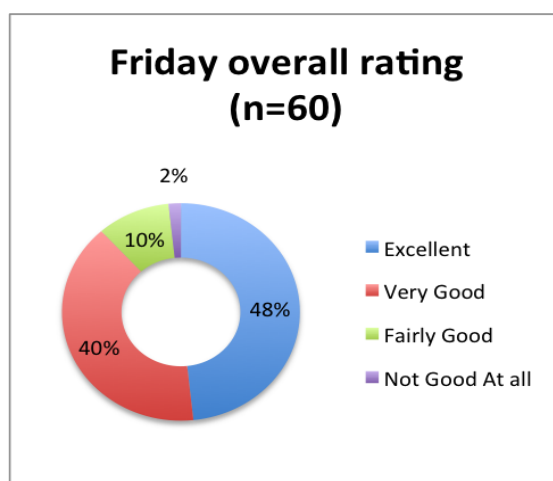
## 2016 FiF Forum evaluations

To capture feedback on the 2016 FiF Forum, a survey link was emailed to all attendees immediately following its conclusion. The survey was relatively short, with a combination of 12 open and closed questions. In total, 61 surveys were returned (a return rate of 62 per cent); 29 respondents indicated their attendance at both events (Thursday and Friday), 31 attended Friday only and 1 attended Thursday only. The respondents were from a range of professional and academic roles, which reflected the diversity of participants who attended the Forum. The largest cohorts were professional staff members (29 per cent), student support staff (24 per cent) or academic staff (23 per cent). Figure 9 provides a breakdown of all university roles, with respondents able to identify more than one role.



**Figure 9: Roles held by Forum attendees**

Overall, respondents rated both days of the Forum very highly. For the Thursday attendees (n=29), 73 per cent rated the workshop as *Excellent* or *Very Good* (n=21) with the remaining 27 per cent rating it as *Fairly Good* (n=7) or *Mildly Good* (n=1). The Friday attendees (n=60) expressed similarly high rates of satisfaction, with 88 per cent rating the Forum as *Excellent* or *Very Good* (n=53). The remaining 12 per cent rated the Forum as *Fairly Good* (n=6) or *Not Good At All* (n=1). Figure 10 provides this breakdown for the Friday attendees.



**Figure 10: Overall rating of Friday Forum**

These rating were often accompanied by qualitative comments that expanded upon respondents' reflections on the forum:

*Really impressed by how much you managed to fit into the day, the high quality of the presentations, the excellent organisation and the collegial vibe.*

(Respondent #4)

*New insights into our cohort and the specific issues and challenges they face. In addition, this has prompted further ideas for innovation that can be brought to our institution and the sector.*

(Respondent #42)

*The AIME session was excellent, and it was great to see how online technologies are being used to create communities and maintain mentoring relationships.*

(Respondent #41)

Some respondents suggested changes to the format – for example, inclusion of more 'solution-focussed' presentations and more 'hands-on' activities.

In terms of Forum organisation, 98 per cent of the respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that it had been well organised, while one *did not agree*. Overwhelmingly, individuals felt that their expectations had been met, with only two people indicating that was not the case, and 95 per cent of respondents felt that the forum would inform their work. This satisfaction was echoed in terms of long-term benefits, with 70 per cent indicating they had plans to collaborate with others met during the forum and 79 per cent agreeing that they would implement ideas derived from the forum in their professional practice.

Participants were asked to identify the particular aspects of the forum they felt were most useful. Most responded by referring to the usefulness of the topics covered either by the speakers or in the lightning presentations:

*Technology-enabled strategies developed to support FiF students.*

(Respondent #60)

*I felt that the welcome call made by Southern Cross University was brilliant and I have brought that suggestion back to my team. We also are interested in linking to the First Degree videos created by Charles Sturt.*

(Respondent #14)

Of particular note was a theme of an 'intention to act' described by a number of respondents; the forum seemingly acted as a galvanising force in this intention and provided inspiration for future actions.

*I plan to look further into the ideas presented about online mentoring - very pertinent to my research. I plan to network with particular people I met and heard presenting – again very pertinent to my research. I will also be using some of the literature mentioned for my research.*

(Respondent #9)

The survey included an opportunity for respondents to indicate what they did not find useful or to provide suggestions for change. Many participants commented on the research focus and suggested having more practical strategies or examples of practice; equally, there were comments on the overlap between presentations and the quantity of material presented, which had led to 'information overload'. These suggestions and others can be usefully applied to future Forums in this field.

## **Publications**

The fellowship also disseminated output through a variety of publication avenues to reach a broad audience. These included institutional pieces, online journal articles, newspaper stories and articles targeting practitioner journals, as outlined below.

