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Student and staff expectations and experiences

Final report of the project *A collaborative multi-faceted approach to address the gaps between student expectation and experience at university*

2013

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www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations

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The project authors would like to express their gratitude to the academics involved in the development of this project and in the dissemination of the findings. We also thank the reference group for their contributions to the project.

We trust that all those involved benefit from the application of the project findings in the years to come.

List of acronyms used

ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd
ATN	Australian Technology Network
Go8	Group of Eight
GPA	Grade Point Average
IRU	Innovative Research University
OLT	Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching
SSEE	Student Expectations and Experiences
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
UniSA	University of South Australia

Executive summary

Aims and Deliverables
The research project, *A Collaborative Multi-faceted Approach to Address the Gaps between Student Expectation and Experience at University*, otherwise known as the SSEE project, aimed to understand the issue of school to university transition from many points of view.

Other aims of the project were to:

- Provide a common forum for school teachers, university academics, and professional staff
- Expand existing pilot studies to all three universities in SA as well as the secondary school sector
- Understand the interaction between a student's expectations, experiences, entrance scores, and grades
- Better prepare students for transition by widely communicating the results of the study
- Develop working relationships between universities (academic and administrative areas) and high schools
- Produce an evidence base for expectations and experiences of students during transition and utilise it to support and develop current transition strategies

The key outcomes and deliverables include:

- Development and wide dissemination of a series of Project Factsheets
- Exposure at key events for students including University Open Days and Orientation events
- Development of strong links across the three collaborating universities and the secondary education sector that will be used to create change in response to the project findings into the future
- The project key findings have been quoted and referenced by leading academic experts external to the project including Professor Sally Kift[1] and Professor Mantz Yorke[2]
- Establishment of a Project Reference Group as a very successful way of making stronger connections between high school and university staff.
- Implementation of a Schools Engagement Plan in order to disseminate the project findings
- Numerous presentations to the secondary school sector
- Development and implementation of an effective dissemination strategy targeting all stakeholders, including a comprehensive website and blog.
- Numerous conference presentations resulting in published papers.
- Media coverage[3]

[1] <https://fileshare.qut.edu.au/public/kift/ERGAKeynote_290911_Sent.pptx>
[2] <www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/content/pdf/keynote_workshop/Yorke%20Fremantle%20FYHE%20Paper%20v7%20(public).pdf>
[3] <www.adelaidenow.com.au/unis-a-shock-for-students/story-e6frea6u-1226140351467>

Research process:
Research involved surveying commencing South Australian university students to learn what they expected from university life. Continuing students were surveyed and asked about their actual experience of university. High school teachers and lecturers of first year students were also surveyed to form a complete picture of the gaps between expectations and experiences for new university students.

The project collected and analysed survey data from the following sources:

- Commencing students from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (n=8535)
- Continuing students from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010 and 2011 (n=9782)
- Senior secondary teachers and school counsellors from a number of schools across the spectrum of public, independent and Catholic schools in 2010 (n=234) with a follow up in 2012 (ongoing), and
- University lecturers, tutors and practical demonstrators from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010 (n=251).

Although not initially within the scope of the original project, survey data was also collected from commencing students in 2012 in order to assess whether the introduction of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) secondary school curriculum in 2011 had any effect on students' expectations.

Dissemination
The project findings were disseminated widely through a number of channels, discussed in detail in Chapter 5, including:

- A comprehensive project website
- Development of promotional materials
- Papers and conference presentation written by members of the project team
- Visits to secondary schools and associations
- Project updates
- A Reference Group
- A Project Forum
- Word of mouth

Conclusion and Recommendations
This project has been a highly successful collaboration across the secondary and tertiary education sector with impacts that will be experienced in the years to come. A rich source of data has been established that will enable analysis, application, and dissemination to continue and contribute to the growing body of scholarly literature on the tertiary transition experience. The report identifies a number of key recommendations for various stakeholder groups to consider in response to this research, discussed in Chapter 7.

More information on the project can be sourced at www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations.

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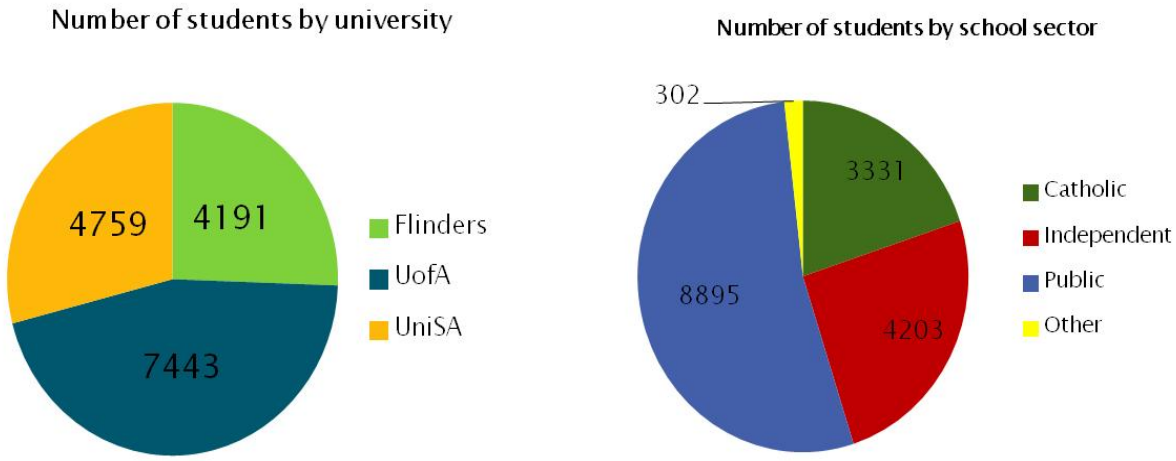


Figure 2: Student entry into university

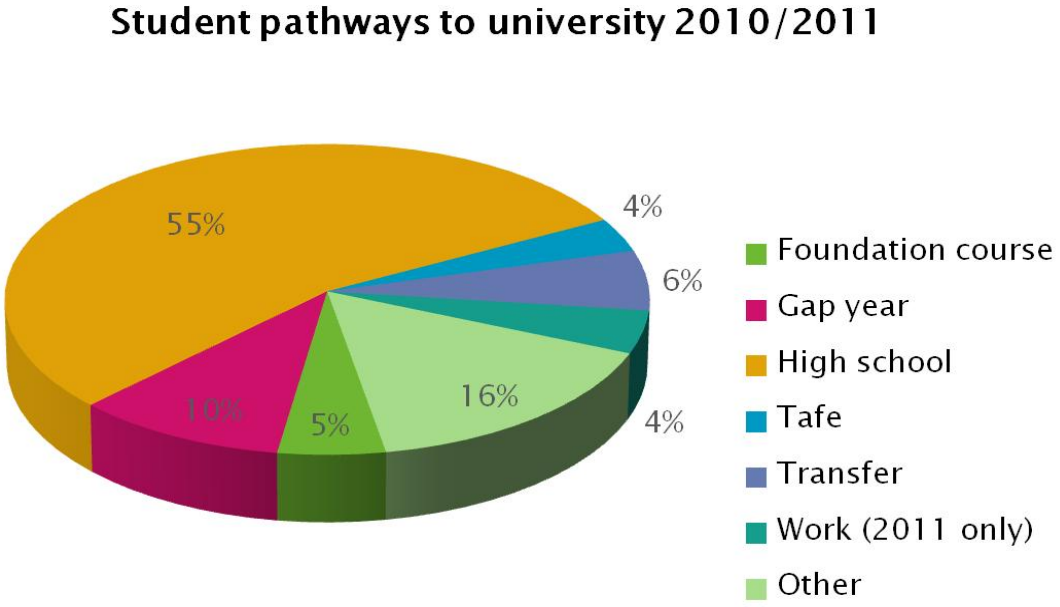
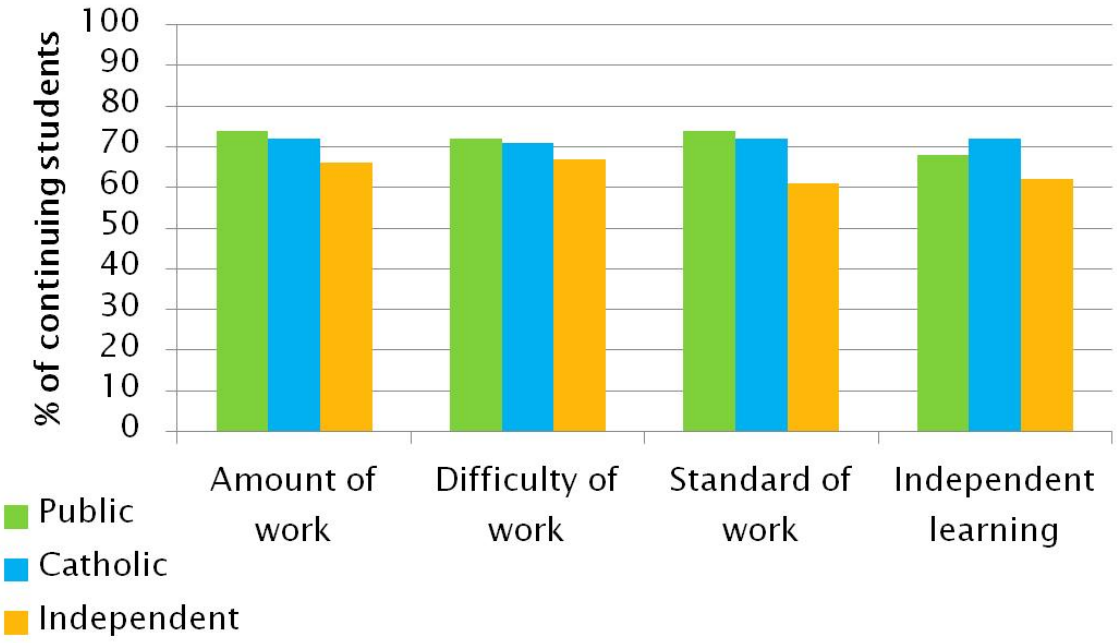


Figure 3: Differences experienced between school and university



Chapter 1: Introduction

The underpinnings of this project were developed in 2007-08 when a number of pilot surveys were conducted at The University of Adelaide. Students commencing tertiary education at The University of Adelaide were surveyed in order to further elucidate the difficulties they faced upon entry (Crisp et al., 2009). Students from all faculties were asked what they expected in a number of areas such as workload, feedback on assignments, and access to teaching staff. Interestingly, while students responded that they thought studying at university would be different to high school, they consistently indicated that their expectations of access to teachers, response times for the return of work and feedback, and reviewing of drafts, was the same as high school. This suggested that while students knew there *would* be a change they did not really appreciate the *nature* of the change, nor were students sufficiently cognizant of the more ambiguous expectations and demands placed on them compared with the highly structured environment of secondary school.

In a follow-up study Brinkworth et al. (2008) reported in more depth on results from two of the student groups in the original surveys: those entering university to study either humanities or science. A similar study conducted at University of South Australia by King and Thalluri (2006) demonstrated that students had several unmet expectations in regards to their new academic learning environment. They had difficulty managing the self-directed nature of the majority of the learning tasks and often felt socially isolated in this new environment.

Student responses in our pilot studies aligned with previous findings that a successful transition was not solely due to academic ability, but depended also on personality factors as contributing to first year student success (McInnis, James & Hartley, 2000, Thalluri and King, 2009) and an ability to make a rapid adjustment to a learning environment that requires greater autonomy and individual responsibility than students expect upon commencement.

The results from the pilot studies suggested that educating students in greater detail about what to expect at university, and educating academics about the skills students have and do not have, would greatly assist with transition. This initial research showed that while expectations and experiences differed from each other, these differences were common across at least two contrasting faculties within a single university; however institutional differences, other student divisions, and the perspective of secondary school teachers remained hitherto unexplored. For this reason, a collaborative proposal consisting of representatives from the three tertiary institutions and a number of high schools within South Australia representing the three secondary school sectors (public, independent and Catholic), as well as an external evaluation group, was approved by the ALTC in 2009 in order to expand on the pilot studies to cover the missing factors.

1.1 Project team members

The project team members that contributed significantly to the completion of the project are listed below.

Academics
Dr Russell Brinkworth, University of South Australia (Project co-leader)
Dr Ben McCann, The University of Adelaide (Project co-leader)
Dr Karen Burke de Silva, Flinders University
Dr Sharron King, University of South Australia
Dr Ann Luzeckyj, Flinders University
Dr Ed Palmer, The University of Adelaide
Dr Sheila Scutter, James Cook University

Project Support
Ms Joanne O'Connor, The University of Adelaide
Ms Jen Hill, The University of Adelaide
Mrs Jacqui McCann, The University of Adelaide
Ms Victoria Wright, The University of Adelaide

1.2 Project aims

Our project sought to inform students of the realities of university life to better facilitate the transition from secondary to tertiary education. Our hypothesis was that by communicating to high school students some of the details of the differences they will experience upon commencing university study they would be better prepared for the transition. Furthermore, by making university lecturers more aware of student expectations, they would be in a better position to accommodate them.

The aims of this collaborative multi-faceted project were to:

- Provide a common forum for the distribution and discussion of ideas by bringing the three main groups working on transition (secondary school teachers, university academics and professional staff) closer;
- Expand our pilot studies to all areas at all three universities in the state as well as the secondary school sector;
- Understand the interaction between a student's university entrance score, expectations of university, grades at university and their experiences during first year;
- Better prepare students for transition by directly communicating the results of the study with secondary school teachers and students as well as those involved in transition at the tertiary level;
- Develop working relationships between the academic, administrative and support areas of universities and high schools to seamlessly and coherently support students in a coordinated fashion in their formative university year;
- Produce an evidence base for the expectations and experiences of students during transition and utilise it to supplement current high school and university transition strategies (e.g. personal learning plan, new SACE, Orientation Week activities).

1.3 People involved

The project involved an external reference group and an independent external evaluator.

