



Federation University Australia

Case study report

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This case study is one of eight studies which contribute to a wider project:

Shaping the 21st Century Student Experience at Regional Universities

<http://shapingtheregionalstudentexperience.com.au/>

Executive summary

This case report presents key findings from the Federation University (FedUni) Case Study as part of the OLT Strategic Priority project, ***Shaping the 21st century student experience at regional universities (SP 14-4602)***. Six staff and seven students participated in an exploratory qualitative research project which investigated the relationship between central student academic and transition support services and programs (SS&Ps) and student motivation, emotion, well-being and satisfaction. This scope of project includes the following SS&Ps: *Mentors*; *ASK Service*; *FedReady*; *yourtutor*; *Study Skills Website*; *Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)*. The key findings from the two key audiences are described below:

Staff Interviews – Major findings

1. Selecting high-quality, suitable Student Leaders is essential for meeting SS&P goals and facilitating positive interactions with diverse student cohorts
2. Professional and academic staff experiences of, attitudes towards and current level of awareness of SS&Ps significantly impact on student referral and therefore, potential success
3. Student Leaders see their involvement in institutional SS&P as career and leadership opportunities and are keen to contribute within existing institutional structures
4. Articulating the outcomes for students using SS&P across the institution may have a positive impact on timely referral to services, student engagement and student retention
5. Students require a variety of modes of interactions to foster capacity and capability building (ie. face-to-face, online, just-in-time, social connections).

Student Interviews – Major findings

1. Selecting high-quality suitable, enthusiastic Student Leaders is essential for facilitating positive interactions among less experienced peers and meeting SS&P goals
2. Student Leaders offer both emotional and academic support to diverse student cohorts
3. It would be advantageous to extend certain SS&Ps that target challenging curriculum beyond first year courses
4. The current SS&Ps are strongly associated with positive student engagement, well-being, satisfaction, motivation and a sense of belonging
5. The provision and extension of greater leadership and problem-solving opportunities for second and third year students is highly desirable and could be valuable.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Federation University is a regional Victorian university and a member of the Regional Universities Network (RUN). According to the 2015 September QILT Report, students completing the 2014 University Experience Survey (n=867), report 78.5% satisfaction with the level of *Student Support* offered across the university. The current research investigates the student experience with a focus on centrally provided student academic and transition support services and programs (SS&Ps). The research considers the views of students who have accessed one or more SS&Ps in the past 12 months and staff who are involved with aspects of SS&P delivery. These programs also include students employed in leadership and facilitating roles within SS&P, known as *Student Leaders*. The research also explores the relationship between the SS&Ps and student motivation, emotion, well-being and satisfaction.

1.2 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the key findings of the FedUni case studies relative to the described context. The report describes the institutional case studies using an inductive process which has been guided by the Kahu model (Kahu 2013). The report will also permit for cross-case and cross-institutional relationships to be drawn, relative to specific elements, dimensions and facets as described in the Kahu model.

2 Case design

2.1 Case study plan

The case study plan was composed of four stages which were guided by the project leadership team and the FedUni reference group member, Professor Marcia Devlin. These stages included the following:

- *Stage 0: Project Initiation, planning, ethics;*
- *Stage 1: Desk research, analysis and meta-analysis;*
- *Stage 2: Stakeholder consultations, conduct case studies, case study analysis and project progress report*
- *Stage 3: Cross-case analysis*
- *Stage 4: Project consolidation*

2.2 Theme

2.2.1 Theme title

Central student academic and transition support services and programs (SS&Ps): Their impact on student motivation, wellbeing and satisfaction in a regional Australian university context.

2.2.2 Theme description

Federation University offers a range of centrally-facilitated academic and transition support services and programs (SS&Ps) students. These programs focus on creating a positive student experience and improved student retention and success outcomes. Many of these programs are facilitated by *Student Leaders* (students employed in leadership and facilitating roles within SS&P). There is currently a lack of knowledge specific to nationally gathered graduate data and elements such as student emotion, motivation, satisfaction and well-being. This study explores this specific discourse from the perspective of numerous student users and numerous staff who contribute to the delivery of a range of SS&Ps. These elements are closely aligned with facets described in the Kahu model including psychological influences (Emotion; Motivation) and proximal consequences (Satisfaction; Well-being).