### ***Institutional articles to showcase the research and the project:***

1. *Breaking down the barriers to higher education* (Elise Pitt). A UOW piece that showcased the fellowship and FiF student cohort. Available from <http://media.uow.edu.au/news/UOW198968>
2. *Will you be the first in your family to go to uni?* (UniSpeak). A UOW piece targeted at school leavers considering higher education and providing advice to those who are FiF. Available from <http://www.uow.edu.au/unispeak/UOW214419.html>

### ***National features on the research<sup>5</sup>:***

1. *Engaging, retaining and supporting first-in-family university students: An OLT fellowship odyssey* (Sarah O'Shea). Published by the National Centre for Student Equity in higher education. Available from <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/engaging-retaining-and-supporting-first-in-family-university-students-an-olt-fellowship-odyssey/>
2. *Getting students into uni is one thing, but how to keep them there?* (Sarah O'Shea with Valerie Harwood and Paul Chandler). Published by The Conversation. Available from <https://theconversation.com/getting-students-into-uni-is-one-thing-but-how-to-keep-them-there-47933>

---

<sup>5</sup> In addition to these publications, three peer-reviewed journal articles were also published based on previous research studies but focused on first-in-family learners



3. *First-in-family learners and higher education: Negotiating the 'silences' of university transition and participation* (Sarah O'Shea). Invited article for *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* (Vol 3). Available from [www.hersda.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-3/](http://www.hersda.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-3/)
4. *Supporting and engaging students who are the first in their families to attend university: A practise paper* (Sarah O'Shea). Invited article for *Journal of All-Ireland Society for Higher Education* (AISHE), 8(2). Available from <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/issue/view/23>
5. *Engaging first-in-family university learners* (Sarah O'Shea). Invited article for *University World News*. Available from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20161129232613901>

### **Newspaper articles on the research:**

1. *UOW researcher aims to aid university trailblazers* (*Illawarra Mercury*, 26 July 2015). Available from <http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/3236970/researcher-aims-to-aid-university-trailblazers/>
2. *FedUni forum for the first in families* (*Ballarat Courier*, 21 June 2016). Available from <http://www.thecourier.com.au/story/3983371/feduni-forum-for-the-first-in-families/>

### **Other Media**

TV Interview: 27 July 2015:	WIN News at 7; story about first-in-family students commencing university study (mid-year).
Radio Interview: August 2015	Interview with Fiona Wyllie on ABC <i>Statewide Drive NSW</i> to discuss the particular issues associated with being first in the family.
Radio Interview: Sept 2015	Interview with 2SER about first-in-family students following publication by the Department of Education and Training of statistics of domestic completion rates. Available from <a href="http://www.2ser.com/component/k2/item/18243-why-so-many-university-students-drop-out">http://www.2ser.com/component/k2/item/18243-why-so-many-university-students-drop-out</a>

## **Unsolicited stakeholder feedback**

Throughout the fellowship, a diverse range of unsolicited stakeholder feedback was received. Some related to requests for advice or short-term mentoring around projects, whilst some commented on the beneficial nature of the research, website resources or workshops. A number of people also requested that their names be placed on the e-list for newsletters and blog updates; these were generally a result of colleagues' recommendations or word-of-mouth within broader networks.

## **Analytics from the website**

Interest in the fellowship is also indicated by the analytics tracking visits to the FiF website. Since the website's inception, the visits have been consistent, with nearly 14,000 individual visitors since it initially went 'live' in April 2015. The analytics also indicate that most visitors are viewing more than one page (n= 32,803 page views) and a relatively high percentage of these are repeat visits (21.3 per cent). Not surprisingly, visits generally increase around the times of fellowship workshops and when an article or story has been published. The site also

seems to have international appeal; while just over half the visits are derived from Australia (55.81 per cent), there are also visits and sessions originating from the US (9.38 per cent) and the UK (3 per cent).

## Part 4. Considerations and future directions

The final section of this report reflects upon both the accomplishments and the limitations of this fellowship. As with any initiative, there are always things that could have been done differently and unexpected outcomes that could not have been envisioned at the outset. With this in mind, the following sections will highlight the ‘success factors’ of the fellowship along with the challenges encountered.

### Success factors

#### *The currency of the project*

This fellowship has been timely as, generally, there appears to be a growing awareness within institutions of the large FiF cohort. In terms of this fellowship, this recognition is perhaps best demonstrated by the popularity of the workshops and the accompanying evaluative feedback. The requests for workshops continue and a number have been planned for 2017, including an invitation to provide a keynote to Murdoch University’s Careers MasterClass (March 2017) for school careers counsellors on how to assist FiF students navigate between school and university. The website analytics, along with the response to the 2016 FiF Forum, further indicate this currency, with a high number of participants electing<sup>6</sup> to continue receiving newsletters and updates throughout 2017.

#### *The collaborative nature of the activities*

As much as possible, the fellowship sought to collaborate with stakeholders across the higher education sector in Australia. For example, the national principles emerged from such collaboration and the final version reflects input from over 330 participants across the sector. Similarly, as the website resources developed they were showcased at workshops and feedback sought from participants. Such a high level of collaboration arguably added both authenticity and validity to the final outputs.

#### *Value for money*

This fellowship has produced an array of website resources, including video materials that can be utilised by higher education providers across the tertiary sector. In addition, the first set of national principles has been developed and is available as a free downloadable .pdf on the FiF website. The Fellow has provided advice and mentoring and has worked closely with two institutions; these connections and collaborations were further enabled through the FiF Forum held in November. The Forum was a free event, largely due to the co-sponsorship with the ARC project, which allowed two separate but complementary initiatives the opportunity to reach a much broader audience. Overall, the outputs from this fellowship would not have been possible without very careful (and frugal) handling of the budget.

---

<sup>6</sup> The final question on the Forum evaluation survey asked respondents to indicate if they wished to continue to receive the updates, only one respondent requested that their details be removed.