External reference group
The project's external reference group was developed in response to the interim evaluation report by Professor Sally Kift. The members were:

- Dr Russell Brinkworth, Dr Ben McCann, Project co-leaders (Convenors)
- Jacqui McCann, Project Manager (Secretariat)
- Heather Parkes, Principals Australia Inc
- Bev Rogers, Department of Education and Children's Services (SA)
- Dr Sophia Matiasz, Principal Policy Officer, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (SA)
- Dr Lynda MacLeod, Assistant Director, Educational Services, Association of Independent Schools in SA (AISSA)
- Jane Iwanowitsch, Senior Education Adviser – Senior Years, Catholic Education Office

- Graeme Oliver, Deputy Principal, Australian Science and Mathematics School (based at Flinders University)
- Mark Colsey, Careers Counsellor, St Peter's College
- Tim Oughton, Principal, Scotch College Adelaide
- Ann Prime, Principal, Salisbury High School
- Steve Jones, Director, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Academic and Student Services Division, Flinders
- Professor Joe Shapter, Dean of School, School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, Flinders
- Professor Larry Owens, Associate Head (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law, Flinders
- Associate Professor Heather Smigiel, Physical Sciences, Flinders
- Professor Vicki Waye, Division of Business: Dean of Teaching and Learning, Professor of Law, University of South Australia (UniSA)
- Associate Professor Brenton Dansie, Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment: Dean; Teaching and Learning, UniSA
- Associate Professor Lynne Badger, Dean: Teaching and Learning, Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, UniSA
- Alan Brideson, Director, Marketing and Development Unit, UniSA
- Stephen Parsons, Deputy Director, Learning and Teaching Unit, UniSA
- Dr Ben Grindlay, Marketing Director, Market Research Manager, The University of Adelaide (Adelaide)
- Associate Professor Simon Pyke, Acting Director, Centre for Learning and Professional Development, Adelaide
- Sally Hebenstreit, Director, Student Support Services, Adelaide
- Jan Thompson, Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Flinders

External evaluators
Professor Sally Kift and Dr John Willison agreed to be the project's external evaluators. Dr John Willison is based at The University of Adelaide and was in regular communication with the project team leaders and attended a number of project meetings. Professor Sally Kift visited Adelaide twice in 2011 to meet with the project committee. Their report is at appendix F.

1.4 Dissemination methods

The project findings were widely disseminated through a broad range of channels, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, including:

- A comprehensive project website
- Development of promotional materials
- Papers and conference presentation written by members of the project team
- Visits to secondary schools and school associations
- Project updates
- A Reference Group
- A Project Forum
- Word of mouth

1.5 Stakeholders

A number of stakeholder groups were identified and key findings were disseminated to these groups during the project.

- First year university teaching staff – Lecturers, tutors and demonstrators of first-year students were a key stakeholder group and the project team members have connected with key groups of staff at the three universities to present the key findings. A Factsheet has been developed that will be widely disseminated.
- Secondary school teaching staff – Secondary school teaching staff were surveyed twice throughout the project. Numerous presentations and meetings were conducted with secondary school teaching staff to disseminate the key findings and create discussion around potential change. A Factsheet was widely disseminated.
- Prospective and continuing university students – Students were the primary stakeholder group and were the main source of data for this project through the surveys. Key findings have been widely disseminated through all possible avenues including Open Days, presentations at secondary schools and through the Department of Education.
- Parents of prospective university students – Parents were identified as a potential stakeholder group as they can influence their children. A Factsheet was developed for parents to equip parents with key facts about university that could be discussed with their children.

Chapter 2: Process

Funding was sought to explore the differences between expectations and experiences for students from all backgrounds across the three collaborating universities and the perspective of secondary school teachers.

2.1 Initial pilot studies

The underpinnings of this project were developed in 2007-08 when a number of pilot surveys were conducted at The University of Adelaide. The surveys were of students commencing tertiary education at The University of Adelaide in order to further elucidate the difficulties they faced upon entry (Crisp et al., 2009). Students from all faculties were asked what they expected in a number of areas such as workload, feedback on assignments and access to teaching staff. These studies suggested that students did not really appreciate the nature of the change, nor were students sufficiently cognizant of the more ambiguous expectations and demands placed on them compared with the more structured environment of high school. A further study reported in more depth on results from two of the student groups in the original surveys: those entering university to study either Humanities or Science. A similar study conducted at University of South Australia demonstrated that students had unmet expectations in regards to their new academic learning environment. This initial research showed that expectations and experiences are not very different between different faculties within a single university; however institutional differences, other student divisions and the perspective of secondary school teachers remained unexplored. For this reason, a collaborative proposal consisting of representatives from the three tertiary institutions and a number of high schools within South Australia, as well as an external evaluation group, was approved by the ALTC in 2009 in order to expand on the pilot studies to cover the missing factors.

2.2 Methodology

The project methodology involved surveying key stakeholders and promoting uptake of key findings.

2.2.1 Surveys

The project collected and analysed survey data from the following sources:

- Commencing students in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (n=8535)
- Continuing students in 2010 and 2011 (n=9782)
- Senior secondary teachers and school counsellors from a number of schools across the spectrum of public, independent and Catholic schools in 2010 (n=234) with a follow-up in 2012 (ongoing), and
- University lecturers, tutors and practical demonstrators from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010 (n=251).

The commencing student surveys were distributed to students commencing study at each of the three universities in South Australia, in the month prior to Orientation Week in 2010, post-Orientation Week in 2011 and immediately before, during and two weeks after Orientation Week in 2012. The commencing student surveys consisted of multiple choice, Likert scale, ranking and three open-ended questions about why students were attending university, what their expectations were and what had influenced their expectations. Students were also asked whether they felt anything was missing in their preparation for university.

The continuing student surveys were conducted in July/August in 2010 and 2011. The surveys consisted of questions to collect demographic data on students, their experiences in relation to amount of actual study undertaken, views on teaching staff commitments, the

differences between school and university, whether they performed as well as they expected and what they found helped them to succeed.

The survey of university lecturers, tutors and practical demonstrators from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010 included questions on their field of teaching, the reasons why they think students make certain choices around university study and what they think makes for an effective transition.

A survey of senior secondary school teachers and counsellors conducted in 2010 consisted of questions on their field of teaching, the reasons why they think students make certain choices around university study and their views on student expectations of university and what they think is important for transition. A follow-up survey, to increase numbers, was given in early 2012.

Recruitment was via existing communication methods to students at each university and through the student portals, where a link was provided from the students' institution to the online survey. Posters placed around the universities also encouraged students to participate in the study and a prize was offered as an incentive to participate. The 2011 survey was widely promoted at Orientation Week events and the project update to the mailing list. The study had ethics approval from each of the universities participating.

The three South Australian universities each belong to one of the three major university alliances in Australia. The University of Adelaide belongs to the Group of Eight (Go8), Flinders University is an Innovative Research University (IRU) and the University of South Australia is part of the Australian Technology Network (ATN). Together, these universities make up almost all commencing tertiary students in the state of South Australia.

Data were analysed by SPSS v17 for descriptive and comparative analysis using Chi-square or ANOVA according to the nature of the data. Responses to open-ended questions were thematically analysed manually and frequency of themes counted.

Copies of the surveys can be found in the Appendices.

Chapter 3: Outcomes and Deliverables

Eight outcomes and six deliverables were specified in the original project proposal. These are listed and reported on below.

3.1 Project outcomes

The project outcomes as stated in the initial proposal were:

- Incoming university students will be better prepared for what they will encounter upon commencement and more aware of what university staff expect of them by having a closer alignment between their expectations of university life and the experience they will have once there;
- High school and university staff will better understand the different expectations of students;
- High school teachers will have a better understanding of what students should expect if they elect to go to university;
- Transition programs currently run by the member universities will have a well defined baseline upon which to construct a number of new activities to complement existing ones;
- School and university staff and students will have a better understanding of some differences between, and what to expect at, the different universities in South Australia;
- Closer working relationships between high school teachers, university academics and university professional staff;
- A number of lecturers of commencing students will modify their curriculum to better account for student expectations.
- A better understanding of how a student's predicted academic potential (as measured by their TER), expectations and experiences interact to produce university results (e.g. attrition, GPA, transfers).

Significant inroads have been made into achieving the project outcomes and this will be continued and strengthened as the project team members continue to disseminate and adopt the project findings.

3.1.1 Incoming university students will be better prepared for what they will encounter upon commencement and be more aware of what university staff expect of them by having a closer alignment between their expectations of university life and the experience they will have once there.

Media coverage: A major success was the publication of an article about the project "Uni's a shock for students" in the Adelaide-based daily newspaper *The Advertiser* on Monday 19th September 2011. The online version of the article, published at www.adelaidenow.com.au, attracted a number of useful and occasionally incisive (anonymous) user comments about the role of universities in the transition experience.[4]

University Open Days: We were successful in getting the Project Factsheets on to displays/information booths at the 2011 Open Days at all three Universities. Hundreds of copies of the Factsheet for Parents and the Factsheet for New University Students were distributed at these large events in August 2011. Several hundreds of these updated factsheets were again disseminated during 2012 Orientation Week at The University of Adelaide at the Parent-Student evening event.

[4] <www.adelaidenow.com.au/unis-a-shock-for-students/story-e6frea6u-1226140351467>

Distribution of Factsheet for New University Students: This Factsheet was distributed through the website and at the Parents Night and Secondary School Careers Counsellors Conference at The University of Adelaide in May/June (see list of events at the end of this report). Factsheets have also been distributed as part of school and stakeholder visits.

The orientation week organisers at the three universities included our Factsheet for New University Students in orientation packs or via email to all incoming university students in 2012.

3.1.2 High school and university staff will better understand the different expectations of students.

Education Research Group of Adelaide (ERGA) Conference: Professor Sally Kift, the project's external evaluator, incorporated some of the project's key findings in her keynote address to the ERGA Conference in Adelaide, 28-30 September 2011.[5]

Reference Group meetings: The Project Reference Group has been a very successful way of making stronger connections between high school and university staff. At the July 2011 meeting, a Factsheet of the ten key findings that have emerged from recent, initial data analysis was distributed to members. Some Reference Group members distributed the Factsheet through their networks, which has been obvious through further feedback from schools during visits. At the final Reference Group meeting in February 2012, members of the Reference Group took factsheets and USB data sticks away with them to disseminate among their own networks.

During the July 2011 Reference Group meeting, there was extensive discussion about the need for changes to transition practices on both sides of the education sector; from the universities as well as from the schools. However, it was also acknowledged that there are limitations of the project in creating systemic change and this project was primarily designed to disseminate findings from the student surveys.

3.1.3 High school teachers will have a better understanding of what students should expect if they elect to go to university.

Meetings with Schools: The Project Liaison officers visited schools and met with high school teachers as part of the implementation of a School Engagement Plan. This is summarised in Part 2 of this Report.

3.1.4 Transition programs currently run by the member universities will have a well defined baseline upon which to construct a number of new activities to complement existing ones.

This has been achieved through the collection of the survey data, which has provided a clear understanding of student expectations and experiences across 2010 and 2011.

3.1.5 School and university staff and students will have a better understanding of some differences with, and what to expect at, the different universities in South Australia.

Meeting with Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), The University of Adelaide: The project team met with Professor Pascale Quester to discuss the initial project findings. Professor Quester was very interested in our project and was keen to be kept informed of project progress. She already knew a little about the project as she had been included in our mailing list early on, so she had already received (and had read) the June e-newsletter.

[5] https://fileshare.qut.edu.au/public/kift/ERGAKeynote_290911_Sent.pptx

Professor Quester said she would be interested in seeing further substantial data analysis once it is complete and final. She would like to discuss implications/recommendations of the data when the final conclusions are made. She said this research provides a timely baseline for measuring the current state of student experience before the major changes that will be introduced in 2013 into the tertiary education sector. Professor Quester also said she is interested in issues around recruitment and retention of students from non-traditional backgrounds and low socio-economic backgrounds across the different universities. Professor Quester provided a quote for our next newsletter and for use on our blog. Project representatives will meet with the DVC(A)s from UniSA and Flinders University in 2012 to communicate core findings and future recommendations.

3.1.6 Closer working relationships between high school teachers, university academics and university professional staff will be established.

Project Reference Group: The Reference Group has enabled a diverse group of stakeholders (academic, professional, non-university) to engage with the project and assist with wide dissemination.

Project committee: The project committee has enabled the connection and collaboration of academic staff across the three universities that would not otherwise have happened.

3.1.7 A number of lecturers of commencing students will modify their curriculum to better account for student expectations.

There were a number of lecturers, tutors, and First Year Course Co-ordinators involved in the Project Committee and Reference Group. We were approached by several lecturers and course co-ordinators who asked to join our mailing list to be kept informed of outcomes and indicated they will support the project in any way possible in the future (especially in Orientation Week 2013, and the first crucial weeks of Semester 1 2013 for commencing students).

The project will make key recommendations to first year lecturers regarding expectations when the findings are available. A Factsheet for First Year University Teaching Staff is in development and will be ready for publication and dissemination by the end of 2012, ready for incorporation into 2013 teaching practice and transition awareness.

Presentations are planned for established groups of first year teaching staff such as the School of Humanities at The University of Adelaide in July 2012, and the Community of Practice Group at Flinders University in August 2012.

3.1.8 A better understanding of how a student's predicted academic potential (as measured by their TER), expectations and experiences interact to produce university results (e.g. attrition, GPA, transfers).

2011 Continuing Students Survey: There was an overwhelming response to the second continuing students' survey, with a total of 7396 participants. This is more than double the number of respondents in 2010, indicating effective marketing and promotional techniques were employed by the Project Management team. This has provided a vast amount of data on student experience for the Project Committee to build on the 2010 data.

Full data set obtained: Significant effort went into liaising with the three universities to obtain the full set of ATAR, TER and GPA data from 2010 and 2011 for the entire 16829 students that have responded to our surveys. At the time of this report, and the end of the data gathering phase of this project, GPAs did not exist for 2012 commencing students. Therefore this information was not incorporated into subsequent data analysis.

3.2 Project deliverables

The project's list of deliverables from the original proposal was:

- The framework, and feedback from initial implementation, for a school outreach program where academic and professional staff will have the opportunity to communicate with high school students and teachers directly about what life at university is really like;
- Interactive web site with examples and findings from the work. It will also include a space to communicate with others on the issue of what to expect when at university and will be linked to by the ALTC exchange, each of the three universities, as well as the home pages of local high schools;
- Reports for universities and high schools about the findings of the study and what can be done to better align the expectations and experiences of students;
- A more informed series of university orientation activities aimed at addressing the mismatch between student expectations and experiences more effectively;
- Flyers and pamphlets for high school students describing life at university with particular reference to the areas identified by the work as having a disconnect between experiences and expectations.
- After the project's completion, peer-reviewed articles by the members involved on the issues of expectations and experiences will be accepted for publication, and related national and international conference presentations will be made.