2.2.3 Unit/Units of analysis

The units of analysis are the chunks of data (ie sentence, paragraphs and/or phrases) which has been determined from the NVIVO interview transcripts. Several institutional centrally-facilitated academic and transition SS&Ps were the focus within this research. The experiences of both staff and students relative to specific SS&Ps and the Kahu model, were thematically coded using a grounded theory approach.

2.2.4 Theme scope

The scope of this case study is within the boundaries of eight institutions focused on 'Shaping the 21 century student experience within regional universities' (S21CRSE). The case studies are limited to evidence relevant to the S21CRSE objectives and are structured around Kahu model elements, dimensions and facets.

2.2.5 Participants

The FedUni participants in this research included seven students and six staff. Student participants had to demonstrate active involvement in one or more SS&P during the past 12 months to qualify for selection. Staff participants had to demonstrate involvement (ie partial delivery and/or involvement from a faculty perspective) during the past 12 months to qualify for selection. Participants were studying/working at the Mt Helen or Gippsland campuses of FedUni. Participants were sought via recruitment methods of posters around campus, institutional wide electronic messages and targeted emails.

2.3 Data Collection, management and Analysis

Data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews with participants. The interview protocol was validated with students who are current Student Leaders within several SS&Ps. These students were excluded as potential participants for this research. The key lead researchers included Dr Briony Supple, Associate Professor Nina Fotinatos and Sylwia Wojtaszek (current PhD student). Dr Supple and Ms Wojtaszek conducted the interviews in a mutually agreed location. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by Smart Docs, as recommended by the USC leadership team. Each interview took approximately a 30-45 minutes. The participants were offered a \$50 movie voucher in appreciation of their time.

Transcribed data was analysed using NVIVO 11 software. The data were coded against the Kahu Model (Kahu 2013) facets, which were used as key 'nodes' for analysis. The transcripts were thoroughly read by two researchers and independently coded using the Kahu Coding Guidelines as instructed by the USC leadership team. A summary of the interview protocol can be found in Figure 1, **Appendix 1**. A mapping between the Kahu (2013) model and the interview questions can be found in Table 1, **Appendix 1**. The data was also examined for cross theme case analysis (ie influences vs engagement vs consequences) and are subsequently described in **Appendix 2**.

3 Timeline

Table 1 Case study timeline

	2015							2016			
	May	June/July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April/May
Activities											
Project planning	X										
Appointment of institutional Project Officer		X									
Seek institutional ethics			X								
Invite participants				X	X	x	x	x			
Conduct interviews/ focus groups						X	X	X	X		
Conduct analysis								X	X		
Write report									X	X	X

4 Findings

4.1 Overview/4.2 Description of Themes

A thorough investigation of both the staff and student transcripts against the Kahu model identified *eight* key staff themes and *six* key student themes. These have been described in further detail with appropriate illustrative quotes in **Appendix 2** (Section 1- Staff Themes; Section 2 – Student Themes). The frequency of nodal activity relative to the Kahu (2013) is also listed in **Appendix 3**.

Staff interviews key themes

1. There are clear, positive benefits for students who participate in the SS&Ps offered
2. There are concerns for the students who deliberately choose not to engage with SS&Ps
3. A lack of staff general awareness of and training relevant to SS&P options is problematic, inefficient and should become an institutional priority
4. Follow-up on referral, student progress and associated outcomes relevant to SS&P should be streamlined (ie improvement in closure of the loop regarding student need and support offered)
5. Student Leaders have an enormous responsibility to facilitate SS&Ps and offer guidance to students relative to their specific needs
6. Complexities associated with staff acceptance and awareness of, and attitudes towards, SS&P can impact on referral opportunities for students most in need
7. Positive association between student emotions, skills and self-efficacy, relative to level and type of interaction with specific SS&Ps
8. Peer interaction and support has a positive impact on student well-being

Student interview key themes

1. There is a strong association between student who partake in SS&Ps and student belongingness and well-being
2. Satisfaction and well-being in mature-age students and transition anxiety are positively influenced by involvement with SS&Ps
3. There is a strong association between participation in SS&Ps and positive student emotions and well-being
4. There is a strong association between participation in SS&Ps and positive personal growth and satisfaction
5. There is a strong association between students who participate in SS&Ps and positive well-being, motivation and interaction
6. The success of the SS&P intended outcomes is strongly associated with the quality of Student Leader

4.3 Observations from the case study

Unexpected findings from the Staff Interviews

1. The staff interviews highlight that there is a lack of understanding of the full support services available to our students
2. Throughout the interviews, there few comments regarding insufficient funding
3. Participants suggested a number of effective methods of dealing with institutional challenges.