### ***Responsiveness and flexibility: The requests for practical exemplars and activities***

The workshop evaluations provided ongoing and critical feedback on fellowship activities; after each workshop, this feedback was analysed and this then informed adjustments to fellowship activities. For example, the requests for more practical examples resulted in additional online resources and led to the inclusion of examples of practical initiatives within the workshop format. This process was assisted by an examination of institutional literature in this field from the UK and US, which highlighted what overseas institutions are implementing for FiF students. This review provided the basis for suggestions that were further complemented by surveys (n=53) conducted with the parents of prospective students (O'Shea, 2016e).

## **Challenges**

There were also a number of challenges encountered over the course of the fellowship, as follows.

### ***Case study sites***

The cyclic nature of equity funding, and the resulting uncertainty in terms of future planning, meant it was quite difficult to engage with the case study sites early on in the fellowship. This was largely due to changes in staffing and the resulting quick turnarounds in planning and enacting of retention strategies. While the fellowship did engage with equity stakeholders at a number of sites (UNSW, UOW, SCU and The University of Sydney, amongst others), this was a very fluid process and could not be structured or defined in advance. Instead, it became necessary to have a highly flexible approach that engaged with staff in a timely and immediate sense, in order to respond to questions and issues as they arose.

### ***Organisational constraints***

The organisation of workshops across Australia took up an unexpected amount of time and required persistence and a degree of patience. While the initial application promised three workshops, the fellowship actually delivered 14 workshops across the country. The increased number was largely due to the interest shown in the topic, an interest that, while welcomed, did translate into greater than planned time commitments and necessary adjustments to work and other schedules.

### ***Longevity***

As the fellowship reached completion, the need to secure additional funding to continue this work became imperative. To this end, applications were made to various funding sources and schemes to obtain the appropriate financial support. While a number of these were unsuccessful, the fellow did secure funding from the Australian Research Council in November 2016 to enable further theorisation in relation to FiF persistence. Details of this research are outlined below in the final section of the report.

## **Future directions**

Across the higher education field, my fellowship outcomes have been received with very positive feedback and, importantly, have impacted upon program structure, institutional focus

and individuals' perspectives on this cohort. In particular,, building upon the website content has enabled this resource to retain currency and respond to the needs of the sector. Throughout 2016, requests to link to the site have been regularly received and the profile of this resource has undoubtedly been raised by fellowship activities, evidenced by both stakeholder feedback and analytics on the site.

While the fellowship is now complete, work in this field will continue under the auspices of further funding and research opportunities. In November 2016, I was awarded ARC Discovery Project funding for a proposal to research alternative ways of thinking about university persistence and success for this student cohort. The theoretical outcomes of this project will include new applications of cultural capital and capabilities-based approaches that enable recognition and consideration of student intersectionality. The practical outcomes will include the development of an empirically informed framework that defines the cultural strengths and capabilities that support FiF learners' persistence and success at university. The Fellow has also been offered two further opportunities, as a national coordinator for a FiF scholarly network and as a Visiting Research Fellow for the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE). Both roles provide a national platform from which to enact change and organise ongoing activity in the field of student equity and FiF university experience.

# References

- ABS. (2013). Hitting the books: Characteristics of higher education students. *Australian Social Trends*. Available from:  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features20July+2013>
- AIHW. (2014). *Towards a performance measurement framework for equity in higher education*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- Ball, S., Davies, J., David, M. & Reay, D. (2002). 'Classification' and 'Judgement': Social class and the 'cognitive structures' of choice of Higher Education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(1), 51-72.
- Chen, X. (2005). *First-generation students in postsecondary education: A look at their college transcripts*. Washington, DC.: US Department of Education.
- Edwards, D. & McMillan, J. (2015). Completing university in a growing sector: Is equity an issue? Melbourne, Australia: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Australia. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).
- Gofen, A. (2009). Family Capital: How First-Generation Higher Education Students Break the Intergenerational Cycle. *Family Relations*, 58, 104-120.
- Hinton, T., Gannaway, D., Berry, B. & Moore, K. (2011). *The D-Cubed Guide: Planning for Effective Dissemination*. Sydney: Australian Teaching and Learning Council.
- Lehmann, W. (2009). University as vocational education: working class students' expectations for university. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30(2), 137-149.
- Lizzio, A. (2006). The student lifecycle: An integrative framework for guiding practice. Griffith University.
- May, J., Delahunty, J., O'Shea, S. & Stone, C. (2016). Seeking the passionate career: first-in-family enabling students and the idea of the Australian university. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 70(4), 384-399.
- O' Shea, S. (2011). Nomads in diaspora space – exploring women's identity work in the university. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 43 (1), 61-78.
- O' Shea, S. (2014). Filling up silences – first in family students, capital and university talk in the home. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 34(2), 139-155.
- O' Shea, S. (2014a). Transitions and Turning Points: How first in family female students story their transition to university and student identity formation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(2), 135-158.
- O' Shea, S. (2015). Arriving, Surviving and Succeeding: First-in-Family women and their experiences of transitioning into the first year of university. *Journal of College Student Development*. 56(5), 497-515.
- O'Shea, S. (2016a). First-in-family learners and higher education: Negotiating the 'silences' of university transition and participation. Invited article for *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* (Vol 3). Available from [www.hersa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-3/](http://www.hersa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-3/)
- O'Shea, S. (2016b). Supporting and engaging students who are the first in their families to attend university: A practise paper. Invited article for *Journal of All-Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)*, 8(2). Available from <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/issue/view/23>
- O'Shea, S. (2016c). Navigating the knowledge sets of older learners: Exploring the capitals of first-in-family mature age students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 18(3), 35-54.
- O'Shea, S., (2016d). Avoiding the manufacture of 'sameness': First-in-family students, cultural capital and the higher education environment. *Higher Education*, 72(1), 59-78.
- O'Shea, S. (2016e). Survey data conducted with parents of prospective students. Unpublished data from the OLT fellowship.
- O'Shea, S. (2016f). Engaging first-in-family university learners. *University World News* (December, 2016). Available from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20161129232613901>