3.2.1 The framework, and feedback from initial implementation, for a school outreach program where academic and professional staff will have the opportunity to communicate with high school students and teachers directly about what life at university is really like.

Project Blog: A key way to communicate with high school teachers and other external stakeholders was through our project blog.[6]

Implementation of the Schools Engagement Plan: Project liaison officers visited schools and communicated the available findings with key staff.

Presentations: Project representatives presented key findings at the Secondary School Careers Counsellors Conference in Adelaide on 24 June 2011. See also conference presentations. A project representative spoke at an event organised by the Association for Tertiary Education Management on 'Responding to Student Expectations' and Vocational Education Coordinators' Professional Development and Network Day in November 2011. A presentation was made to the Directors of Curriculum of Secondary/Combined Independent Schools at their meeting in May 2012.

3.2.2 Interactive website with examples and findings from the work. It will also include a space to communicate with others on the issue of what to expect when at university and will be linked to by the ALTC exchange, each of the three universities, as well as the home pages of local high schools.

The website was kept up-to-date with presentations and messaging to key stakeholders. There are a number of links to the other universities throughout this site.

The blog was also a live and constantly evolving way of keeping in touch with stakeholders.

[6] <uniexpectations.wordpress.com/>

3.2.3 Reports for universities and high schools about the findings of the study and what can be done to better align the expectations and experiences of students.

This will occur in 2012 once the further data analysis is finalised.

3.2.4 A more informed series of university orientation activities aimed at addressing the mismatch between student expectations and experiences more effectively.

Meetings with the Manager of the Transition and Advisory Service, The University of Adelaide: Project staff has met with transition and advisory staff on a number of occasions and there is significant interest in this project. A follow up meeting will take place once further data analysis is available. Similar meetings are planned with equivalent personnel at UniSA. However the position at Flinders University has remained vacant during 2011.

3.2.5 Flyers and pamphlets for high school students describing life at university with particular reference to the areas identified by the work as having a disconnect between experiences and expectations.

We have developed five key resources for the high school sector in light of the project findings to date:

- 10 Key Facts
- Factsheet for Parents
- Factsheet for New University Students
- Factsheet for School Staff
- Factsheet for High School Students

Our regular newsletter[7] kept the entire education sector in SA up-to-date with key project developments.

3.2.6. After the project's completion, peer-reviewed articles by the members involved on the issues of expectations and experiences will be accepted for publication, and related national and international conference presentations will be made.

Conferences: The following conference presentations were given:

- The significance of being first: A consideration of cultural capital in relation to 'first in family' student's choices of university and program. Authors; Luzeckyj, L. King, S. Scutter, S. and Brinkworth, R. For the First Year in Higher Education Conference-June 2011, WA
- Widening participation: does cultural capital really make a difference for first year students? Authors; King, S. Luzeckyj, A. Scutter, S. and Brinkworth, R. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc Conference - July 2011, QLD
- "We're not in Kansas anymore": Analysing university expectations and experiences for rural and remote students. Authors: Brinkworth, Russell & McCann, Ben. (2011) Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference, SA.
- Does remote mean removed? An investigation into the expectations and experiences of rural and remote students at University Authors: Brinkworth, RSA &

[7] <www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/publications/>

McCann, B (2011) 1st International Australasian Conference on Enabling Access to Higher Education Adelaide, SA.

- Professor Sally Kift, external evaluator, used some of the project's key findings in her keynote address to the Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference in Adelaide on the 28-30 September.[8]
- Where did you get that idea? What are student expectations of the first year university experience and what has informed them? Authors: Scutter, S, Luzeckyj, A, Palmer, E & Brinkworth, RSA (2010) 2nd Annual Student Equity in Higher Education Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- What a strange idea! Student expectations of the first year university experience Authors: Scutter, S, Palmer, E, Luzeckyj, A & Brinkworth, RSA (2010) 5th Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference Adelaide, South Australia
- "Don't ask me what I think of you I might not give the answer that you want me to ": An exploration of 1st year university students' expectations and experiences from the students' and the teachers' perspectives Authors: Luzeckyj, A, Burke da Silva, K, Scutter, S, Palmer, E & Brinkworth RSA (2010) First Year in Higher Education. July 2010, Adelaide, South Australia.

Publications: The following peer-reviewed journal articles have been published, with a number of new articles still in development.

- In 2011, the article 'The significance of being first: A consideration of cultural capital in relation to "first in family" student's choices of university and program. A Practice Report' was published in the *International Journal of First Year in Higher Education.* Authors; Luzeckyj. A, King. S, Scutter. S, and Brinkworth, R.
- In 2011, the article 'What do commencing undergraduate students expect from first year university' was published in the *International Journal of First Year in Higher Education.* Authors; Scutter. S, Palmer. E, Luzeckyj. A, Burke Da Silva. K, and Brinkworth. R.

This research has attained international recognition: One of the two keynote speakers at the First Year in Higher Education (FYHE) Conference,[9] Professor Mantz Yorke, quoted from this work a number of times in his paper.[10]

[8] <www.adelaide.edu.au/erga/events/2011/>
[9] <www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/index.html>
[10] <www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/content/pdf/keynote_workshop/Yorke%20Fremantle%20FYHE%20Paper%20v7%20(public).pdf>

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Data from the surveys was used to establish a number of key findings, some of which are outlined below.

4.1 Facts about the data

Sixty-seven per cent of all respondents were female, a proportion in keeping with the overall demographic of tertiary students in South Australia. Most students (81%) had completed secondary schooling in South Australia, 9% were from other Australian states and 10% were from overseas. The majority of students (68%) had attended a metropolitan school whereas 22% had attended a school in a rural area. Most students (71%) had entered university based on year 12 or 13 secondary schooling results. Three percent had completed the International Baccalaureate and 7% had entered based on Technical and Further Education (TAFE) qualifications. Five percent had entered university by pre-entry courses and 13% of students had entered by "other" pathways, including transferring from other programs or special entry paths. Compared with the other universities, The University of Adelaide had a lower percentage of students entering from TAFE and a higher percentage of students completing the International Baccalaureate. The percentage of students studying in their first preference degree was high (79%). The vast majority of students (94%) were studying in internal mode and most (82%) were studying a full load of four courses per semester.

4.2 Student expectations versus experiences

4.2.1 Why students choose university study

The top three sources of information on university are friends, university websites and university recruiting information. Students were asked about the reasons they chose the course in which they were enrolled. It was discovered that most students (56%) decide to go to university before year 11. The top two reasons students give for choosing their degree are: interest (71%) and job prospects (46%). School staff believed the top two reasons are: to improve job prospects (75%) and expectations of family and friends (63%). Only 12% of students reported expectations of family and friends as a significant factor.

4.2.2 Standard of work

Almost all (93%) of upper secondary teachers indicated they talk to their students about attending university. There was a disparity between the expectations on the standard of work at university. While 40% of school teachers/counsellors believe there is little difference between the standards of work required at school and university, 80% of university staff and 72% of continuing students reported that the standard of university work is different or extremely different to school work. Further, less than 50% of students and school teachers believed that secondary education adequately prepared them for university compared to 14% of university lecturers.

4.2.3 Study and outside commitments

Three quarters of new university students have unrealistic expectations about the amount of study expected at university. 70%-80% of students reported that the standard of university work is different or extremely different to school work. Our survey showed that only 46% of students felt that school adequately prepared them for university study. Most first year students (75%) expected to be able to work and study but only 50% were able to. Further, 45% of students had outside commitments that negatively affected their learning. The majority (80%) of new students agreed it is important to have a close group of friends for support at university.

4.2.4 Why students continue study

One quarter of students said that talking with university staff helped their decision to continue at university. Over 85% of new students attended orientation activities and 63% of students surveyed said that they found orientation partially or really useful. When asked whether the level of assistance provided to struggling students was different at university compared to school, 79% of school teachers, 65% of lecturers and 55% of continuing students believe this to be the case.

One third of students surveyed indicated that they had transferred into another degree. 90% of university and school staff think that students transfer degrees because “it is not what they thought it would be” but only 18% actually transfer because of this reason. The main reported reason for changing degrees is because their new degree is “more suited to their job choice”. Less than 5% of university teachers, school teachers and students reported that transferring is due to “not learning anything new”.

4.2.5 Expectations of teaching staff

A large majority of commencing students expect easy access to university lecturers but only just over half (53%) of continuing students reported easy access. While the majority of commencing students (92%) expect it is important to attend most lectures, this dropped to 76% of continuing students. Most students (94%) indicate that feedback on drafts of their work will be important at university but less than one quarter (24%) reported getting drafts read. While 94% of lecturers believe they provide sufficient feedback and 98% of commencing students expect feedback will be critical, almost half (45%) of continuing students are unhappy with the amount of feedback received.

4.2.6 Impacts on GPA

Students find it difficult to maintain a balance between study and outside interests. Most (87%) of lecturers and most (83%) of incoming students think it is important to have outside interests but only half (51%) of continuing students actually had structured interests outside study. Further, one third of students expect that outside commitments will negatively affect their study and 44% said they did. Most (86%) lecturers believe this to be the case. The students who reported having outside interests that negatively effected their study had a 6% drop in both GPA and satisfaction when compared to those who did not.

Students that had parents and/or siblings that went to university had 3.5% higher grade point average (GPA) and 1.5% lower satisfaction.

When asked whether students spend more time seeking out extra information on class topics they find interesting, 78% of commencing students said they would but only 58% of continuing students did extra research. Almost all lecturers (98%) think this is important, which is reflected in the fact that students that did had 2.6% higher GPAs and 5.4% higher satisfaction.

In relation to the importance of group work outside class time, 80% of lecturers said this was important as did two-thirds of commencing students, which dropped to 44% of continuing students. Students who though group work important had an increase in satisfaction (up 4.3%) but a slight decrease in GPA of 1.5%. This may indicate group work outside of class may be more helpful to lower performing students.

4.3 First in family students

Approximately 32% of students that responded to our surveys were first in family. Students who were first in family were more likely to come from rural backgrounds. First in family students were slightly older (22.06 years) than non-first in family students (21.37), however the difference in age was minimal.

4.3.1 Source of information on university

When asked what had informed their expectations of what university would be like, students who did not have family experience (were the first in their family to attend university) based their expectations of university on school counsellors, school teachers, university recruiting material and websites significantly more than students who were not the first in their family to attend university. Students who were not first in family relied significantly more on parents, friends and siblings for informing their expectations. First in family students were also more likely to make the decision to attend university towards the end of high school or after working for some time than non-first in family students.

4.3.2 Choice of course and university

First in family students were more likely to be enrolled at either Flinders or UniSA than at Adelaide University. While 37% of students were first in family at Flinders and 35% at UniSA, this was only the case for 25% of students at Adelaide. First in family students were more likely to enrol in education, economics and science, whereas non-first in family students were more often enrolled in law, medicine/dentistry and engineering. However, this trend requires further analysis as there is a likelihood of a number of other variables interacting to influence program choice, including different program availability at universities and the tertiary entrance score required for admission to some programs.

4.3.3 Need for greater focus on first in family students

First in family students often had limited knowledge regarding the range of degree programs available; unrealistic expectations of university study, for example the time required for self-directed study, broader responsibilities, for example needing to work to support themselves through university, or family caring responsibilities. First in family students do not lack cultural capital per se, rather they have a “different” cultural capital and that the onus should be on the university sector to change in order to recognise and value this cultural capital. First in family students bring new forms of knowledge and ways of knowing that interact and challenge current dominant understandings. To fully capitalise on this potential, the university sector needs to develop a greater understanding of the capital that students bring to their studies so as to structure experiences in ways that facilitate the success of all, including an expanding first in family cohort.

4.4 Rural and remote students

Students self reported their status as metropolitan or rural/remote when answering the question “Is the location of the school where you completed the majority of your final years of High School best described as”. Twenty-two percent of students reported finishing schooling in a rural or remote area as opposed to metropolitan. A larger percentage of rural students were female than in the metropolitan sample (70% versus 64%). Both rural and metropolitan samples were age matched, average 22.8 years.

As a percentage of students at the institution Adelaide University had a lower proportion of rural students (26%) compared to Flinders (28%) and UniSA (26%). A larger proportion of students coming from the public education system were from a rural area (30%) when compared to Catholic (17%) and independent (16%).

Rural students were more likely to enter university based on high school results than metropolitan students (75% versus 70%) but slightly less likely to enter directly from high school (53% versus 56%). There were few differences between rural and metropolitan students on when they decided to go to university (chi-squared = 37.6, df = 4, $p<0.05$). Four and a half percent more metropolitan students decided to go to university before year 11 (57.5% compared to 53%) while 3.6% less decided towards the end of high school (16% compared to 19.6%).

University entrance scores (ATARs) were slightly lower for rural (81.2 ± 13.8) versus metropolitan students (83.5 ± 14.6) (mean ± standard deviation), however rural students were more likely to be enrolled in the degree of their first preference (83% versus 79%).

There was a small but statistically significant difference in the programs students were enrolled in (chi-squared = 85.7, df = 16, $p<0.05$). Rural students were more likely to be studying science, nursing, education and society & culture but less likely to be studying engineering, architecture and building, medicine, veterinary science and law than metropolitan students. When asked why they selected the program of study that they did there was an average difference between rural and metropolitan student responses of 1.2 ± 0.6% and a maximum of 2.3%.

When forming expectations, rural students are less likely to get information about university from parents (45%) or other family members (53%) than metropolitan students (52% and 57%). Slightly more likely to rely on university websites (63%) and recruiters (62%) than metropolitan (58% both). Just as likely to rely on school teachers (58% rural, 57% metro) and friends (70% each). Rural students are not relying heavily on new (38%) or traditional media (27%) to get their expectations of what university is like.

Important differences between rural and metropolitan students were that rural students were more likely to be first in family (30%, versus 21% metropolitan students) and less likely to be living at home while at University (25% versus 63%). While rural students feel equally capable before attending university (89%, versus 88% metropolitan) they feel more capable than metropolitan students once at university (67%, versus 63%).

Rural students report being equally capable as metropolitan students in key IT areas of email (95%), web browsing (87%) and word processing (94%). They are also equally likely to have outside commitments negatively affect their study (41%) and perform just as well academically (i.e. have almost the same average GPA) as metro students (5.08 ± 1.15 rural versus 5.06 ± 1.14 metropolitan).