Unexpected findings from the Student Interviews

1. *Student Leaders* (ie. students employed in leadership and facilitating roles within SS&P) need ongoing support
2. Streamlining access to and awareness of the SS&Ps would enable better, efficient and timely student support
3. There is a perception of a lack of focus on academic achievement **in the SS&Ps?**

5 Understanding the regional student experience

5.1 Relationship to the Kahu model

General relationship findings

The findings of the interviews demonstrated a strong connection with several elements, dimensions and facets of the Kahu model (Kahu 2013). The most frequently coded facets [ie. 11 – Staff (n=86); 12 – Support (n=189); 14 – Emotion (n=48); 30 - Well-being] were located within the *‘Psychosocial influences - ‘University’* and the *‘Proximal consequences – Social’* element/dimension relationship respectively (**Appendix 3**).

The *‘Student Engagement’* element lacks mention of student personalities and self-confidence levels. However, both factors often influence a student accessing SS&Ps. A key question still remains: How do you bring existing SS&Ps to students with personalities and confidence levels that may lead to them not seeking timely support? Preliminary percentage coverage statistics regarding coding areas (ie facets) also highlights differences between staff and student priorities and the varied interview protocols. For example, complete staff transcripts mentioned the value of 25- *Interaction* as a rate of 2.1% compared to 40.3 % for students. Similarly, complete staff transcripts mentioned the value of 14 – *Emotion* as a rate of 3.9% compared to 76.5 % for students.

5.2 Insights gained

This case provides evidence of practice and specific examples relevant to 2015 QILT data focused on *‘Student Support’*. It provides both staff and student insight into the *‘softer student skills and attributes’* which are encouraged throughout the process of active engagement with institutional level SS&Ps.

5.3 Good practice examples

Vignette 1

1. **Psychological influences and their impact on positive student engagement and well-being**
 - This case study was focused on assessing central academic student support services and the relationship with psychological influences, associations with student engagement and related student consequences.
 - Federation University, Associate Professor Nina Fotinatos, Dr Briony Supple
2. **Positive programme outcomes, linking:**
 - a) Consequences – Satisfaction (29); Well-being (30); Retention (31)
 - b) Engagement – Interest (20); Belonging (21)
 - c) Influences – Support (12)
 - d) Summary:
 - Students are excited and feeling connected to the study and institution which is associated with retention
 - This is evidenced through enthusiast sentiments of feeling a sense of belongingness to a larger entity than self

- Such engagement has occurred due to a variety of support mechanisms offered throughout the programs which are primarily facilitated by *Student Leaders* and peers

3. Impact (student quotes)

- *"[M]ost fantastic thing ever"; "I felt more comfortable and relaxed. And I think that if I didn't do FedReady I would have come in on the Monday and gone, oh my God, and I probably wouldn't have come back after the Monday, because that was so overwhelming anyway" (Student 1).*
- *"[Y]ou find that once you get involved it's easy to stay involved"; "[O]bviously feeling connected somewhere is a big part of retention" (Student 6).*
- *"For mentoring I definitely think so because your mentors, they learn about what each of the.....student services [offer] pretty much in and out"; "I think with mentoring, that could definitely save a student because when you get to your really, really low stages sometimes the easiest option seems like the only one at one stage until you get kind of shoved into other options, so a mentor is a really good way of providing that, I guess, extra little push to help them out and make them realise that there are more options than just dropping out, so I think mentoring has very high potential for that" (Student 7).*

4. Implementing the practice (staff quotes)

- *"Resilience and emotional intelligence is a key in student success" (Staff 3).*
- *"[Y]ou've got support, then you're more likely to persist" (Staff 4).*
- *"Retention is one of the foundation planks now" (Staff 6).*

Vignette 2

1. Title

- This case study was focused on assessing central academic student support services and the relationship with psychological influences, associations with student engagement and related student consequences.
- Federation University, Associate Professor Nina Fotinatos, Dr Briony Supple