- O'Shea, S., May, J., Stone, C. & Delahunty, J. (2015). *Breaking the Barriers: supporting and engaging mature age first-in-family university learners and their families*. Available from <http://firstinfamily.com.au/report.php>
- O'Shea, S., May, J., Stone, C. & Delahunty, J. (2017). *First-in-Family Students, University Experience and Family Life: Motivations, Transitions and Participation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Shea, S. & Stone, C. (2014). The Hero's Journey: Stories of women returning to education. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 5 (1), 79-91.
- O'Shea, S., Stone, C., May, J. & Delahunty, J. (2016). Discourses of betterment and opportunity: Exploring the privileging of university attendance for first-in-family learners. *Studies in Higher Education*. Online First: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2016.1212325>
- Pitman, T. (2013). 'Miraculous exceptions': what can autobiography tell us about why some disadvantaged students succeed in higher education? *Higher Education Research & Development*, 32(1), 30-42.
- Stone, C. & O'Shea, S. (2012). *Transformations and Self-Discovery: Women returning to study*. Illinois USA: Common Ground Publishing.
- Stone, C. & O'Shea, S. (2013). Time, money, leisure and guilt – the gendered challenges of higher education for mature-age students. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 53(1), 95-116.
- Stone, C., O'Shea, S., May, J., Delahunty, J. & Partington, Z. (2016). Opportunity through online learning: experiences of first-in-family students in online open-entry higher education. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 56(2), 146-169.
- Spiegler, T. & Bednarek, A. (2013). First-generation students: what we ask, what we know and what it means: an international review of the state of research. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 23(4), 318-337.
- Universities Australia. (2016, January). University now within reach for a broader cohort of Australians. Media Release. Retrieved from [www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au)

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Certification by Vice-Chancellor

### ***Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)***

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT fellowship provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Professor Joe Chicharo

14 February 2017

Name: .....Date: .....

## Appendix B: National Principles for engaging first-in-family students and their families



### Preamble

These principles and strategies have been created in collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders who are interested, indeed passionate, about supporting first-in-family learners and their significant others. The development of the principles commenced in February 2015 when participants (n= 113) were asked to develop one over-riding principle that could be employed in the support of first-in-family learners. These participants were derived from 19 higher education providers across seven states of Australia; additionally there were representatives from other government and non-government organisations. Out of this activity, nine draft principles were developed focussing on the support of first-in-family learners.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, stakeholders were invited to both contribute and provide feedback on the this initial set of principles, and contribute their own suggestions. Indeed, responses were so descriptive and insightful that it became clear that these could be used to inform both the principles and underpin s strategies for their enactment.

This final iteration of the principles and strategies is then based upon feedback and input derived from six workshops conducted nationally between August 2015 and April 2016. These workshops provided a forum for over 330 participants to both contribute ideas and perspectives to this evolving list. At the end of each workshop, this input was entered into a data management system and this culminated in an analysis of the both feedback and suggested principles. After refinement, the following seven overarching principles and strategies have been developed.

This is an evolving process and so I see this list of principles and strategies not as a static inventory but rather a fluid and emerging interactive map of how we might engage with this cohort and their significant others.



**Associate Professor Sarah O'Shea**  
2015 Office for Learning and Teaching Fellow  
June 2016

### Acknowledgement:

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Janine Delahunty in the refinement and design of the National Principles featured in this booklet



Australian Government  
Department of Education and Training

*Support for this booklet has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The views expressed in this booklet do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training*



# Overarching Principles and Strategies for Supporting First-in-Family Students and their Families

## PRINCIPLE

- PRINCIPLE 1 Changing Conversations: Engage with Family and Community
- PRINCIPLE 2 Take the Mystery out of University
- PRINCIPLE 3 Make No Assumptions
- PRINCIPLE 4 Build a Sense of Community
- PRINCIPLE 5 Adopt a Strengths-Based Approach
- PRINCIPLE 6 Model Authenticity: Draw on First-in-Family Student Experience
- PRINCIPLE 7 Institutions: Commit to Resources and Policy

## Principle 1

### CHANGING CONVERSATIONS: ENGAGE WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Celebrate being first-in-family (not a deficit model).

Change negative perceptions of university environment through meaningful engagement that encourages and supports new conversations about university.

Build sense of belonging through social activities: connect people and place through in-person contact and on campus social activities that include family and community to build familiarity; family and community days.