4.5 Limitations of the survey

When asked if they were the first member of their immediate family (parents/care givers and siblings) to attend university, 40% of respondents said yes. The very next questions asked about the educational history of their mother/father or other significant parents/guardians and 46% responded with a Bachelor's degree or higher (postgraduate). It was found that 8% of responders said they were first in family but had at least one parent or guardian with a Bachelor's or postgraduate qualification. Due to the ability to compare responses to different questions this error could be, at least partially, corrected and a new more accurate first in family classifier be determined (32% of respondents). However the error level in this question serves as a warning, and a possible limiting factor, when drawing conclusions from survey results such as these.

Chapter 5: Dissemination

The SSEE project used a variety of methods to disseminate the key project findings. These include:

- A comprehensive project website
- Development of promotional materials
- Papers and conference presentation by members of the project team
- Visits to secondary schools and associations
- Project updates
- A reference group
- A project forum
- Word of mouth

5.1 Project website

A website showcasing the project was developed in 2009 and regularly updated throughout the life of the project. It includes detailed information on the project concept and operations, and presentation of the project findings for the targeted audiences in the form of links to factsheets, conference presentations, project updates and the blog. It has been a very effective way to keep in touch with a broad range of stakeholders and in promoting the project.

5.2 Promotional materials

One of the most effective ways to disseminate the key project findings and promote action in response was through the development of a series of Factsheets for different audiences, a brochure for secondary school students and the production of a USB stick of project resources that could be used by stakeholders in presentations and meetings. More Factsheets will be developed as further findings come to light.

5.3 Papers and conference presentations

Members of the project committee disseminated the research through seven conference presentations at national and international levels and three published journal articles.

5.4 Visits to schools and associations

In mid-late 2011 the project team visited a small group of secondary schools and associations to talk with senior secondary students, teachers and counsellors. The purpose of these visits was to share some of the results from the project including information about the transition to university life and the realities of settling in to university.

This select group of schools benefited from being the first to learn the results of our extensive surveying of commencing first year and continuing university students across Adelaide and the issues they face at university.

5.5 Project updates

During 2011, three project updates were disseminated to almost 5,000 people on our mailing list to keep them informed of progress and to promote ways for stakeholders to be further involved in the project.

5.6 Project reference group

The project engaged a Reference Group to: recommend project dissemination strategies; champion SSEE seminars at their institutions and to other relevant stakeholders; and provide advice on how to translate the findings of the SSEE project into practice to create long term, sustainable impacts. The group met three times during 2011 and their involvement was reflected through greater opportunities to disseminate the project findings and engage more broadly with the sector.

5.7 Project forum

In February 2012, a project forum was held to present the project findings to secondary school educators and first year university teaching staff. This was a huge success with almost 100 people attending. This was followed by an opportunity to network and join our mailing list.

5.8 Word of mouth

Although no systematic records were kept of word-of-mouth dissemination, anecdotal evidence and the number of requests for external project presentations suggests that the members of the project team and the reference group were proactive in disseminating information about the project broadly across the sector.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This project has been a highly successful collaboration across the secondary and tertiary education sector with impacts that will be experienced in the years to come. A rich source of data has been established that will enable analysis, application and dissemination to continue and contribute to the growing body of literature on transition. The project has a large network of stakeholders that have been involved in the dissemination of key findings, which has been aided by the development of promotional materials including a brochure and factsheets for specific stakeholder groups. The project team will continue to undertake more extensive data analysis, present at conferences and produce academic journal articles to further educate the sector and add to the growing body of literature on transition.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

Based on the data analysis to date, the following broad recommendations are made:

7.1 Increased focus on first in family students

Given the limited knowledge of university for students that are first in family, the university sector needs to develop a greater understanding of the capital that students bring to their studies so as to structure experiences in ways that facilitate the success of all, including an expanding first in family cohort.

7.2 Increased focus on promoting friendships/networks for commencing students

The importance attributed to friendships with other students was clearly identified in this study. Students at each university had similar perceptions of the importance of social support and friendships but many found it difficult to establish friendships if they did not know anyone in their course. More innovative measures may be required to enable friendship groups to form.

7.3 Increased outreach into schools

Many of the concerns students raised about preparing for university relate to basic communication issues around critical items such as enrolment, the understanding of university terms and obtaining basic course and institution information. These are not unreasonable issues for students to be concerned with and neither are they particularly difficult for institutions to resolve if the need is perceived and the will to act is present. Students should be able to arrive at university on their first day with a clear understanding of what the university experience will be like and the transition they will have to make to enjoy it fully. The days when universities were mysterious places where the intellectual elite resided passed long ago. Thus, there could be greater scope for university transition staff to conduct more outreach education into secondary schools to promote awareness and understanding.

7.4 Increased early intervention

Our research identified that there are many ways that senior secondary school teaching staff could encourage their students to be prepared for the transition. For example, through highlighting the differences between school and university and promoting awareness, encouraging students to attend open days and orientation and transition activities, and being aware of the support and advisory services available at university and not being afraid to seek assistance. It is recommended that members of the Reference Group and key education associations take on these findings and communicate them more broadly to promote increased awareness amongst commencing students.

7.5 Increased focus on transition, advisory and support services

This study has highlighted the importance of university transition, advisory and support services as a vehicle for communicating information to students thinking about attending university and for equipping them with the skills to remain at university. In particular the study has identified the relevance of orientation activities and counselling/support services. It is recommended that all universities allocate substantial funding to ensure these services are available and accessible for all students.

7.6 Professional staff to be included in all projects

A broader reflection on this project is the relevance of professional staff as a means of identifying and communicating project findings to a broader audience beyond academia. The role of professional staff in developing marketing materials and disseminating the findings to the education sector and the broader community has been particularly important in this project and it is believed this may be relevant to other projects to ensure findings are presented in digestible formats beyond universities. It is therefore recommended that similar OLT-funded projects include a budget for professional staff to support the work of the academics and promote broader dissemination and uptake of project findings.

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Appendix A: List of seminars and workshops

Members of the project team have been involved in the following seminars and workshops.

Date/s of the event	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants
11/2009	The University of Adelaide, Adelaide	VET Coordinators' Training session	50
21/5/ 2010	UniSA, Adelaide	Uni SA School Counsellors' day	130
4/6/2010	The University of Adelaide, Adelaide	The University of Adelaide School Counsellors' Day	100
17/6/2010	Flinders University, Adelaide	Flinders University School Counsellors' Day	100
28/6/2010	Adelaide	First Year in Higher Education (FYHE) conference – workshop presentation	25
15/4/2010	The University of Adelaide Excellence in Education Expo, Adelaide	A project poster was widely disseminated.	25
23-24/9/2010	Adelaide	Education Research Group of Adelaide (ERGA) conference	130
11-12/10/2010	Melbourne	Student Equity in Higher Education (SEHE) conference	Approx 50
21/2/11	O'Week, Adelaide	Project and survey promotions at both Flinders University and The University of Adelaide O'Week events	500+
18/5/11	Parents night, Adelaide	Information evening for parents or Prospective University students	40-50
25&26/5/11	'Foot in the Door', Adelaide	University event for high achieving secondary school students	150 max
24/6/11	Secondary School Counsellors Conference, Adelaide	Full day conference for Secondary School Careers Counsellors	Approx 100
28&29 June	Aim for Adelaide, Adelaide	University experiential and aspirational event for secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds	Approx 250
28 June – 1 July 2011	First Year in Higher Education Conference, Fremantle, WA	A paper on first in family was presented and published.	25
July 2011	Higher Education Research and Development Society of	A paper on cultural capital and participation was presented and published.	25

	Australasia Inc Conference, QLD		
21/8/11	University Open Days, Adelaide	Open Days are held at all 3 universities each year to promote university study to prospective students and their families. Factsheets for parents and new university students were distributed widely at each Open Day.	Unknown (Thousands)
28-30/9/2011	Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference, Adelaide	Academic conference for dissemination of best practice programs around transition, retention and engagement	200
4/11/11	Responding to Student Expectations, Australian Tertiary Education Management, UniSA, Adelaide	Regular meeting of student counsellors and high school career advisers. Purpose was to disseminate initial project findings and encourage take-up of school teachers survey.	Approx. 60
11/11/11	Vocational Education Coordinators' Professional Development & Network Day	Networking event for school staff, including VET (Vocational, Educational and Training) staff, teachers and counsellors.	Approx 60
18/11/11	Flinders University, Adelaide	Professional development and networking day for secondary school teachers.	Approx 100
5/12/11	International Australasian Conference on Enabling Access to Higher Education, Adelaide	Presented a conference presentation on rural versus metro expectations and experiences.	30
23/2/12	SSEE Forum for university and secondary teachers and staff, Adelaide	A forum to disseminate the SSEE Project results and promote networking amongst university staff, senior school staff, school leaders and parents.	85
15/5/12	Directors of Curriculum meeting, Adelaide	Presented the key findings to the Directors of Curriculum of secondary/combined independent schools.	30+

Appendix B: 2012 commencing student survey

Question	Commencing students 2012 *Commencing students surveyed after O'Week (27/2/12 – 11/3/12)*
	Tracking Questions
1	Please supply the following information to assist in matching your responses with your grades: Student ID number:
2	Do you give the researchers your permission to access your student/academic records? (Note: if you select no the survey will automatically close)
3	Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? a) Yes b) No
4	Did you relocate to attend University? a) Yes b) No
5	If you did relocate to attend University, where did you relocate from? a) Overseas b) Interstate c) Rural/Regional d) Outer metropolitan e) Within metropolitan area f) Did not relocate
	Base-line Questions
1	Are you? a) Male b) Female
2	Where will your primary University study be this year? a) Flinders University b) The University of Adelaide c) University of South Australia d) Other
3	a) How old are you? _____ years
4	Are you the first member of your immediate family (parents / care givers and siblings) to attend University (i.e. are you the first in your family to study for a Bachelors degree or Postgraduate qualification)? a) Yes b) No
5	What is the highest level of education completed by your mother or other significant female guardian? a) Did not complete High School b) Completed High School c) TAFE or other Tertiary qualification d) University Bachelor Degree e) Postgraduate qualification f) Other, if other please specify g) Don't know

6	What is the highest level of education completed by your father or other significant male guardian? a) Did not complete High School b) Completed High School c) TAFE or other Tertiary qualification d) University Bachelor Degree e) Postgraduate qualification f) Other, if other please specify g) Don't know
7	What was your mother's or other significant female guardian's main study area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical, Natural and Physical Sciences) b) Maths (including Mathematical Sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (e.g. Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media) p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None s) Don't know
8	What was your father's or other significant male guardian's main study area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical, Natural and Physical Sciences) b) Maths (including Mathematical Sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (e.g. Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media)

	p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None s) Don't know
9	Where did you finish High School? a) In South Australia b) In another Australian state c) Overseas
10	Is the location of the school where you completed the majority of your final years of High School best described as? a) Central Adelaide b) Eastern metropolitan c) Western metropolitan d) Southern metropolitan e) Northern metropolitan f) Rural South Australia g) Remote South Australia
11	Is the type of school where you completed the majority of your final years of High School best described as? a) Catholic b) Independent (non-government run, e.g. non-Catholic Private School) c) Public (government run) d) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
12	What was the qualification you achieved to initially gain you entry to University? a) International Baccalaureate b) TAFE or other tertiary certificate c) University pre-entry course d) Year 12 or 13 e) Other, If Other please specify *(add free text box)* f) STAT test
13	What are your current living arrangements? a) At a residential college b) In a shared house c) On campus d) On my own e) With my parents f) With other family g) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
14	When did you decide to attend University? a) Before year 11 b) Towards the end of High School c) After working for some time d) In the last 12 months (outside of High School) e) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*

15	Where did you enrol at this University directly from? a) Foundation course b) Gap year / deferral c) High School d) TAFE (or similar) e) Transfer from another University program f) Work g) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
16	Are you currently enrolled in the degree that was your first preference? a) Yes b) No
17	What will your primary mode of study be? a) Internal (on campus) b) External c) Offshore
Multiple choice questions	
1	What proportion of a full time load will you be studying? (1 course/subject/topic per semester is 25%) a) 100% or more b) 75% c) 50% d) 25% or less
2	How many years have you been studying at a University? (Select 0 if you have just started University) a) 0 b) 1 c) 2 d) 3+
3	What is your main program area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical and other Natural and Physical sciences) b) Maths (including mathematical sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (eg Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media) p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None

	s) Foundation/bridging course
4	What were your main reasons for choosing your program (you can select more than one)? a) Continue in an area already started b) Did not get first preference c) Develop talent and creativity d) Expectations of family and/or friends e) Gain entry to another degree program f) Get specific job training g) Improve job prospects / earning potential h) Interest i) Recommendation of teachers / counsellors j) Other If Other please specify (add free text box) k) University outreach or information session at school l) Visit to a university for an activity or information session
5	How much time per week do you expect to spend in study per course/subject/topic? a) 0-1 hours b) 1-3 hours c) 3-6 hours d) 6-10 hours e) 10-15 hours f) 15-20 hours g) 20+ hours
6	What is a reasonable time for having your assignments / work marked and returned to you? a) Less than 1 week b) 1-2 weeks c) 3-4 weeks d) 5-6 weeks e) 7+ weeks
7	How much of your University teachers working time do you think they spend preparing, teaching and assessing classes? a) Less than 10% b) 10-20% c) 20-40% d) 40-60% e) 60-80% f) 80-100%
8	Have you attended any University orientation activities for first year students? a) Yes, they were really useful b) Yes, they were useful c) Yes, they made no difference d) Yes, they were unhelpful e) Yes, they were very unhelpful f) No, I did not attend g) No, I did not know they were on
9	Are any of your friends attending the same University? a) Yes and in same degree / program b) Yes but not in the same degree / program c) No