2. Positive programme outcomes, linking:

- a) Consequences – Well-being (30)
- b) Engagement – Interaction (25); Participation (26)
- c) Influences – Motivation (15)
- d) Summary:
 - Students demonstrated feelings of positive well-being relative to experiences at university
 - SS&Ps allowed for meaningful opportunities for students throughout periods of their studies and keep motivated to strive for success
 - The interaction and participation throughout many authentic and enjoyable SS&P activities

3. Impact (student quotes)

- *'FedReady gave you that taste of what you're going to be doing. I'd walked out of the class on the first day of FedReady, I just went, oh, my God, I just want it to be next week (Student 1).*
- *"[FedReady], it was great because it introduced you to other students who were new ... and help you start university as well which was a very good help (Student 6).*

4. Implementing the practice (staff quotes)

- *[Mentors] - "It gives that constant person to go back to and help them you know what, I was in your shoes this time last year and have some of those conversations about what*

some of the issues are and have that openness about okay, so who do I go and see when things start going wrong, or how can I share this when I've worked something out.... Great, let's show everybody how to do it. They're the facilitators of those relationships, I think... that initial, the motivation for some bonding and things like that." (Staff 1).

- *"They get the social interaction with their mentors. They get to meet people, they get someone that can answer their questions" (Staff 3).*

6 Implications

Staff Interviews

- Review the current FedUni student support menu and make linkages across services more explicit
- Review and redesign training, awareness and communication relevant to student support referrals and desired student outcomes (ie collect data on referrals and close the loop)
- Feed back to the relevant key stakeholders that staff workload and conflicting priorities may be negatively influencing student engagement and satisfaction

Student Interviews

- Increase recruitment quality assurance and training for Student Leaders
- Work with key stakeholders in developing strategies to target and reach students who do not currently use the SS&Ps due to their personality and attitude (ie investigate barriers to the SS&P)
- Create better communication channels for Student Leaders to reach students and provide the Student Leaders with additional support when unexpected incidents occur
- Investigate the student experience of those who actively choose not to access SS&Ps and whose higher education journey is not enjoyable

7 Conclusion

This FedUni case study demonstrate the impact that SS&Ps can have on student well-being, retention, satisfaction, motivation and engagement in a regional university context. It also provides strong alignment with the Kahu model linking the influences with student engagement and consequences. In addition, it highlights possible areas for improvement that could also benefits students' success and engagement within the regional university context.

8 References

Ella R. Kahu (2013) *Framing student engagement in higher education*, Studies in Higher Education, 38:5, 758-773, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2011.598505, Accessed October 15, 2015.

9 Funding acknowledgement

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

10 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Interview Protocol and Mapping to Kahu (2013) Model
- Appendix 2: Theme descriptions and illustrative quotes
- Appendix 3: Nodal Frequency Summary

Appendix 1: Interview Protocol and Mapping to the Kahu (2013) Model

Figure 1: Staff and Student Summary Interview Protocol

Staff Interviews

Start with the general questioning of the program and progress from there:

1. Can you explain your involvement with the retention programs?
2. Why do you think this program is beneficial to students? From your perspective, what do you think the students value the most about these programs?
3. Can you explain that further?
4. Can you provide best case examples of positive outcomes associated with students engaged in these programs?
5. What would be the impact of not offering such as program?
6. Are there other things you'd like to mention?
7. What challenges do you believe still exist for students?
8. Can you recommend potential strategies for addressing these existing challenges at an institutional level and potentially at a sector level?
9. Do you believe that the retention programs we offer are sufficient to meet the need of student emotional and well-being needs? Please expand.

Student Interviews

Start with general questioning of the program and/or services (ie FedReady, Mentor Program, PASS, ASK, Your tutor, Study Skills Website) and progress from there:

1. What motivated you to engage with this program and/or service?
2. Did your experience with the program and/or service have an impact on your capacity to learn/achieve/feel a sense of belonging/meet your academic performance expectations within a specific course or generally? If so, how?
3. Did your experience with the *program and/or service* have an impact on your level of motivation towards your studies generally? If so, how?
4. How did your experience with the program and/or service make you feel?
5. Please describe 3 keys aspects of the program and/or service?
6. Describe your study/learning experience
7. Describe your overall emotion/wellbeing during your period of study

NB: The questioning for the students was less structured and no discrete questions were asked however all aspects of the questions were covered in a two-way conversation between the participant and the interviewer.