Build relationships with students and families: staff go to different campuses (regional and city locations), talk face-to-face, be available to engage with and provide support to first-in-family students and family; sustained relationships over time.

Start engagement (very) young – early conversations:

- Target programs for first-in-family students in primary school
- Consistent communication, and
- Place-based, human-centred, two-way (space and place), strengths-based approach.

Be friendly: celebrate diversity and cultural richness, value all people, say hello, smile.

Actively work towards changing university culture and myths for example “university is for young people” or “students that lack certain skills / life experiences need to be changed or acted upon”. Remain mindful that you need to avoid implying (in any way) that these students are deficit.

Have a community focus: strive to make the university part of the local community rather than separate from it.

Provide accessible resources and information to family.

Provide language translators at drop-in sessions to overcome language barriers.

## Principle 2

### TAKE THE MYSTERY OUT OF UNIVERSITY

Foreground student contact that is face to face, that engages with students and their families in a meaningful sense and that occurs both on campus and in the community.

Ask students and family members what they need based on their experience (don't make assumptions about their needs).

Ensure first-in-family students and family members know how to access available support services.

Ensure first-in-family students and family members know the impacts and benefits of being first.

Utilise a variety of multi-modal technological strategies to engage with this group. Strategies need to be multi-channelled; relevant and targeted; two-way; student centered – “Computer says yes!”; just in time; and reflective of the student life cycle.

Make expectations clear and explicit: hold information sessions on what students can expect.

Make all information accessible. Don't use uni jargon! Include brochures that decipher uni jargon.

Make people feel welcome and comfortable on campus by decoding the university landscape through a variety of strategies including family open days, real go to people and peer support.

Accessibility to quality information, awareness, understanding of higher education experiences for students and family = stronger relationships.

Provide education at the community level in general about resources for first-in-family students – make this a part of the uni narrative.

## Principle 3

### MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS

- About who first-in-family students are.
- About what their families know, need or can offer.
- About diverse backgrounds.
- About knowledge of academic expectations and processes.
- Normalise the difference and recognise academic practices and literacies needed for success.
- Provide safe ways to fill in gaps in how to support, e.g. phone app for families to understand how to support students.
- Greater awareness and understanding of the diversity of first-in-family students.

## Principle 4

### BUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Provide informal opportunities for families to come to campus: include parents and family at events and hold information days for first-in-family students and their family members.

Provide space for first-in-family student voices to be heard via marketing, literature and policy documents.

Encourage and maintain approachability amongst all staff members.

Acknowledge students and their particular journeys to higher education.

Build on technology to create relationships that are meaningful and supportive. These relationships need to be proactive, authentic and diverse but also involve real people and face to face encounters.

## Principle 5

### ADOPT A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

University outreach that seeks to **empower** students by:

- Recognising what they bring to the university environment and the validity of prior experience.
- Encouraging students to reflect upon the support that exists outside the university.
- Fostering help-seeking behaviour.

Acknowledging and celebrating the resource of diversity: includes diversity of ages, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic circumstances, life experiences.

## Principle 6

### MODEL AUTHENTICITY: DRAW ON FIRST-IN-FAMILY STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Develop a mentoring program for students at uni – a 'go to' person.
- Provide students and family with real stories from first-in-family students (and family members who've been there):
  - Inspirational videos
  - First-in-family student and/or family members as invited speakers at events, and
  - Q & A sessions including first-in-family student/s and/or family member/s.
- Provide networking opportunities for students and their families so that they know there are others in the same situation.

## Principle 7

### INSTITUTIONS: COMMIT TO RESOURCES AND POLICY

The institution has a responsibility to:

- allocate funds to effectively support increasing numbers of first-in-family students.
- distribute dedicated staffing, funding and resources that enable success for first-in-family students.
- consider a first-in-family team including a member from other equity groups (e.g. Indigenous, international, disability, etc).
- employ a family engagement / support officer.
- develop a coordinated approach to support students and family members.
- commit funds and resources to research on first-in-family students and their families.
- collect data of first-in-family students at enrolment or through University Admission Centre.
- upskill academic staff and raise awareness.

Institutional policy needs to:

- include recognition of first-in-family students as a diverse group.
- capture first-in-family students at time of enrolment.
- develop institutional guidelines for staff.

## Appendix C: Example of Newsletter and Blog

Issue 1: April, 2016

[View this email in your browser](#)



A/Prof Sarah O'Shea | [sarahos@unsw.edu.au](mailto:sarahos@unsw.edu.au) | [www.firstinfamily.com.au](http://www.firstinfamily.com.au) | [www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog](http://www.firstinfamily.com.au/blog) | @Unsw\_FIF

### Did You Know?

- 51% of Australian students are First-in-Family (FiF) (Spiegle & Bednarek, 2013)
- 26% considered leaving in their first year (Coates & Ransom, 2011)
- FiF students are half as likely as their second or third generation peers to attend university (OECD 2013)



### Quotable Quotes

*What do others say?*

*"The research was solid, meaningful, helpful. Concrete strategies, deep understanding of diverse experiences FiF students bring to Uni. Success is deeply personal so hearing stories from students shows how we need services to be agile."*

*Workshops attendee, QUT*

### Four Key Stories:

#### Feb: USydney Talk

At the beginning of February I was given the opportunity to address a group of engaged and interested practitioners at the University of Sydney. The session was lively with some great contributions to the National Principles — [read more here](#)

