

Creating a national framework for student partnership in university decision making and governance

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SUMMARY

Creating a national framework for student partnership in university decision making and governance is a 2016 National Senior Teaching Fellowship awarded to Professor Sally Varnham from the University of Technology Sydney. The final report was completed in 2020.

The objective of the Fellowship was to produce a national framework for student partnership in university decision-making and governance. The project aim has been achieved through a series of workshops with stakeholders around the country to gather input into formulating this framework and the principles underpinning it. Fellowship activities have been reported throughout the fellowship via a weekly blog both on the Fellowship webpage (<http://studentvoiceaustralia.com/sallys-blog>).

There is evidence more and more students are taking the lead and working cooperatively with their institutions to create better outcomes for students and institutions alike. There is increasing appreciation that student cohorts are diverse and the solutions we implement need to suit this diversity. Conferences are now regularly featuring students talking about student partnership issues rather than university staff and management doing all the talking. Institutions are taking up the challenge of working with their students in new and more sophisticated ways and momentum in this space is gathering. One constant is that the tertiary education landscape in Australia will continue to evolve and partnering with students is integral to an ongoing process of adaptation to address changes as they arise. Increasingly as students become accustomed to being welcome participants in decision-making, problem-solving and futureproofing, our tertiary institutions will continue to play an active role in that process and will continue to develop the space and opportunity for them to do so.

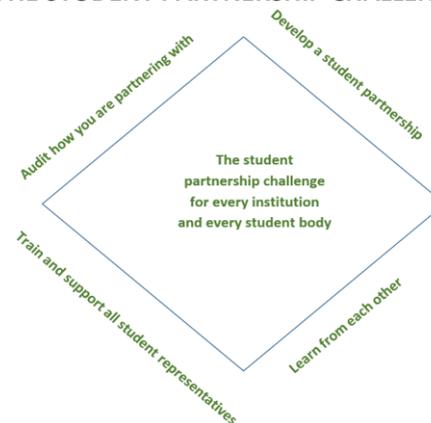
FELLOWSHIP CONTRIBUTION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

FELLOWSHIP

Principles for student partnership in decision making:

- Principle 1:** Building authentic partnerships
- Principle 2:** Communication – honesty and transparency
- Principle 3:** Strong student leadership
- Principle 4:** Training and Support – as a partnership
- Principle 5:** Every student’s voice – diversity and inclusivity
- Principle 6:** Valuing student voice – recognition of formal and informal engagement
- Principle 7:** A National Presence – for facilitation and support

THE STUDENT PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGE



KEY STEPS FOR INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENT BODIES ALIKE IN BUILDING STUDENT PARTNERSHIP

Key steps in building student partnership include:

- ❖ Reviewing current student engagement practices across the institution
- ❖ Working with their diverse range of students to develop new initiatives and processes for student partnership
- ❖ Creating a student partnership agreement
- ❖ Engaging student academic representatives and training and supporting these and all representatives and student leaders.