10	Do you plan to transfer out of your current degree program (e.g. you received an offer for a program that was your second or lower preference and you plan to reapply for your first preference or you plan to use your current degree to gain entry to another degree)? a.) Yes b.) No c.) Unsure at this stage
11	Compared to School at University do you expect to perform: a) much better b) better c) about the same d) worse e) much worse f) not sure
5-Point Likert Scale Questions	
1	I expect to be able to combine study with paid work.
2	Having easy and convenient access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face teaching will be important to my learning.
3	Feedback on my submitted work will be important to my learning.
4	Feedback on **drafts** of work will be important to my learning.
5	It will be important for me to attend most lectures.
6	I have commitments / activities outside of University that might negatively affect my ability to study.
7	Participating in group work **during** class time will assist my learning.
8	Participating in group work **outside** class time will assist my learning.
9	University teachers will provide all the materials I require for my learning.
10	I see myself as a capable student and expect to do well at University.
11	Having a group of close friends will be important for support at University.
12	It is important to have structured interests outside of academic study (e.g. sports clubs, societies, structured social groups).
13	Dedicated student study spaces on campus would / will be beneficial for my learning
14	Having lecturers who are enthusiastic about teaching will be important for my learning.
15	I learn better when provided with diagrams and pictures to explain concepts.
16	I will spend more time seeking out extra information on class topics I find interesting.
17	Talking with school teachers and / or University staff helped me decide to come to University.
18	Contributing to in-class discussions will be important for my learning.
19	Do you feel that your school adequately prepared you for university study?
20	I anticipate studying at University to be different from high school in the following areas: [extremely different, different, some differences, minimal differences, no difference] a) Class duration b) Class size c) Amount of work d) Difficulty of work e) Extra assistance provided to struggling students f) Friendliness of staff towards students g) Approachability of staff h) Adapting to an independent learning style i) Length of time for assignments j) Level of feedback on assignments k) Standard of work required

	l) Teachers knowledge of individual students m) Time available for staff to speak with students
21	I have sufficient proficiency in the following forms of information technology (IT) to commence my University studies: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not required] a) Database programs (e.g. Microsoft Access) b) Email c) Web programming d) Social networking e) Spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) f) Web browsing / searching for specific information for an assignment g) Word processing h) Statistical packages (e.g. SAS, SPSS)
22	The following have helped to shape my views on what to expect from University: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable] a) Parents / primary carers b) School careers counsellors c) School teachers d) Older siblings or other family members e) Friends f) Traditional Media (e.g. TV, radio, movies) g) New Media (e.g. internet, social networking) h) University websites i) University recruiting information (e.g. open days, adverts) j) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
23	One of the roles of secondary education is to prepare students for University study. (Add comments box)
Qualitative Questions	
1	What do you think will be important for making your University experience successful?
2.	On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied do you expect to be with your University experience? (select from 1 to 10 buttons) (add free text box)
3.	On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied were you with your high school experience? (Select from 1 to 10 buttons) (add free text box)
4	Was there something missing from your preparations for University that you think would have been helpful?
5	If you would like to elaborate on why you wanted to undertake study at University, please do so here
6.	Any other comments?
Follow-up Questions	
1	Please supply a valid email address to enter the prize draw
2	Would you like to be added to our mailing list? a) Yes b) No
3	How did you find out about this survey? a) University website b) University e-newsletter c) Flyer d) Email

	e) Personal contact f) Other (please specify)
4	If you were to win one of the prizes, what would you purchase with your gift vouchers- select up to 3)? a) Books (personal) b) Books (work or study related) c) Chemist products d) Clothes e) Dining f) Electronics g) Entertainment h) Furniture i) Groceries j) Hobbies k) Living Expenses (e.g. rent, bills) l) Music m) Petrol n) Shoes o) Sports Equipment p) Travel q) Wine, beer, spirits r) Other (please specify) **Regardless of how you answer this question, it will not impact on whether you win the prize, prizes are drawn randomly.
5	If you have any questions about the Transition issues raised in this survey, please contact the Transition Support Unit at your respective University. Flinders University students contact: getconnected@flinders.edu.au or tel (08) 8201 3121 The University of Adelaide students contact: (08) 8303 5208 University of South Australia students contact: Learning Connection at your campus City East 8302 2330 City West 8302 0022 Mawson Lakes 8302 5006 Magill 8302 4423 Whyalla 8302 6161

Appendix C: 2011 continuing student survey

Question	Continuing Students 2011 *students asked to reflect back on their first year at University(surveyed in 2nd semester)*
1	Please supply the following information to assist in matching your responses with your grades: Student ID number OR Last Name Given Name(s)
2	Do you give the researchers your permission to access your student/academic records? (Note: if you select no the survey will automatically close)
1	Are you? a) Male b) Female
2	Where did you undertake the majority of your 1st year University study? a) Flinders University b) The University of Adelaide c) University of South Australia d) Other Australian University e) Overseas University
3	a) How old are you? _____ years
4	Are you the first member of your immediate family (parents / care givers and siblings) to attend University? a) Yes b) No
5	What is the highest level of education completed by your mother or other significant female parent/guardian? a) Did not complete High School b) Completed High School c) TAFE or other Tertiary qualification d) University Bachelor Degree e) Postgraduate qualification f) Other g) Don't know
6	What is the highest level of education completed by your father or other significant male parent/guardian? a) Did not complete High School b) Completed High School c) TAFE or other Tertiary qualification d) University Bachelor Degree e) Postgraduate qualification f) Other g) Don't know
7	What was your mother's or other significant female parent/guardian's main study area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical, Natural and Physical Sciences) b) Maths (including Mathematical Sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building

	f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (e.g. Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media) p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None s) Don't know
8	What was your father's or other significant male parent/guardian's main study area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical, Natural and Physical Sciences) b) Maths (including Mathematical Sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (e.g. Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media) p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None s) Don't know
9	Where did you finish High School? a) In South Australia b) In another Australian state c) Overseas
10	Is the location of the school where you completed the majority of your final years of High School best described as? a) Metropolitan b) Rural c) Remote d) Other (e.g. distance or home schooling). If Other please specify *(add free tex boxt)*

11	Is the type of school where you completed the majority of your final years of High School best described as? a) Catholic b) Independent (non-government run, e.g. non-Catholic Private School) c) Public (government run) e) Other (e.g. distance or home schooling) If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
12	What was the qualification you achieved that initially gained you entry to University? a) International Baccalaureate b) TAFE or other tertiary certificate c) University pre-entry course d) Year 12 or 13 e) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
13	What were your living arrangements in your first semester of University? a) At a residential college b) In a shared house c) On campus d) On my own e) With my parents f) With other family g) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
14	When did you decide to attend University? a) Before year 11 b) Towards the end of High School c) After working for some time d) In the 12 months before University (outside of High School) e) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
15	Where did you enrol at this University from? a) Foundation course b) Gap year / deferral c) High School d) TAFE (or similar) e) Transfer from another University program f) Work g) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
16	When you started University did you get into the degree that was your first preference? a) Yes b) No
17	What was your primary mode of study during your first year at University? a) Internal (on campus) b) External c) Offshore
1	What proportion of a full time load did you study in your first year of University? (1 course per semester is 25%) a) 100% or more b) 75% c) 50%

	d) 25% or less
2	How many years have you been studying at a University? (Select 0 if you are still in 1st year) a) 0 b) 1 c) 2 d) 3 e) 4+
3	What is your main program area? a) Science (e.g. Physics, Earth, Biological, Chemical and other Natural and Physical sciences) b) Maths (including mathematical sciences) c) Information Technology d) Engineering and related Technologies e) Architecture and Building f) Agriculture, Environmental and related studies g) Medicine h) Vet Science i) Nursing j) Health Sciences (including Public Health) k) Education l) Management and Commerce (eg Accounting, Tourism, Marketing, Finance) m) Law and Legal Studies n) Society and Culture (eg Humanities, Social Science, Politics, Welfare, Economics, Sport, Language) o) Creative Arts (eg Performing & Visual Arts, Music, Design, Communications, Media) p) Food, Hospitality and Personal Services q) Other. If other please specify (add free text box) r) None If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
4	What were your main reasons for continuing your program (you can select more than one)? a) Continue in an area already started b) Did not get first preference c) Develop talent and creativity d) Expectations of family and/or friends e) Gain entry to another degree program f) Get specific job training g) Improve job prospects / earning potential h) Interest i) Recommendation of teachers / counsellors j) Other - If Other please specify *(add free text box* k) I changed from my initial program choice
5	On average how much time per week did you spend in study **per** course / subject during your first year? a) 0-1 hours b) 1-3 hours c) 3-6 hours d) 6-10 hours e) 10-15 hours

	f) 15-20 hours g) 20+ hours
6	What was the average time for assignments / work to be marked and returned to you? a) Less than 1 week b) 1-2 weeks c) 3-4 weeks d) 5-6 weeks e) 7+ weeks
7	How much of your University teachers' working time do you think they spend preparing, teaching and assessing classes? a) Less than 10% b) 10-20% c) 20-40% d) 40-60% e) 60-80% f) 80-100%
8	The University orientation events to assist students commencing University were? a) Very useful b) Useful c) Neutral d) Unhelpful e) Very unhelpful f) Did not attend
9	Did any of your friends from before University attend the same University? a) Yes and in same degree / program b) Yes but not in the same degree / program c) No
10	If you have changed your primary degree / program please indicate why (you may select more than one)? a) Have not changed degrees b) Always intended transferring c) Did not enjoy it d) Did not have any friends e) Did not like the teachers f) New degree is more suited to my job choice g) Not what I thought it would be h) Not what I was told it would be i) Not getting the grades I expected j) Not learning anything new k) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
11	My performance at University has been: a) far above my expectations b) above my expectations c) as expected d) below my expectations e) far below my expectations f) too variable to qualify
1	I was able to combine study with paid work.
2	I had easy and convenient access to my lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face

	teaching times.
3	Sufficient feedback was provided on my submitted work.
4	Feedback on my **drafts** of work was provided.
5	It was important for my learning to attend most lectures.
6	I had outside commitments / activities that negatively affected my ability to study.
7	Participating in group work **during** class time assisted my learning.
8	Participating in group work **outside** class time assisted my learning.
9	University teachers provided all the materials I required for my learning.
10	I did as well or better than I expected at University.
11	I had a group of close friends during my first semester at University.
12	I had structured interests outside of academic study during my first semester at University (e.g. sports clubs, societies, structured social groups).
13	Dedicated student study spaces on campus would be / are beneficial for my learning
14	I learned more in classes taught by enthusiastic teachers.
15	When in class I preferred handouts/slides that used diagrams and pictures to explain complex ideas rather than text alone
16	I spent more time seeking out extra information about the topics I found interesting in class.
17	Talking with University staff helped me decide to continue at University.
18	I contributed significantly to in-class discussions
19	Secondary education adequately prepared me for University study
20	Studying at University is different to High School in the following areas: [extremely different, different, some differences, minimal differences, no difference] a) Class duration b) Class size c) Amount of work d) Difficulty of work e) Extra assistance provided to struggling students f) Friendliness of staff towards students g) Approachability of staff h) Adapting to an independent learning style i) Length of time for assignments j) Level of feedback on assignments k) Standard of work required l) Teachers knowledge of individual students m) Time available for staff to speak with students
21	I had sufficient proficiency in the following forms of information technology (IT) before commencing my studies: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not required] a) Database programs (e.g. Microsoft Access) b) Email c) Web programming d) Social networking e) Spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) f) Web browsing / searching for specific information for an assignment g) Word processing h) Statistical packages (e.g. SAS, SPSS)
22	The information I got from the following accurately reflected what University life would be like: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable] a) Parents / primary carers b) School careers counsellors

	c) School teachers d) Older siblings or other family members e) Friends f) Traditional Media (e.g. TV, radio, movies) g) New Media (e.g. internet, social networking) h) University websites i) University recruiting information (e.g. open days, adverts) j) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
1	What was important for making your University experience successful?
2.	On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied are you with your University experience to date? (select from 1 to 10 buttons)
3	Is there anything you think would have better prepared you for University?
4	Please elaborate on why you wanted to continue undertaking study at University?
5.	Any other comments?
1	Please supply a valid email address to enter the prize draw
2	Would you like to be added to our mailing list? a) Yes b) No
3	How did you find out about this survey? a) University website b) University e-newsletter c) Flyer d) Email e) Personal contact f) Other (please specify)
4	If you have any questions about the Transition issues raised in this survey, please contact the Transition Support Unit at your respective University. Flinders University students contact: getconnected@flinders.edu.au or tel (08) 8201 3121 The University of Adelaide students contact: (08) 8303 5208 University of South Australia students contact: Learning Connection at your campus City East 8302 2330 City West 8302 0022 Mawson Lakes 8302 5006 Magill 8302 4423 Whyalla 8302 6161
5	If you have a question about this research project please contact the project team on studentexpectations@gmail.com

Appendix D: 2012 secondary school teaching staff survey

Question no.	High-school teachers / counsellors/leaders (years 10-12) 2012 Survey
	Tracking Questions
1.	Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? c) Yes d) No
2.	Did you relocate to take up your current position with your school? a) Yes b) No
3.	If you did relocate for your current position, where did you relocate from? a) Overseas b) Interstate c) Rural/regional d) Outer metropolitan e) Within metropolitan area f) Did not relocate
	Base-line Questions
1	Are you: a) Male b) Female
2	Where was your teaching/counselling qualification obtained from: a) Flinders University b) The University of Adelaide c) University of South Australia d) Other Australian University e) Overseas f) Other, if other please specify (add free text box).
3	What age group are you in? a) Under 20 b) 20-24 c) 25-29 d) 30-39 e) 40-49 f) 50-59 g) 60+
4	Were you the first member of your immediate family (parents / care givers and siblings) to attend University? a) Yes b) No
5	In the last 5 years where have you mainly taught/counselled (or all teaching/counselling if less than 5 years): a) In South Australia b) In another Australian state c) Overseas

6	Is the location of the school where you teach/counsel best described as: h) Central Adelaide i) Eastern metropolitan j) Western metropolitan k) Southern metropolitan l) Northern metropolitan m) Rural South Australia n) Remote South Australia
7	Is the type of school where you teach/counsel best described as: a) Catholic b) Independent (non-government run) c) Public (government run) d) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
8	Do you teach/counsel students studying for: a) SACE b) International Baccalaureate c) Both d) Neither
9	Is your position best described as: a) Classroom teacher b) School Leadership (e.g. Principal) c) Career Counsellor d) Pastoral Carer
	Multiple choice questions
1	Are you currently employed on a: a) Full-time basis b) Part-time basis c) Casual / relief teacher d) Other basis If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
2	How many years, including the current one, have you been teaching / counselling students in years 10-12? a) 1 b) 2-3 c) 4-6 d) 7-10 e) 10+
3	What are your main teaching areas? (you can select more than one) a) Arts b) Business, Enterprise and Technology c) Cross-disciplinary studies d) English e) Health and Physical Education f) Humanities and Social Sciences g) Languages h) Mathematics i) Sciences j) Counselling k) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*