#### March: ATEM Presentation

Sometimes one thing leads to another quite unexpectedly – last session I co-authored a short piece for [The Conversation](#) on student mentoring. Based on this, the Australian Tertiary Education Managers (ATEM) Network contacted me to deliver a talk on mentoring and first-in-family student retention — [read more here](#)


#### April: UK and Ireland Activities

Throughout April, I will be visiting the UK and Ireland to present on Fellowship work and also to exchange ideas about supporting and engaging first-in-family learners and their family /community. During this time, I will visit with [The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#) and present a seminar for [Dundalk Institute of Technology](#). In the UK, I have been asked to present at an event organised by the [Society for Research in HE](#) entitled: Re-thinking 'family' in relationship to higher education.

#### Ongoing: Case Study sites

An integral part of this Fellowship is working with two case study sites: 1) [UNSW Aspire Program](#) 2) [UOW's In2Uni program](#) — [read more here](#)





[First in Family Blog](#)
[Visit the main First in Family Site](#)
[About Blog](#)
[National Forum](#)
[Newsletters](#)

## Conversations National Forum Wrap-Up

December 11, 2016 | [Leave a comment](#)

The Conversations on Engaging and Retaining First-in-Family Learners in Higher Education on Friday 25th November at the University of Wollongong was the finale for this OLT Fellowship – and what a great day it was! We began planning the forum in earnest in March and drew on what we'd done the previous year for the... [Read More](#)

## Student-staff partnerships in the equity field

October 24, 2016 | [Leave a comment](#)

I was recently invited to participate in the National Roundtable on Students as Partners organised by Kelly Matthews – this was part of Kelly's Fellowship work and was held at University of Queensland in September. The Students as Partners approach to curriculum development and university engagement is broadly defined by authentic collaboration between staff and students both within... [Read More](#)

## FiF student experience – From the ground up

September 5, 2016 | [Leave a comment](#)

'My higher education journey was facilitated by the encouragement and guidance of the people around me. The support that I received provided me with a sense of purpose in my studies and a sense of belonging to the university community.' (Lisa, FiF student 2016) Part of my OLT Fellowship is exploring ways to foreground... [Read More](#)

## University is Not as Daunting...

August 22, 2016 | [Leave a comment](#)

'I have learnt [university] is not as daunting as I thought.' (Grandmother of School Student, Survey... [Read More](#)

### Search Blog Content

### Categories

- [Best Practice](#)
- [Experiences](#)
- [Principles](#)
- [Workshops](#)

### Recent Posts

- [Conversations National Forum Wrap-Up](#)
- [Student-staff partnerships in the equity field](#)
- [FiF student experience – From the ground up](#)
- [University is Not as Daunting...](#)
- [Supporting and retaining the first-in-family online student cohort](#)

### Recent Comments

- admin on [Supporting and retaining the first-in-family online student cohort](#)
- Catherine Roberts on [Supporting and retaining the first-in-family online student cohort](#)
- admin on [Conversations about Retaining and Engaging First-in-Family Learners in Higher Ed: 24th – 25th November 2016, University of Wollongong](#)
- Carol Hoyle on [Conversations about Retaining and Engaging First-in-Family Learners in Higher Ed: 24th – 25th November 2016, University of Wollongong](#)
- Tracy Lovett-Jones on [About](#)

### Latest Tweets

Tweets by @UK\_FIF

## Appendix D: Summary reflections from UNSW and CSU

### Visit to UNSW: Reflection 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 UNSW Campus

#### Context

I attended UNSW today to meet and mentor the staff at the ASPIRE Community Hubs located in the western suburbs of Sydney – there are two hubs one located at Chester Hill and the other located at James Meehan HS, located at Macquarie Fields. The meeting included Rosie (James Meehan HS); Jen (Chester Hill) and Gavin Greenfield who manages the Aspire program, Ann Jardine also joined the meeting at various stages.

ASPIRE Community Hubs are an innovative way to engage with the community and are located within the community rather than on-campus. The intent is not to actually ‘pathway’ students into UNSW but rather to engage with them and support them in their own personal aspirations. However, this innovative nature means that the work here is evolving and fluid rather than tied to a particular model or framework. My role in this process is to provide some mentoring to both Rosie and Jen, to enable them to reflect upon their particular approaches and also develop approaches and strategies that are evolving from the ‘ground up’.

#### Meeting Overview

Initially, the conversation focussed on reporting and how this might be achieved within the governs of the HEPP pro-forma. We discussed the need for each to create their own reporting benchmarks that will validate their activities and the nature of their work, which may not have any measurable outputs in an immediate sense. Based on discussion, both decided to create a template that included various levels of contact as well as indicating more formal activities that they were undertaking. We also discussed seeking out key stakeholders in their communities that may be willing to reflect on their impact within the community. We also discussed various approaches to engaging with the community and family including participating in: existing community events; community language centres; youth centres and workers; religious events and centres and also libraries.