Table 1: Kahu (2013) Mapping to Motivation/Emotion/Well-being/Satisfaction

	Kahu Model (Level 1 headings)	Overarching domains (Level 2 headings)	Specific domains (Level 3 headings)	Questions that align with our investigation
Retention Related Programs				
Fed Ready Program	Distal consequences Proximal consequences Proximal consequences Psychosocial influences	Academic Academic; Social; Student	Retention Learning; Achievement; Satisfaction; Well being Motivation	1. Did you utilise the FedReady program in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 7 2. What <u>motivated</u> you to engage with this program? 3. Did your experience with FedReady impact on your capacity to <u>learn and achieve</u> within your studies generally? If so, how? 4. Did your experience with FedReady affect your level of <u>motivation</u> towards your studies generally? If so, how? 5. How did your experience with FedReady <u>make you feel</u> ? 6. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 FedReady Program?
Mentor Program	Proximal consequences Psychological influences Distal consequences	Social Students Social	Satisfaction; Well-being; Motivation; Identity; Emotion Personal growth;	7. Did you actively partake in at least 50% of the Mentor Program service in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 13 8. What <u>motivated</u> you to engage with this program? 9. Did your experience with the Mentor Program impact on your capacity to increase your <u>sense of belonging</u> to your program and FedUni generally? If so, how? 10. Did your experience with the Mentor Program affect your level of <u>motivation</u> towards your studies generally? If so, how? 11. How did your experience with the Mentor Program <u>make you feel</u> ? 12. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 Mentor Program?
PASS Program	Distal consequence Distal consequence	Academic Social Academic	Retention Personal Growth Learning;	13. Did you actively partake in the PASS Program for 1 or more of your courses in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 20 14. What <u>motivated</u> you to engage with this program? 15. Did your experience with the PASS Program have an impact on <u>academic performance</u> within a specified course? If so, how?

	Proximal consequences Proximal consequences	Social	Achievement Satisfaction; Well-being	16. Did your experience with the PASS Program affect your level of <u>motivation</u> towards that specific course? If so, how? 17. Did your experience with the PASS Program have an impact on your <u>study habits</u> more generally? If so, how? 18. How did your experience with the PASS Program <u>make you feel</u> ? 19. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 PASS Program?
ASK Service	Psychosocial influences Psychosocial influences Proximal consequences Distal consequences	Emotion Student Academic Academic	Skills; Self efficacy; Motivation Learning; Achievement Retention	20. Have you used the ASK Service in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 26 21. What motivated you to engage with this service? 22. Did your experience with the ASK Service have an impact on <u>academic performance</u> within a specific course or generally? If so, how? 23. Did your experience with the ASK Service have an impact on your level of <u>motivation</u> towards a specific course? If so, how? 24. Did your experience with the ASK Service have an impact on your <u>study skill habits</u> more generally? If so, how? 25. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 ASK Service?
Yourtutor (online service)	Psychosocial influences Psychosocial influences Proximal consequences Distal consequences	Emotion Student Academic Academic	Skills; Self efficacy; Motivation Learning; Achievement Retention	26. Have you used the yourtutor Service in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 32 27. What motivated you to engage with this service? 28. Did your experience with the <i>yourtutor</i> service have an impact on <u>academic performance</u> within a specific course or generally? If so, how? 29. Did your experience with the <i>yourtutor</i> service have an impact on your level of <u>motivation</u> towards a specific course? If so, how? 30. How did your experience with the <i>yourtutor</i> service <u>make you feel</u> ? 31. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 <i>yourtutor</i> service?
Study Skills Website (online service)				32. Have you used the Study Skills Website in 2015? Yes – Continue with questions; No – Move to question 38 33. What motivated you to engage with this website? 34. Did your experience with the <i>Study Skills Website</i> have an impact on <u>academic performance</u> within a specific course or generally? If so, how? 35. Did your experience with the <i>Study Skills Website</i> have an impact on your level of <u>motivation</u> towards a specific course? If so, how? 36. How did your experience with the <i>Study Skills Website</i> <u>make you feel</u> ? 37. Please describe <u>3 keys aspects</u> of the 2015 <i>Study Skills Website</i> ?