4	What do you think are the main reasons students select a University course/program (you can select more than one)? a) Continue in an area already started b) Did not get first preference c) Develop talent and creativity d) Expectations of family and/or friends e) Gain entry to another degree program f) Get specific job training g) Improve job prospects / earning potential h) Interest i) Recommendation of teachers / counsellors j) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)* k) University outreach activity or information session at school l) Visit to a University for an activity or information session
5	On average how much time per week do you expect your school students to spend in study **per** course / subject while at high school? (Assume 4 courses is full-time so per course is 1/4 of expected full-time study commitment) a) 0-1 hours b) 1-3 hours c) 3-6 hours d) 6-10 hours e) 10-15 hours f) 15-20 hours g) 20+ hours
6	On average how long does it take you to mark and return student assignments / work: a) 1 week b) 2 weeks c) 3-4 weeks d) 5-6 weeks e) 7+ weeks f) N/A
7	How much of your working time do you spend preparing, teaching and assessing classes / counselling students? a) Less than 10% b) 10-20% c) 20-40% d) 40-60% e) 60-80% f) 80-100%
8	University orientation events to assist students commencing university are: g) Very useful h) Useful i) Neutral j) Unhelpful k) Very unhelpful l) Unnecessary m) Don't know
9	Is it important for students at university to know people before they commence? b) Yes and in same degree / program c) Yes but not necessarily in same degree / program

	d) No
10	What do you think are the main reasons students change degrees once at university (you may select more than one)? a) No particular reason b) Always intended transferring c) Did not enjoy it d) Did not have any friends e) Did not like the teachers f) New degree more suited to job choice g) Not what they thought it would be h) Not what they were told it would be i) Not getting the grades they expected j) Not learning anything new k) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
11	Once at University, most students perform: b) much better than they expected c) better than they expected d) about as well as they expected e) worse than they expected f) much worse than they expected g) too variable to quantify
	5-Point Likert Scale Questions
1	A large number of school students combine study with paid work.
2	I provide ongoing easy and convenient access to my students outside of face-to-face teaching times.
3	I provide sufficient feedback on students' submitted work.
4	I provide feedback on **drafts** of student work.
5	It is important for student learning to attend all school classes.
6	School students have outside commitments / activities that negatively affect their ability to study.
7	Participating in group work **during** class time assists student learning.
8	Participating in group work **outside** class time assists student learning.
9	I provide all the materials my students require for their learning.
10	Most University students see themselves as capable and expect to do well at University
11	It is important for students to have a group of close friends for support at school.
12	It is important for students to have interests outside of academic study (e.g. sports clubs, societies, structured social groups).
13	Dedicated student study spaces at school would / do assist with student learning.
14	Showing enthusiasm for the class topic is an important aspect of my teaching.
15	Diagrams and pictures are an important component of any teaching material I provide to my students.
16	Making topics interesting to students is important for their continued learning outside the school classroom.
17	I talk with my students about attending university.
18	Contributing to in-class discussions is important for student learning.
19	Secondary education adequately prepares students for University study.
20	The new SACE structure will increase secondary student preparedness for the transition to tertiary study.
21	The new SACE structure will increase secondary student preparedness for the

	transition into the workplace.
22	The new SACE structure will increase secondary student preparedness for the transition into VET/TAFE
23	One of the roles of my teaching is to prepare students for University study. (Add comments box)
24	I am teaching in an area in which I was trained/studied for.
25	I teach group work skills.
26	Studying at university is different from high school in the following areas: [extremely different, different, some differences, minimal differences, no difference] a) Class duration b) Class size c) Amount of work d) Difficulty of work e) Extra assistance provided to struggling students f) Friendliness of staff towards students g) Approachability of staff h) Adapting to an independent learning style i) Length of time for assignments j) Level of feedback on assignments k) Standard of work required l) Teachers knowledge individual students m) Time available for staff to speak with students
27	Students are required to have a level of proficiency in the following forms of information technology (IT) before completing high school: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not required] a) Database programs (e.g. Access) b) Email c) HTML coding d) Social networking e) Spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) f) Web browsing / searching for specific information for an assignment g) Word processing h) Statistical packages (e.g. SAS, SPSS)
28	Students get their view of what university will be like from the following: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable] a) Parents / primary carers b) School careers counsellors c) School teachers d) Older siblings or other family members e) Friends f) Traditional Media (e.g. TV, radio, movies) g) New Media (e.g. internet, social networking) h) University websites i) University recruiting information (e.g. open days, adverts) j) Other If Other please specify *(free text box)*
	Qualitative Questions
1	What do you think is important for making a student's university experience successful?
2.	On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied do you think students (in general) are with their high school experience? (add

	1 to 10 buttons).
3	Is there anything not currently being done to help students transition into university that you think would be helpful to them?
4	If you would like elaborate on why you think students want to undertake study at university, please do so here.
5	Any other comments?
	Follow-up Questions
1	Please supply a valid email address to enter the prize draw
2	Would you like to be added to the mailing list? (insert tick box)
3	How did you find out about this survey? a) University website b) University e-newsletter c) Flyer d) Email e) Personal contact f) Other (please specify)
4	If you were to win one of the prizes, what would you purchase with your gift vouchers- (select up to 3)? a) Books (personal) b) Books (work or study related) c) Chemist products d) Clothes e) Dining f) Electronics g) Entertainment h) Furniture i) Groceries j) Hobbies k) Living Expenses (e.g. rent, bills) l) Music m) Petrol n) Shoes o) Sports Equipment p) Travel q) Wine, beer, spirits r) Other (please specify) **Regardless of how you answer this question, it will not impact on whether you win the prize, prizes are drawn randomly.
5	I would like to be contacted by someone to discuss some of the issues covered in this survey

Appendix E: 2010 first year university teaching staff survey

Question	University staff teaching first year students
	Base-line Questions
1	Are you: a) Male b) Female
2	Which University do you primarily teach at: a) Flinders University b) The University of Adelaide c) University of South Australia d) Other Australian University e) Overseas University
3	What age group are you in? a) Under 20 b) 20-24 c) 25-29 d) 30-39 e) 40-49 f) 50-59 g) 60+
4	Were you the first member of your immediate family (parents / care givers and siblings) to attend University? a) Yes b) No
5	In the last 5 years where have you mainly taught (or all teaching if less than 5 years): a) In South Australia b) In another Australian state c) Overseas
	Multiple choice questions
1	What is your current position? a) Teaching primarily b) Joint teaching and research c) Research primarily d) Higher degree student (honours / masters / PhD) e) External affiliate f) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
2	How many years, including the current one, have you been teaching at a university? a) 1 b) 2-3 c) 4-6 d) 7-10 e) 10+
3	What is your main teaching area? a) Agricultural science b) Computer science c) Education / architecture d) Economics / commerce e) Engineering

	f) Health science g) Humanities / music / social science h) Law i) Mathematics j) Medical / dental k) Nursing l) Science m) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
4	What do you think are the main reasons students choose to study programs in your area (you can select more than one)? a) Continue in an area already started b) Did not get first preference c) Develop talent and creativity d) Expectations of family and/or friends e) Gain entry to another degree program f) Get specific job training g) Improve job prospects / earning potential h) Interest m) Recommendation of teachers / counsellors i) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
5	On average how much time per week do you expect students to spend in study **per** course / subject? a) 0-1 hours b) 1-3 hours c) 3-6 hours d) 6-10 hours e) 10-15 hours f) 15-20 hours g) 20+ hours
6	On average how long does it take you to mark and return student assignments / work: a) 1 week b) 2 weeks c) 3-4 weeks d) 5-6 weeks e) 7+ weeks
7	How much of your working time do you spend preparing, teaching and assessing classes? a) Less than 10% b) 10-20% c) 20-40% d) 40-60% e) 60-80% f) 80-100%
8	University orientation events to assist students commencing university are: a) Really useful b) Partially useful c) Neutral d) Unhelpful e) Harmful

	f) Unnecessary
9	Is it important for students at university to know people before they commence? a) Yes and in same degree / program b) Yes but not necessarily in same degree / program c) No
10	What do you think are the main reasons students change degrees once at university (you may select more than one)? a) No particular reason b) Always intended transferring c) Did not enjoy it d) Did not have any friends e) Did not like the teachers f) New degree more suited to job choice g) Not what they thought it would be h) Not what they were told it would be i) Not getting the grades they expected j) Not learning anything new k) Other If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
11	Once at University, most students perform: a) much better than they expected b) better than they expected c) about what they expected d) worse than they expected e) much worse than they expected f) too variable to quantify
	5-Point Likert Scale Questions
1	A large number of students combine study with paid work.
2	I provide ongoing easy and convenient access for my students outside of face-to-face teaching times.
3	I provide sufficient feedback on students' submitted work.
4	I provide feedback on **drafts** of student work.
5	It is important that students attend most lectures to aid their learning.
6	Students have outside commitments / activities that negatively affect their ability to study.
7	Participating in group work **during** class time assists student learning.
8	Participating in group work **outside** class time assists student learning.
9	I provide all the materials my students require for their learning.
10	At university, students perform as well as or better than they expect.
11	It is important for students to have a group of close friends for support at university.
12	It is important for students to have interests outside of academic study (e.g. sports clubs, societies, structured social groups).
13	Dedicated undergraduate student study spaces on campus would / do assist with student learning
14	Showing enthusiasm is an important aspect of my teaching.
15	Diagrams and pictures are an important component of any handouts or slides provided to students.
16	Making topics interesting to students is important for their continuous learning outside the classroom.
17	I talk with many high school students about attending university.
18	Contributing to in-class discussions is important for student learning

19	Secondary education adequately prepares students for University study
20	Studying at university is different to high school in the following areas: [extremely different, different, some differences, minimal differences, no difference] a) Class duration b) Class size c) Amount of work d) Difficulty of work e) Extra assistance provided to struggling students f) Friendliness of staff towards students g) Approachability of staff h) Adapting to an independent learning style i) Length of time for assignments j) Level of feedback on assignments k) Standard of work required l) Teachers knowledge of individual students m) Time available for staff to speak with students
21	It is important to have a level of proficiency in the following forms of information technology (IT) before commencing university study: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not required] a) Database programs (e.g. Access) b) Email c) HTML coding d) Social networking e) Spread sheets (e.g. Excel) f) Web browsing / searching for specific information for an assignment g) Word processing h) Statistical packages
22	Students get their view of what university will be like from the following: [strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable] a) Parents / primary carers b) School careers counsellors c) School teachers d) Older siblings or other family members e) Friends f) Traditional Media (e.g. TV, radio, movies) g) New Media (e.g. internet, social networking) h) University websites i) University recruiting information (e.g. open days, adverts) j) Other. If Other please specify *(add free text box)*
	Qualitative Questions
1	What do you think is important for making a student's university experience successful?
2	Is there anything not currently being done to help students transition into university that you think would be helpful to them?
3	Please elaborate on why you think students want to undertake study at university:
4	Any other comments?

	Follow-up Questions
1	If you would like to be contacted by someone to discuss any of the issues covered in this survey please supply a valid email address. (Note: your email will not be used to identify your survey results)
2	How did you find out about this survey? a) University website b) University e-newsletter c) Flyer d) Email e) Personal contact f) Other (please specify)

Appendix F: Independent evaluation report

Office for Learning and Teaching
Final Evaluation Report – Project CG9-1158
Sally Kift, Queensland University of Technology
John Willison, The University of Adelaide

Student and Staff Expectations and Experiences Project (SSEE) Project
Lead Institution: The University of Adelaide
Partner Institutions: Flinders University and University of South Australia

1.0 Executive Summary.

This large, multi-institutional, competitive grant project, originally funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), predecessor organisation to the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), was led by The University of Adelaide and examined the expectations of commencing first year students in South Australia from the perspectives of:

- first year students attending all three South Australian universities (The University of Adelaide, University of South Australia and Flinders University);
- university academic staff teaching at each of those three institutions; and
- teachers at a number of South Australian secondary schools.

The project also examined the actual experiences and achievement of first year students, once they have made the transition from secondary to tertiary education.

In the context of the federal government's new demand driven system and ambitious widening participation agenda for higher education, this project has made a critical and timely contribution to the sector's understanding of the expectations and experiences of students and staff regarding the process of transition from secondary school to university. Specifically, analysis of the extensive data gathered under the auspices of the project has provided a crucial, contemporary evidence and research base that will guide cross-sectoral decision making and is the basis for action to support student recruitment, retention and success, especially for those non-traditional students who come to higher education with different social and cultural capital than their more advantaged peers.

It is a testament to the drive and determination of those involved in the project – the project leaders, Dr Russell Brinkworth and Dr Ben McCann, the talent and dedication of the project staff (project manager, officer and liaison officers) and the support of a core group of project team members – that the project has achieved very substantial and influential outcomes. It must be said that these have been accomplished despite considerable challenges that have presented over the life of the project especially in terms of personnel (recruitment and staff turnover), difficulties in engaging the secondary sector, competitiveness between institutions at the higher level due to potential sensitivity of outcomes, and other, not uncommon, constraints in terms of timeline and resourcing.

Despite these challenges, this large scale project has been a resounding success and the project has produced high quality outcomes and deliverables that will be of great value to the sector in the current dynamic demand driven environment. The opinions of a total of 18,317 commencing and continuing students have been obtained across South Australia in three major rounds of data collection over 2010-2012. Complementing that data, the views of 251 first year university teachers and 234 school educators were collected regarding the experiences of students entering first year university in South Australia. This massive collection of data is a considerable achievement in its own right and analysis of it will be the basis for academic publications for several years beyond the formal life of the project.

There is clear evidence that the project has had considerable impact already both internally, in the partner institutions, and externally both through:

- engagement broadly with the secondary sector and specifically with the South Australian Department of Further Education Employment Science and Training, and
- extensive project disseminations, including refereed journal articles, presentations to conferences and in other fora (including presentations to secondary school stakeholders), non-refereed article(s), a project website, and media coverage in the local press?