Finally, both discussed their long-term plans in the community hub and the various strategies that they were engaged in. Both expressed some concerns about whether this was the most effective approach and also how to report on these types of activities (most of which were long-term and strategic). During discussion, I pointed out that both had been engaged in a form of needs analysis which has allowed them to consider what is already happening; what they need to focus on so as not to replicate what is already happening and also, the strategic nature of their engagement focus. We reflected on the evolving nature of this type of outreach work and how it is has to be both reactive and proactive – drawing on their own strengths as educators would assist them in the adaptability and fluidity this role required.

At the conclusion of the meeting, we discussed meeting again in a few months, a possible site visit and also assistance with framing up the report and the various mechanisms that are used.

**Trip to SCU – Reflection**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016**  
**Southern Cross University Campus**

Previous Activities:

- Skype/telephone meetings with Student Engagement and Retention (SERT) team
- Email contact about the wording of the card along with email about framing questions for the telephone conversation.

Today's Activities:

- Video/followed by 2 hour workshop (30 attendees) and then 2 hour meeting with SERT staff.

**Reflection on meeting**

Context

The roundtable meeting comprised of eight members of staff from both the SERT team and also, Equity and Diversity Unit - later in the meeting we were joined by a student who had been involved in the call to new FiF students. The meeting opened with a reflection on the new strategies that had occurred at the beginning of the semester which comprised of a celebration card, a welcome phone call (which included specific questions around being the first-in-family and the types of supports and concerns this status initiated) in addition the peer mentoring program provided an opportunity for students to pair with a FiF mentor.

Issues that were identified:

- the difficulty of defining the FiF cohort, the team referred to how the indicator related to parents' highest level of education was not a good measure of first-in-family status. One example provided was mature age students who may feel this question does not apply to them or even regard this as quite condescending.
- Even when students had indicated parents had no university qualification during the phone calls it became clear that they were not the first in their families to attend university. This points to the flawed nature of this indicator as this both lacks the necessary detail and may also actually alienate some student cohorts.
- Some of the people who received the card were actually completing a second qualification but this may not have been identified on the enrolment form.
- Not many students indicated a preference for peer mentors who were FiF and while the team were interested in the reasons for this, I pointed out that it simply might be that students were not necessarily aware of what FiF might mean in terms of university studies – you don't necessarily know what you don't know.



- For those who were contacted, the actual concept of being FiF could be quite innovative and it was indicated that being able to approach this in a positive way was a benefit to this approach.
- There were issues with the card including the image and also the font used – I have kept an example of the card for the Appendices. The First-in-Family website was used as a reference in the card and it is very much framed in a celebratory sense. Will check the analytics on return.
- The university is also involved in the Stella program which is bringing local community members, parents and elders on to campus to introduce them to the university environment as parents indicated that they were anxious about their child coming to university due to fear of discrimination – the visit will include the Indigenous Learning Centre.

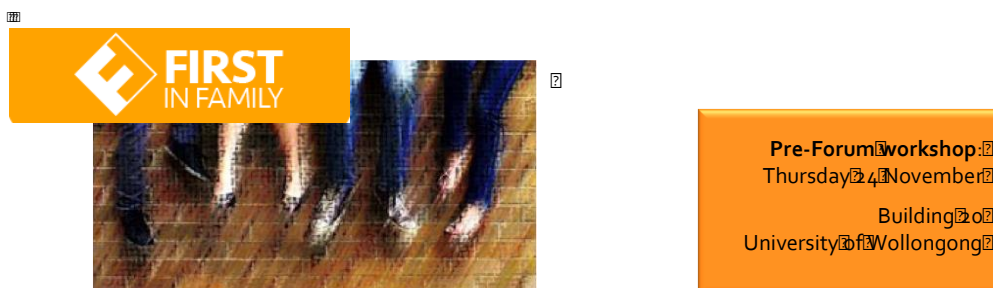
### Where Next?

- The team have decided to conduct some additional research on the strategies that have been implemented which includes conducting surveys with the mentors who were paired with FiF mentees (the survey will be sent to me for feedback as well).
- Another round of cards and also welcome calls in the new year (2017).
- Explore ways to actually identify first in family students making use of the OLT definition – for example more precise questions relating to this along with better data collection that includes trying to identify those who have completed previous studies.
- The peer mentoring area will be exploring an additional question to include that also identifies mentees who are FiF.

Sarah O' Shea  
14 August 2016



## Appendix E: Forum Programs



### Conversations about retaining and engaging first-in-family learners in HE

Pre-Forum Workshop Schedule: Thursday 24 November, 2016

1:30pm	Registration (Building 20) and refreshments
2:00pm	Welcome to Country (Ms Jodi Edwards)
2:15pm	<b>Workshop 1: Focus on AIME Mentoring</b>  <b>Abstract: AIME Mentoring:</b> The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) connects with large numbers of first-in-family Indigenous students in over half of Australia's universities. This session will present information about the approaches used by AIME at different student stages (from primary to high school, at university) and demonstrate the innovations that have enabled AIME to successfully support first-in-family students to participate in higher education. For more details see: <a href="http://www.uowblogs.com/aimeresearchpartnership/">http://www.uowblogs.com/aimeresearchpartnership/</a>
3:15pm	<b>Workshop 2: Best Practice in Online Remote Mentoring: See Online mentoring with young people in remote settings</b>  <b>Abstract: SEE online mentoring</b> with young people in remote settings. In this presentation we will demonstrate our work with the developers of the SEE platform, an online classroom/campus environment. The project is at the 'incubator stage', with pilot work in progress to deliver online mentoring between university students and high school students using an avatar modality. The technology offers unique ways that students separated by distance can meet and build social and cultural capital.
4:15-4:45	Implications for Practice



