WELCOME to the third edition of the Peer Mentoring @ UNSW Newsletter!

Session 1, 2014, was a busy one, with 20 Peer Mentoring programs running across a variety of Faculties, Schools and Departments at UNSW. Approximately 810 peer mentors provided support to new students making the transition to university life. Mentors used their experience and knowledge to guide new students through those first crucial weeks at university. A remarkable 3,254 (approx) first year students (mentees) signed up to be part of the peer mentoring programs across UNSW. A big thanks goes out to all those mentors who gave their time and support to the first year students, and to the mentees themselves for participating in the peer mentoring programs and making them so successful. Thank you also to all the hardworking Peer Mentoring Coordinators who made it all possible!

Well we’ve got a great newsletter for you this month, filled with inspiring and motivating stories from previous mentors and mentees, an article featuring Materials Science Peer Mentoring Coordinator Juanita Vargas, and a piece on the Sleep Smart program, a great university wide campaign.

Happy reading!!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

From Mentor to PhD Candidate!

By Craig Baker, former Peer Mentor with the School of Psychology Peer Mentoring Program. Currently a PhD Candidate in the Masters of Clinical Psychology and combined PhD program.

The Psychology Peer Mentor Program afforded me with a fantastic opportunity to participate, first as a mentee, then as a mentor, and finally as a super mentor and facilitator. I was able to meet and help some extraordinary students cope with an academically demanding program by imparting knowledge and skill-sets to assist with coursework, and perhaps even more importantly; by creating an awareness of the importance of psychological literacy and ongoing learning across the lifespan.

It was a great opportunity to make friends and to learn from others. Peer mentoring intrinsically seeks to develop a sense of citizenship, of community, of belonging to a wider audience connected by mutual responsibility and shared knowledge. It was an incredibly rewarding experience as it allowed me to grow and develop those all-important interpersonal skills, enabling me to learn how to really listen to people and to be an effective communicator. Skills that are very important in fostering engagement with cross-culturally diverse groups and facilitating both personal and professional development in oneself and in others.

Peer mentoring also gave me the confidence to pursue my goals. The experience afforded to me by the Psychology Peer Mentor Program played a vital role in my success in achieving the Bachelor of Psychology at UNSW and becoming a Candidate for the Masters of Clinical Psychology and combined PhD program at UNE. Participating afforded me with a great experience in sharing my academic journey and helping others with theirs.

Just do it and participate, the rewards are fantastic!

PEER MENTORING TRIVIA!!

Q. How many Peer Mentoring @ UNSW programs ran in Session 1, 2014?

A) 20?
B) 15?
C) 10?

Another great semester for Peer Mentoring. A big thank you to all the Peer Mentoring Coordinators, mentors and mentees who made it so successful. Another great semester for Peer Mentoring. A big thank you to all the Peer Mentoring Coordinators, mentors and mentees who made it so successful.

For more information about Peer Mentoring @ UNSW please go to www.peermentoring.unsw.edu.au

Answer: (A) 20!! Another great semester for Peer Mentoring.
THE WHO'S WHO IN PEER MENTORING @ UNSW — Juanita Vargas currently works for the School of Materials Science and Engineering as the Marketing Officer, Outreach and Student Recruitment and coordinates the Peer Mentoring Program.

Juanita is a graduate of Macquarie University where she completed a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Media and Cultural Studies. She has been working in the education sector for the last 10 years in a wide range of roles promoting vocational, tertiary, and continuing education as well as research. She is passionate about helping young people develop their potential through a University education and is interested in how digital and social media can be used to engage students and enhance their learning experience.

"I have been coordinating the School’s peer mentoring program for the last two years and my main goal has been to offer a program where both new and experienced students feel at ease and welcome, I strongly believe that this will allow students to be themselves and feel part of our School and of the wider UNSW community. It has been rewarding to see the 1st years settle into our School and become actively involved in social events and other activities. I am also excited to see experienced students develop their team, communication and leadership skills as peer mentors, these skills are priceless and will assist them in their transition to the workforce.

HEAR FROM A MENTOR — U@UNSW Peer Mentor Tess Calopedos

My name is Tess Calopedos. I’m a fifth year Bachelor of Arts (English)/Social Work student. Last year, I was a U@UNSW Peer Mentor. The U@UNSW Program is an equity project which aims to increase access to UNSW for students from low socio economic backgrounds by utilising multiple indicators of ability, motivation and potential for success in Higher Education.

I have been a peer mentor during school and across many areas within the university and I can honestly say that being part of the U@UNSW Program has been most rewarding. Some schools have over 10 students entering the program. Just because the students are in the same year at school, we cannot assume they are particularly friendly. Other schools have 1 or 2 students coming through and can feel isolated. Peer mentoring usually occurs in small groups, but of course is dependent on timetables. Over the course of first semester, we covered many topics, including the best food on campus, round house parties, how to effectively study, take notes in class and to refer the students to the best support areas on campus.

As I said, I found the U@UNSW peer-mentoring program so rewarding. My peer mentees have fully integrated into university life, joining clubs and making “memories”. It is so fulfilling to have helped one of your Peer Mentees on their way through their university career.

HEAR FROM A MENTEE — The benefits of joining a Peer Mentoring program!

By Belinda Watson, Mature Age Peer Mentoring Program

It was with great excitement that I started a Medical Science Degree at UNSW, in 2011. Eager to become involved in all aspects of University life, I attended O-Week and even joined a few societies. However, it quickly became apparent that being mature-age set me apart from my most of my fellow first-year students. Joining the Mature-Age Peer Mentoring Program, in that first year, not only introduced me to like-minded people, but also gave me fundamental insights into the exciting (and often daunting) world of University life. My mentor provided insightful practical advice, whilst the program introduced me to a circle of fellow students that provided friendly faces along the way. Both instilled a sense of belonging, and a platform from which I could then embrace all of University life.

(Belinda is now a Mature Age Peer Mentor.)
Sleep is an important function for survival, performance and self-regulation. A large proportion of the population, and particularly University students, are chronically sleep deprived. This has an impact on our health, our thinking and what we are able to achieve.

The Sleep Smart program is a university wide campaign that focusses on delivering key ‘positive’ messages about sleep and sleep patterns, with the hope that we can raise the awareness of the UNSW Community about the importance of regular and healthy sleep routines.

Our Sleep Smart Ambassadors have utilised a variety of communication strategies and delivery methods to deliver appropriate and targeted messages to students about the benefits of healthy sleep routines. Sleep Smart ambassadors are typically active during O Week and other events throughout the year.

Sleep smart is also active on Facebook, and uses this medium regularly. To see what we do go to, and like, our Facebook pages:


To find out more about the campaign or to get involved contact Amanda Rembach on 9385 5418 or send an email to caps@unsw.edu.au

**QUOTE:**

“Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same.”

By Franz Schubert

**CONTRIBUTIONS?**

Would you like to share a story about your Peer Mentoring at UNSW experience or is there something that you would like us to include in the newsletter? If so, please email peermentoring@unsw.edu.au

**SAVE THE DATE: Peer Mentoring @ UNSW Information Hour**

27 August, 1pm—2pm, Quadrangle Bldg, Room 1001

On the 27 August, Peer Mentoring @ UNSW are holding their annual ‘Peer Mentoring @ UNSW Information Hour’. Come along and find out about one of the most popular volunteering programs available at UNSW!