2.0 Project Summary and Evaluation Plan

2.1 Project Summary

This large, multi-institutional, competitive grant project, originally funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), now the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), was led by The University of Adelaide and examined the expectations of commencing first year students in South Australia from the perspectives of:

- first year students attending the three South Australian universities (The University of Adelaide, University of South Australia and Flinders University);
- university academic staff teaching at each of those three institutions; and
- teachers at a number of South Australian secondary schools.

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In the context of the federal government's new demand driven system and ambitious widening participation agenda for higher education, this project has made a critical and timely contribution to the sector's understanding of the expectations and experiences of students and staff regarding the process of transition from secondary school to university. Specifically, analysis of the extensive data gathered under the auspices of the project has provided a crucial, contemporary evidence and research base that will guide cross-sectoral decision making and is the basis for action to support student recruitment, retention and success, especially for those non-traditional students who come to higher education with different social and cultural capital than their more advantaged peers.

Two particularly unique and innovative features of this project, which have added enormous further value and validity to the project's outcomes, should be mentioned. First, the extensive consultation with, and engagement and buy-in from, the secondary school sector and, especially, the exploration of the transition experience from the perspective of secondary school teachers. Secondly, the capture of what has been essentially a 'whole-of-state' perspective regarding the transition process from secondary to tertiary education in South Australia due to the very real and fruitful collaboration of the three South Australian universities involved. It also is the case that these three institutions are representative of three of the main Australian university groupings: the Group of Eight (Go8) is represented by The University of Adelaide, the Australian Technology Network (ATN) by the University of South Australia and the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) by Flinders University. These two particular factors, together with the project's rigorous methodology and large data collections, have produced project findings, outcomes and deliverables that are unusually comprehensive and thorough. All those involved should be congratulated on a truly outstanding project that was meticulously conceptualised, scrupulously implemented and carefully analysed to produce practical resources that will benefit all commencing students across the sector, whatever their background in entering higher education.

The project collected and analysed survey data from the following sources:

- commencing students in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (n=8535)
- continuing students in 2010 and 2011 (n=9782)
- senior secondary teachers and school counsellors from a number of schools across the spectrum of public, independent and Catholic schools in 2010 (n=234) with a follow up in 2012 (ongoing), and
- university lecturers, tutors and practical demonstrators from the three collaborating South Australian universities in 2010 (n=251).

It is noted that, though not within the original project plan, survey data was collected from commencing students in 2012 (in addition to 2010 and 2011) in order to assess whether the introduction of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) secondary school curriculum had any effect on students' expectations and experiences.

2.2 Evaluation Plan

Following discussions between project personnel (leaders, staff and team) and the two evaluators early on in the project's implementation phase, the approach to the two stage evaluation framework was agreed for a Stage 1 formative (interim) evaluation and the Stage 2 summative evaluation. The Stage 1 formative (interim) evaluation was prepared accordingly and delivered in February 2011. This report is the Stage 2 summative evaluation and its preparation has been informed by project documentation and communications, in-person attendance by the evaluators at a number of public and project team meetings, the project website (http://www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/) and the various disseminations and deliverables made and produced under the project's auspices. An evaluators' questionnaire, mediated through Survey Monkey in April 2012, has also informed the preparation of this report. That questionnaire gathered anonymous data from people who were highly (n=7) or mildly (n=1) familiar with the project and its outcomes, with a response rate of 25%.

In the ***Stage 1*** interim evaluation, the evaluation focus was on 'in-depth discussions with the project leaders, committee and staff to determine the success of the project in achieving the stated deliverables and outcomes, and focus on improvements/changes that [could] be adapted to ensure the success of the project in its second year of operation. This [was] based on an action research approach which promote[d] reflection on what was planned, what worked well, what didn't work well and what [could] be done differently' (SSEE Project Evaluation Framework, 2011). Key questions for the Stage 1 evaluation were:

1. What processes were planned and what were actually put in place for the project?
2. Were there any variations from the processes that were initially proposed, and if so, why?
3. How might the project be improved?
4. What were the observable short-term outcomes?

The agreed approach to this Stage 2 evaluation was to 'look at the overall effectiveness of the project in achieving the stated deliverables and outcomes and make recommendations for the future sustainability of the project aims and outcomes. This [was to] include a review of project outcomes and deliverables and interpretation of data, with any reflections on alternative interpretations or conclusions that could be drawn. Part of the recommendations should outline how the universities may support ongoing evaluation of the project impacts'.

The agreed key relevant questions for Stage 2 were to be the same as for Stage 1 with the following additional questions:

5. To what extent have the intended outcomes and deliverables been achieved?
6. Were there any unintended outcomes?
7. What factors helped and hindered in the achievement of the outcomes and deliverables?
8. What measures, if any, have been put in place to promote sustainability of the project's focus and outcomes?
9. What lessons have been learned from this project and how might these be of assistance to other institutions?
10. How can the project outcomes be further embedded in the education system at both the secondary and tertiary levels?

Each of these 10 key evaluation questions will now be considered.

3.0 Stage 2 Key Evaluation Questions.

3.1 What processes were planned and what were actually put in place for the project?

Most of the processes planned for the project were implemented. Any variations were reported to the ALTC in a timely fashion and in interim reports, together with explanations for same, including particularly an application for and approval of a justifiable extension to allow the project to continue its work into 2012 for the purposes of further data analysis and to assess properly the impact of the project on student expectations. The evaluators are satisfied with the project's implementation, given particularly its ambitious scope and scale. Good people were appointed to manage the project (in terms of project coordination and liaison officers) and accommodations which were required to be made due to staff turnover and movement in key roles, common in projects of this kind, were well managed.

3.2 Were there any variations from the processes that were initially proposed, and if so, why?

In the main, any variations from processes initially proposed were as a result of constraints caused by personnel changes and movement and/or due to the sheer scope and scale of the project's aims (re the latter, for example, less engagement from secondary schools and school teachers was realised than anticipated). Variations have been well managed and significant sample sizes for data collection were achieved regardless. The project leaders, project staff and the project team have adopted a continuous and critically reflective approach to the project's progress and have demonstrated the desired capacity for flexibility with regard to project management, activities and outcomes.

3.3 How might the project have been improved?

It would have been helpful if one of the project leaders had not been moved between three different faculties in his home institution over the first year of the project. Institutional commitment to staff stability could be improved in this regard. Ultimately, this project leader changed institutions in the project's second year (to another South Australian institution) and it is to his, his co-leader's and the project staff and team's great credit that the project proceeded relatively smoothly nevertheless.

The Stage 1 evaluation commended the attention that had been paid to sectoral and external dissemination of the project's outcomes to that point and recommended that, as the project moved into its next stage, the project leaders and team members might also like to consider a particular focus on internal disseminations within their individual institutions. It was suggested that such disseminations might be engaged in at both the local (for example, the school and faculty) and broader, institution-wide, levels, principally for the purposes of internal visibility, ownership and sponsorship and with a view to facilitating ultimate uptake of project resources and findings. Specifically, it was recommended that an aspect of this intra-institutional engagement might be the establishment of a reference group of influential learning and student support leaders across the collaborating universities to consider and advise on project resources and findings as they became available. In response to this recommendation, a project reference group was established

which met four times over 2011.

3.4 What were the observable short-term outcomes?

A considerable number of impressive short term outcomes were observable, as recorded in the Stage 1 evaluation and repeated here as follows –

- Management of the ethics approval across the three universities and in the secondary sector. This was a mammoth task that was managed sensitively and carefully. It is not to be underrated as a significant project outcome.
- The establishing of a strong and committed core project team, which worked effectively cross-institutionally and has evolved over time. As was said at one of the project team meetings Evaluator Kift attended in February 2011 in Adelaide –

  '*Before the project even started it was good at 'hoovering-up' people – at connecting people – maximising a lot of potential for interconnectedness. This is a huge feature of the project: really good for the longer term, augurs well for future collaboration and was achieved from budget zero*.'
- Even after only one year, project outcomes were starting to feed into participating universities and were being used during Orientation and in other programs being offered.
- The engagement of the South Australian Department of Further Education Employment Science and Training was a particular project strength. The project secured the services of Dr Sophia Matiasz, Principal Policy Officer, Quality and Tertiary Education Policy Directorate as a project team member. This support and sponsorship by the state government department was significant and contributed to the project's momentum and effectiveness across the two sectors (secondary and tertiary).
- Unintended outcomes that were identified by Dr Matiasz included that –
  - The project was feeding into some state government strategic objectives; and
  - The project had a 'huge community engagement aspect', in terms of its attention to the concerns of family members (mums, dads, grandparents) regarding the experience of their children/ grandchildren at university.
- Real excitement and engagement was demonstrated by project team members as to the project's the focus and potential impact. For example, as was said at the February 2011 project team meeting –

  '*We will have a phenomenal impact over time*'
  '*What the project has already achieved is a move from qualitative to quantitative [evidence], which has helped to engage different audiences*.'
  '*[The project will] go a long way with evidence-based policy impact*.'
- A project website was established quite early on at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/
- Several external disseminations (conference presentations/ papers and one journal article) had already been produced.

3.5 To what extent have the intended outcomes and deliverables been achieved?

The original application referred to

- The 'four major activities' and six aims of the project (at pp 4-5 of the original application)
- Eight project 'Outcomes' (at p 5), and
- Six important project 'Deliverables' (at p 5).

The original project outcomes were largely achieved (as set out in the project's Final Report at p.18), as were the project's original 'deliverables' (as set out in the project's Final Report at p.21).

For the sake of completeness, we now set out the original project outcomes specified in the grant application (at p. 5) and note the outcomes achieved against those outcomes in **Table 1**. The original project deliverables (Application at p. 5) and what was delivered are set out in **Table 2**. The responses from stakeholders to the evaluators' questionnaire regarding key features of the outcomes and deliverables are set out in **Table 3**.

Table 1: Original Outcomes from Application and Outcomes Produced

Outcomes specified in original application	Outcomes produced
Incoming university students will be better prepared for what they will encounter upon commencement and be more aware of what university staff expect of them by having a closer alignment between their expectations of university life and the experience they will have once there.	**Media coverage:** A major success was the publication of an article about the project "Uni's a shock for students" in the major newspaper "The Advertiser" on Monday 19th September 2011. An electronic copy of the article can be sourced at http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/unis-a-shock-for-students/story-e6frea6u-1226140351467 **University Open Days:** Project Factsheets were distributed at the Open Days at all three Universities in August 2011. **Distribution of Factsheet for New University Students:** This Factsheet was distributed widely.
High school and university staff will better understand the different expectations of students.	**Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference:** Professor Sally Kift, external evaluator, used some of the project's key findings in her keynote address to the Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference in Adelaide on the 28-30 September. A full copy of her presentation can be found at https://fileshare.qut.edu.au/public/kift/ERGAKeynote_290911_Sent.pptx **Reference Group meetings:** The Project Reference Group has been a very successful way of making stronger connections between high school and university staff.
High school teachers will have a better understanding of what students should expect if they elect to go to university.	**Meetings with Schools:** The Project Liaison officers targeted 8 key schools and education associations and met with staff as part of the implementation of a Schools Engagement Plan.

Transition programs currently run by the member universities will have a well defined baseline upon which to construct a number of new activities to complement existing ones.	This has been achieved through the collection of the survey data which has provided a clear understanding of student expectations and experiences across 2010 – 2012.
School and university staff and students will have a better understanding of some differences with, and what to expect at, the different universities in South Australia.	**Meeting with Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), The University of Adelaide**: The project team met with Professor Quester to discuss the initial project findings. Professor Quester was very interested in the project and keen to keep informed of project progress. Professor Quester said she would like to discuss implications/recommendations of the data when the final conclusions are made. She said this research provides a timely baseline for measuring the current state of student experience before the major changes that will be introduced next year into the tertiary education sector. Professor Quester also said she is interested around recruitment and retention of students from non-traditional backgrounds and low socio-economic backgrounds across the different universities. Project representatives will meet with all three DVC(A)s in the second half of 2012 once further findings come to light.
Closer working relationships between high school teachers, university academics and university professional staff will be established.	**Project Reference Group:** The Reference Group has enabled a diverse group of stakeholders to engage with the project and assist with wide dissemination. **Project Committee:** The project committee has enabled the connection and collaboration of academic staff across the three (3) universities that would not otherwise have happened.
A number of lecturers of commencing students will modify their curriculum to better account for student expectations.	There are a number of lecturers involved in the Project Committee and Reference Group. We have been approached by several lecturers who have asked to join our mailing list to be kept informed of outcomes and have indicated they would like to support the project in any way possible. The project will make key recommendations to first year lecturers regarding expectations when the findings are available. A Factsheet for First Year University Teaching Staff is in development. Presentations have been made to established groups of first year teaching staff such as the Community of Practice Group at Flinders University.

A better understanding of how a student's predicted academic potential (as measured by their TER), expectations and experiences interact to produce university results (e.g. attrition, GPA, transfers).	**2011 Continuing Students Survey:** There was a huge response to the second continuing students' survey, with a total of 7,396 participants. This is more than double the number of respondents in 2010, indicating effective marketing and promotional techniques were employed. This has provided a vast amount of data on student experience to build on the 2010 data. **Full data set obtained**: Significant effort went into liaising with the three (3) universities to obtain the full set of ATAR, TER and GPA data from 2010 and 2011 for the 16,829 students that have responded to the 2010 and 2011 surveys.

Table 2: Original Deliverables from Application and Deliverables Produced.

Deliverables specified in original application	Deliverables produced
The framework, and feedback from initial implementation, for a school outreach program where academic and professional staff will have the opportunity to communicate with high school students and teachers directly about what life at university is really like.	**Project Blog:** A key way to communicate with high school teachers and other external stakeholders was through our project blog at http://uniexpectations.wordpress.com/ **Implementation of the Schools Engagement Plan:** Project liaison officers visited schools to communicate the available findings with key staff and conducted several presentations to Year 11 students and distributed factsheets and information. **Presentations:** Project representatives presented key findings at the Secondary School Careers Counsellors Conference in Adelaide on the 24th June 2011, an Australian Tertiary Education Management event on 'Responding to Student Expectations' on the 4th November 2011, and the Vocational Education Coordinators' Professional Development & Network day on the 11th November 2011.
Interactive website with examples and findings from the work. It will also include a space to communicate with others on the issue of what to expect when at university and will be linked to by the ALTC exchange, each of the three universities, as well as the home pages of local high schools.	Website established at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/ The blog was also a live and constantly evolving way of keeping in touch with stakeholders.