**Forum: Friday 25 November**  
**Building 20**  
**University of Wollongong**

## Conversations about retaining and engaging first-in-family learners in HE

### Forum schedule: Friday 25 November, 2016

8:30am	Registration (Building 20) and tea/coffee		
9:00am	Welcome to Country (Ms Odie Edwards)		
9:15am	Opening Address		
9:30am	Invited speaker: Dr Emma Wolfram-Foliaki, University of Auckland: A Global Perspective: Exploring First-in-Family Learners' Experiences Internationally		
10:15am	Morning tea		
10:45am	Lightening Presentations on Best Practice and Research:		
	Stream	Stream	Stream
	Dr Erica Southgate (UON): Getting to be a Doctor: The capacity to aspire to medical school for students from first-in-family and low socioeconomic status backgrounds	Ms Nadine White (SCU): Welcome and Congratulations! Southern Cross University's First-in-Family Commencing Undergraduate Welcome Initiative	Ms Deanna McCall (Monash): Opportunities for change: What factors influence First-in-Family students to enrol in higher education?
	Dr James Williams, Matthew Farrugia & Kym Nguyen (Swinburne): Improving First-in-Family student outcomes through Swinburne Connect	Ms Sally Patfield (UON): Widening participation and the aspirations of prospective first-in-family students	Ms Jennifer Eaton & Ms Rosie Westland (UNSW): ASPIRE Community Hubs: Building university presence in a community
11:30am	Invited speaker: A/Prof Sharon King, A/Prof Ben McCann, Dr Ann Luzecky, University of South Australia (UniSA): Transforming Identity: First-in-Family Students' Experiences of Success at University		
12:15pm	Lightening Presentations on Best Practice and Research:		
	Stream	Stream	
	Dr Linda Devereux & Dr Kate Wilson (UNSW): First-in-Family students: what can we learn from the unique context of UNSW Canberra?	Melissa Zaccagnini & Sian O'Sullivan (UOW): How Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) supports First-in-Family Learners	
	Ms Lisa Belfiore (UOW): Making difference to the first-in-family student experience with the SALT project	Mr Brian Martin & Ms Ellen Sabo (FedUni): Belonging, context and practice: Digital Narratives for pedagogical engagement and retention of First-in-Family students	
1:00pm	Lunch and networking		
1:45pm	Invited speaker: Dr Cathy Stone, NCSEHE Fellow, University of Newcastle: Improving participation, success and retention of online first-in-family university students		
2:30pm	Invited speaker: Ms Kara King, Charles Sturt University: Supporting students who are first-in-family and community to come to university: A focus on resources		
3:15pm	Roundtable discussion with speakers on themes emerging from the forums, questions, comments from participants		
3:45pm	Close and where to from here?		
4:00pm	Finish		



Australian Government  
 Department of Education and Training

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training



Organised by: A/Prof Sarah O'Shea, Dr Anne Delahunty, UOW  
 @Uni\_Fir @http://firstinfamily.com.au

## Appendix F: Workshop Evaluation Survey

### APPENDIX I

#### WORKSHOP EVALUATION SURVEY QUESTIONS

**“Engaging Families to Engage Students”: Forging productive partnerships with families to assist first in family students navigate their higher education journey**



### National OLT Fellowship

#### Workshop Evaluation

What state did this workshop / activity occur within? .....

What University/organisation are you from? .....

Please tick what best describes your current professional role:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Staff Member        | <input type="checkbox"/> University professional staff member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher in the area       | <input type="checkbox"/> Equity practitioner                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current student              | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Support staff member         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy maker                 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) ..... |   |

Overall, how would you rate the OLT Fellowship workshop or activity you participated in?

Excellent	Very good	Fairly good	Mildly good	Not good at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain your choice .....

.....

Please tick the box that best describes your answer to the questions

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
--	-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

Version 1: 31 Aug 2015

HREC application 15/

Engaging Families to Engage Students

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
The activity was well organised.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My expectations of the activity were fulfilled.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My participation in this activity will be useful to my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan to collaborate with people I met today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information presented has increased my knowledge of this area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will use information from this workshop /activity in work or research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**What aspects of the activity / workshop did you find most useful? For example, can you provide any examples of ideas/ strategies/ outcomes that might be useful for you professionally or personally.**

**What aspects of this activity / workshop did you find least useful? For example what parts of this activity could be improved upon, what else would you have liked to hear about?**

**Overall I would rate the usefulness of this workshop / activity as (tick one):**

Very Poor	Poor	Average	Above average	Outstanding
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you explain your answer?

**How likely is it that you will implement ideas from this workshop / activity into your professional context?**

Not at all likely	Unlikely	Unsure	Likely	Most likely
-------------------	----------	--------	--------	-------------

Not at all likely	Unlikely	Unsure	Likely	Most likely
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you explain your answer?

**Please include your email below if you would like to be updated about these OLT Fellowship activities**

*Thank you for your time in completing this evaluation*

## Appendix G: Gantt chart planner for 2016 FiF forum

### FiF Conversations forum: 24 & 25 November 2016

