Successful delivery of Phase 2 of Leadership Program

In April and June of this year, we held the second Phase of the Intercultural Academic Leadership program with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators at Curtin University. After revising and refining the program following feedback from Phase 1, the Phase 2 delivery proved to be very successful. Participants came from all different areas within the University, including Science, Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery and Media, Culture and Communication. The group was also joined by an Indigenous educator from another University. The diversity of educators from different fields provided a rich interprofessional context for exploring and discussing leadership in the intercultural space. Facilitators of Phase 2 included A/Prof Marion Kickett, Prof Kim Scott, A/ Prof Dawn Bessarb, Dr Angela Durey, Ms Kate Taylor, Ms Susan Reys, Dr Julie Hoffman and Ms Leanne Purdom.

Shifting confidence in Participants: Results from the Pre and Post Program Surveys’

Pre and post confidence surveys were completed by participants in the 2nd Phase of the IALP, to explore how confident they felt across various teaching domains in the intercultural space. Surveys were completed prior to the commencement of the IALP (Pre WS), after Module 5 (Post WS 1-5) and also after Module 6 (Post WS 6). The figure below illustrates the dramatic shift in confidence that participants felt from the beginning to the end of the IALP, providing a rich picture of the impacts of the IALP program on teaching, learning and leadership in the intercultural space. Importantly, the results also demonstrate the value in doing the survey after both Module 5 and 6, with confidence possibly increasing not only as a result of participants completing the Module 6 content, but also perhaps having the opportunity to take what they learnt in the earlier Modules and apply the material to their teaching practice.
Phase 2 participants: Shifts in confidence following completion of the IALP

Feedback from participants also highlighted the value of the program content and the overall positive experience they had:

“well facilitated from our Aboriginal colleagues who generously shared their stories and ideas with us (not just the project leaders); reminded that discomfort is OK!”

“Very moving & provocative....yet healing”

“Considering how to deal with difficult (intercultural) situations that arise during teaching”

Principles for delivering the IALP: The Working Together Framework

The goal of the IALP is that it is delivered alongside an Indigenous embedded unit, across faculties. At Curtin, this has been the Indigenous Cultures and Health Unit 130 (ICH), currently delivered through the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The Working Together Framework proposes that to develop the cultural competency of higher education and develop intercultural leadership, institutions must commit to compulsory studies for students in Indigenous content, and crucially, that this content is delivered by a teaching team that is composed of at least half Indigenous staff. This converges with the higher vision of the IALP and Working Together Framework: and bringing Indigenous people and voices into mainstream education through models of recruitment and retention.

However, if delivery of the IALP alongside an Indigenous embedded unit is not possible, the Working Together Framework suggests the IALP can be delivered wherever there is discreet Indigenous content and may also support content delivery for other cross-cultural spaces. Yet the core principle of the project is about ‘intercultural’ and thus collaboration is key to delivery and in participation. If there are no Indigenous staff/students in an area, the guide to implanting this program suggests that organizers collaborate with other areas of the university to find Indigenous staff as co-presenters and/or as participants.

Future of the IALP: University commitment and sector dissemination

The Working Together team recognised very early that presenting on the project at conferences was extremely important—both nationally and internationally—to increase awareness within the sector about the project and importantly, about the resources available. The team have presented at a number of important forums and conferences. Two publications are currently being developed, and all resources developed for the project, including the full IALP package, are available on the project website: http://academicleadership.curtin.edu.au/IALP/

At Curtin, there has been considerable interest and senior leadership support to embed the IALP beyond its OLT finding cycle. Recent commitments from the university’s new learning institute has seen the commitment of ongoing funding to coordinate and deliver the program as part of the strategy to develop Indigenous Cultural Capabilities in staff. This new initiative will also include development of a Train the Trainer pillar to the IALP.