Reports for universities and high schools about the findings of the study and what can be done to better align the expectations and experiences of students.	This is a work in progress.
A more informed series of university orientation activates aimed at addressing the mismatch between student expectations and experiences more effectively.	**Factsheet for Transition Staff:** A factsheet for transition staff will be developed in the second half of 2012. **Meetings with the Manager, Transition and Advisory Service, University of Adelaide:** Project staff met with transition and advisory staff on a number of occasions and there is significant interest in this project. A follow up meeting will take place once further data analysis is available later in 2012. Similar meetings are planned with equivalent personnel at UniSA in the second half of 2012. The academic in charge of transition at Flinders University was part of the project committee.
Flyers and pamphlets for high school students describing life at university with particular reference to the areas identified by the work as having a disconnect between experiences and expectations.	See factsheets published on website at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/ Five (5) key resources were developed for the high school sector: • 10 Key Facts • Factsheet for Parents • Factsheet for New University Students • Factsheet for School Staff • Factsheet for High School Students A regular newsletter kept the entire education sector in SA up-to-date of key project developments. Copies can be found at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/altc/expectations/publications/.
After the project's completion, peer-reviewed articles by the members involved on the issues of expectations and experiences will be accepted for publication, and related national and international conference presentations will be made.	**Conferences**: In 2011 the following conference presentations were given: 1. The significance of being first: A consideration of cultural capital in relation to 'first in family' student's choices of university and program. Authors; Luzeckyj, A, King, S. Scutter, S. and Brinkworth, R. For the First Year in Higher Education Conference- June 2011, WA 2. Widening participation: does cultural capital really make a difference for first year students? Authors; King, S. Luzeckyj, A. Scutter, S. and Brinkworth, R. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc Conference - July 2011, QLD 3. "We're not in Kansas anymore": Analysing university expectations and experiences for rural and remote students. Authors: Brinkworth, Russell & McCann, Ben. Education Research Group of Adelaide Conference – 28-30 September 2011, SA. 4. A presentation on rural and remote students was made at the

	1st International Australasian Conference on Enabling Access to Higher Education in Adelaide on the 5-7 December 2011, SA. **Publications:** In 2011, the article 'The significance of being first: A consideration of cultural capital in relation to "first in family" student's choices of university and program. A Practice Report' was published in the *International Journal of First Year in Higher Education.* Authors; Luzeckyj. A, King. S, Scutter. S, and Brinkworth, R. In 2010, the article 'What do commencing undergraduate students expect from first year university' was published in the *International Journal of First Year in Higher Education.* Authors; Scutter. S, Palmer. E, Luzeckyj. A, Burke Da Silva. K, and Brinkworth. R. **This research has attained international recognition**: One of the two Keynote speakers at the First Year in Higher Education (FYHE) Conference (http://www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/index.html), Professor Mantz Yorke, quoted from this work a number of times – see his paper - http://www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/content/pdf/keynote_workshop/Yorke%20Fremantle%20FYHE%20Paper%20v7%20(public).pdf

Table 3: Degree of agreement of respondents (n=8) to evaluators' questionnaire regarding key features of the outcomes and deliverables

QUESTION DETAILING SPECIFICS OF PROJECT OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES	DEGREE OF AGREEMENT BY RESPONDENTS ABOUT EXTENT OF SUCCESS	
DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE OF SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY TRANSITION FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW	NO AGREEMENT MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT	0% 0% 100%
PROVIDE A COMMON FORUM FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS, UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF.	NO AGREEMENT MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT	0% 37.5% 62.5%
EXPAND EXISTING PILOT STUDIES TO ALL THREE UNIVERSITIES IN SA AS WELL AS THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR.	NO AGREEMENT MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT N/A	0% 50% 37.5% 12.5%
UNDERSTAND THE INTERACTION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S EXPECTATIONS, EXPERIENCES, ENTRANCE SCORES AND GRADES.	NO AGREEMENT MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT	0% 25% 75%
BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS FOR TRANSITION BY WIDELY COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY.	NO AGREEMENT MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT	0% 62.5% 37.5%

DEVELOP WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES (ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS) AND HIGH SCHOOLS	**NO AGREEMENT** **MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT** **HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT** **NOT APPLICABLE**	**0%** **37.5%** **25%** **37.5%**
PRODUCE AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS DURING TRANSITION AND UTILISE IT TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP CURRENT TRANSITION STRATEGIES	**NO AGREEMENT** **MILD TO MODERATE AGREEMENT** **HIGH DEGREE OF AGREEMENT**	**0%** **12.5%** **87.5%**

Overall, the respondents were in broad agreement that these outcomes were attained, except for 'Develop working relationships between universities (academic and administrative areas) and high schools', where three respondents indicated 'Not applicable', and the 'high degree of agreement' was only 25%. This, along with other evaluation data, does flag the need for further development of school-university connections as a major priority for continuing work.

3.6 Were there any unintended outcomes?

In addition to the project fitting into state government strategic objectives, and the 'huge community engagement aspect' noted earlier, one respondent to the Evaluators' questionnaire commented '*I discovered how 'out of touch' some Principals were with what actually happens during the transition*'. This reflects the project's ability for 'awareness raising' at various levels, from school students up to school principals, and its ability to connect the 'grass roots' elements with more strategic initiatives.

3.7 What factors helped and hindered in the achievement of the outcomes and deliverables?

Several factors were particularly significant in helping the achievement of the project's ambitious outcomes and deliverables. Chief amongst them were

- Strong project leadership by the two project leaders, Dr Russell Brinkworth and Dr Ben McCann, who were ably supported by dedicated and enthusiastic project team members and component and committed project staff;
- The make-up of the project team itself; the team was a good mix of academic and professional staff across the three collaborating institutions with complementary skill sets (especially strong as regards both qualitative and quantitative data analysis skills) and diverse disciplinary and professional staff perspectives.
- The involvement of all three South Australian universities across all faculties which enabled a 'whole-of-state' analysis;
- Engagement with secondary sector across a number of high schools within South Australia which were representative of the three secondary school types (public, independent and Catholic). Especially helpful in the development of this engagement was the role of and dedication demonstrated by the project's liaison officers;
- The engagement with the South Australian Department of Further Education Employment Science and Training was a particular project strength. Dr Sophia Matiasz's involvement as a project team member was a great advantage for which both the project and Dr Matiasz should be congratulated. This support and sponsorship by the

state government department was significant and contributed to the project's momentum and effectiveness across the two sectors (secondary and tertiary).

- The considerable piloting and preparatory work that was conducted at The University of Adelaide enabled the project to hit the ground running, which is always an advantage in large scale projects of this nature.

Specific factors that might be considered to have hindered the project and its ability to achieve its outcomes and deliverables have already been mentioned in this report: principally, issues around

- recruitment and staff turnover on the project team;
- the changing employment conditions of one of the project leaders;
- engagement with the secondary sector to the extent that had been anticipated.

Data from the evaluators' questionnaire reinforced the above, and also identified the following:

- Management and analysis of statistical data was identified as a hindering aspect by four of the eight respondents, including the following two comments:
    - *'I suspect that the potential volume of data generated was not adequately anticipated. This has somewhat hindered in delivering outcomes (and a LOT of work remains to be done).'*
    - '*Sample sizes meant that sometimes it was hard to drill down to cohorts.'*
- One respondent also reflected that:
    - *'The 'where to now' outcome was probably not fleshed out sufficiently.'*

Timely analysis of data and the dissemination of this could readily impact on the where to from here, and so strategies for long term engagement are considered next.

3.8 What measures, if any, have been put in place to promote sustainability of the project's focus and outcomes?

In response to a question about sustainability in the evaluators' questionnaire, five respondents listed specific strategies that they were aware of:

- *'Our University already has a transition program in place'*
- *'Resources have been made available to schools.'*
- *'There are information sheets available for distribution.'*
- *'The website and continuing work of project team to disseminate what was learned from the project'*; and
- *'Project still underway to all intents and purposes regardless of funding'*

It is the last comment that provides the greatest sense of sustainable work, as this respondent saw the project as continuing regardless of funding, possibly because the project had galvanised existing personnel at the three universities towards a shared direction.

3.9 What lessons have been learned from this project and how might these be of assistance to other institutions?

In 2008, the ALTC undertook an analysis of the 'day to day operations of the grants program, the reported experiences of grants scheme project teams, and feedback from the sector, over the years 2006-2008' (*Operational learnings of ALTC project holders*, ALTC, 2008, 1) and summarised the 'key operational issues specific to project holders'. This analysis revealed

the following five key learnings and key challenges for project holders, as reported by project teams (ALTC, 2008, 1), many of which resonate with the current project team's experience:

Key learnings

- *Ensuring senior-level executive and institutional support for the project*
- *Having effective dissemination strategies in place at the outset which promote the embedding of findings and outcomes*
- *Ensuring effective and sustainable communication and collaboration within and external to the project team*
- *Systematic and carefully planned project management*
- *Continuous and critical reflection on the project progress and capacity for flexibility with regard to project management, activities and outcomes*

Key challenges

- *Staff recruitment and staff turnover on the project team*
- *Ensuring project recognition, endorsement and uptake*
- *Dealing with unexpected costs and delays*
- *Managing ethics approvals*
- *Ensuring effective and continuous collaboration and communication with project partners*

From the evaluation perspective, while many of these learnings and challenges did evidence themselves in this large scale and ambitious project, they were generally handled very ably due to the diligent and dedicated management of the project leaders who were working with conscientious project team members and staff who consistently demonstrated enormous goodwill in seeking to ensure the project's success.

Many of these lessons continue to be common across projects and, building on the analysis set out in the *Operational learnings* document (ALTC 2008), the OLT might consider it useful to prepare a 'cheat sheet' of handy hints for a project's start up and ongoing maintenance, that is made available to both intending and successful applicants on the OLT website, to leverage this expanding knowledge base of common implementation issues. In this way, applicants and teams would be informed in advance of key potential challenges and be in a position to proactively devise possible strategies to work around them (for example, regarding project induction, an annual (or commencing) face-to-face team meeting for team building, succession planning, clarity around responsibility sharing, models for the constitution and role of reference groups, etc).

Stakeholders responding to the evaluators' survey commented that there are many lessons that *'should be transferable to many institutions. Ask again in 2013'*. However, another respondent, picking up the theme of data analysis issues, stated that it is *'Too early to say. More fine grained data analysis required'*. Nevertheless, 50 % of respondents were unequivocal when it came to lessons learned:

- *'This project uncovered valuable information that should be the focus of information sessions in schools and at the universities so should be widely used.'*
- *'Confirmed views with evidence and also assisted develop further specific strategies eg parents' orientation'*
- *'It has certainly provided me with statistical evidence to present to my students and parents to prepare them better for the next stage of their education.'*

- *'More than lessons learned I think the project provides evidence to support ideas about low SES; FIF and rural students as well as providing a greater understanding that students' expectations and experience is vastly different.'*

3.10 How can the project outcomes be further embedded in the education system at both the secondary and tertiary levels?

The project has worked hard at and been very conscious of the need to ensure that its outcomes are embedded in the education system at both the secondary and tertiary levels. The website is an excellent example of information provision in this regard, while team members and the project's liaison officers in particular have been tireless in their engaged dissemination of project findings to both secondary school stakeholders and the tertiary sector more broadly. In the new regulatory and quality environment that is now being oversighted by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the impetrative for higher education providers to take seriously their responsibilities to assure the quality of student attainment, support and participation would suggest that the project outcomes and deliverables, given the strength of their evidence and research base, will have impact on the way higher education providers go about their business in managing student transition and support.

In terms of further embedding project outcomes in the education system, respondents to the evaluators' questionnaire distinguished elements for each sector:
For Secondary students, the project was:

> *'very useful for providing advice to tertiary bound students'*, yet *'need[s] to communicate better with them'.*

For Tertiary students, the project unearthed:

> *'a number of evident 'mismatches' between expectation and experience that will need to be addressed'*. Some found that *'tertiary relatively easy via communication and guideline sheets (which are great)'* and that answers would be found *'by educating university and high school teachers and ensuring that students' expectations are realistic and that they are met.'*

However, one respondent indicated more systematic elements were necessary for embedding outcomes:

> *'I am not sure that the tertiary sector has changed as much, therefore I think that they need to be more innovative in the experiences that they provide for first year students as an effective transition - more access to support, smaller lecture size groups, some drafting of work permitted and marked work being returned to the students a lot a quicker to provide more timely feedback.'*

4.0 Conclusion.

This evaluation has assessed the project's processes and products against the set of specific indicators agreed between the evaluators and the project team. Within the constraints of time, resourcing, staff turnover, and understandable issues of scope and reach, this project has achieved considerable and significant outcomes and impact. The project team members, the reference group members, the project staff and the project leaders in particular are to be commended for their enthusiastic, passionate and dedicated pursuit of the project outcomes. There is little to fault in the way this project has been conducted and much to praise. It is also entirely appropriate and desirable that many project publications are still being developed as the team works through and analyses the data collected in more detail and from different focal perspectives.

This project has engaged in new and important work: as the government's participation and attainment targets move the sector towards delivering the transformative effects of higher education to greater numbers and increasingly diverse entering cohorts, it would be

beneficial for more OLT grants and other institutional research projects to take the approach that this project has done and examine programs and initiatives designed to support student outcomes from cross-institutional, whole-of-sector and inter-sectoral perspectives.

The Student and Staff Expectations and Experiences (SSEE) Project has made a significant contribution to our understanding of school leavers' expectations and experiences as they make the transition from secondary to tertiary study in our higher education institutions. It has delivered a rich data set and significant findings that are of demonstrably broad sectoral application at a critical time of growth and diversity in higher education attainment and participation. In very practical terms, the project has also produced a suite a valuable resources for university students, for secondary students and for parents, while the project's findings will be of benefit to institutions that wish to improve the outcomes, satisfaction and performance for all university students, whatever their entering social or cultural capital. Very significantly, the project has also succeeded in opening up a critical cross-sectoral dialogue around student expectations and experiences through its work with South Australian secondary schools. There are realistically high hopes for the project's sustainability being cemented in these strong cross-sectoral linkages and relationships developed, and the institutional leaders of the three South Australian universities involved are encouraged to provide the necessary resourcing to ensure that this is the case.

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