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Appendix 2: Description of themes with illustrative quotes

Section 1: Staff Themes

1. *Relationship with Kahu - Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff, 12 – Support, 16 – Skills)*

A number of staff discussed the benefit they had observed for students who actively chose to partake in the SS&P as both student-staff leaders (ie employed as a student leader within one or more of the SS&P) and/or program participants. Staff mentioned that student participants were often inspired during their involvement to become mentors and/or gain work experience in one of the SS&P relative to their interest area (ie leadership, teaching, professional development etc). Staff commented that students were able to see the value of this experience, particularly where it could be added to their resume. Staff also commented that student leaders were interested in supporting new students as perhaps they had been in the past. Illustrative comments can be located in Figure 2, **Appendix 2**.

Here are two student comments to support this theme: *[D]efinitely the mentor programme the most. I'm actually a mentor co-ordinator this year. So that was fantastic. I started last year as just a mentor for the whole year, and it was just the best programme. I figured that I would do the mentor programme because I didn't have a very good mentor when I first started. So I wanted to change that and make sure people didn't get the same thing as I did. So I'd worked hard enough in that to be a mentor co-ordinator this year and I just think it's the best programme (Int 3). [I]I'm nervous because while I was confident doing the mentor position, the mentor co-ordinator is looking after people that look after the first years. So it's that step further and it means I'll have to almost take under all of their first years and help them with any problems they've got with them. So I'll be having to spread myself out quite, quite thinly for everything obviously whilst doing full time study, but excited. It's going to be a great experience. In high school I was always chosen for leadership opportunities so I figure this is just going to be like another one of those chances (Int 3).*

2. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (12 – Support)*

A number of staff raised the issue regarding the problem with students who choose not to engage the SS&P. Although this was frequently mentioned, no solution was proposed regarding the difficulty on reaching all students and actively informing them about the support that is available to them in a constructive, not overpowering welcoming manner. It is commonly agreed by participants that once *"[Y]ou've got support, then you're more likely to persist"* in your educative journey (p. 3 Int 4); *[H]ow do you engage with the people that don't engage with all of this because they're probably the people that need the help and that is going to be – it's a challenge for these programs and it's a challenge for us, you know. We've got really good employment outcomes, but where are the people that don't get jobs. We don't know. We've got no idea because we don't know them. They have never come through our doors because, you know, we have been able to build a relationship and track these people. That's a real challenge, is the people that thing I don't need Fed Ready. It's the people that don't turn up to mentor sessions, or don't engage in the Facebook chats that they have, are the people that then struggle more. So, how do you get those people that kind of sit on the I don't need it, in to actually giving it a go because then they will realise they do need it and that's the challenge, I reckon (Int 1).*

3. *Relationship with Kahu Mode I – Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff; 12 –Support; 13 – Workload); Structural influences (1 – Culture)*

A number of staff mentioned that more thought and planning was required to consider how to positively impact on staff awareness specific to purpose, structure, timing and function of SS&P made available to students. High staff workload, competing priorities, a lack of staff qualification and training, silo mentality were indicated as factors that negatively influence current staff awareness of SS&P availability. The quality of staff training (academic and non-academic) was repeatedly raised regarding a key factor relative to staff awareness; *[I] would say we probably have a better understanding of some of the other areas in Student Connect, for example. If everybody in Clip had a better idea of what we did and what counselling did and what advisory does, I think that*

would then facilitate and enable the referral and it's almost like we need to get a seamless service for the students, where at the minute it's like go upstairs, go to Student Connect and it's like we're all here to help you and then you've got the Res guys who are doing similar stuff to you, similar stuff over on Res, you know. Wouldn't it be nice if it all just looked a bit more seamless in that regard (Int.1); [I] just wish there was a bit more interaction with the student connect services because I think there's still that kind of us and them a little bit (Int. 2).

4. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff; 12 –Support); Structural influences (1 – Culture)*

A number of staff mentioned that SS&P structural location (ie department/offices/buildings) and functional relationship relative to faculties was required to reduce the 'us versus them' view SS&P provision and access. Staff regularly mentioned that that improved communication was required regarding referring students for support and a mechanism for tracking feedback/actions/outcomes relevant to the referral process and the SS&P initiative. Several staff commented that improved staff unity and a focus on institutional goals (ie student retention and success) was required to improve our provision of SS&P. See support quotes: [We should] "[B]roaden our staffs' knowledge of what it is we do beyond their little office" (p. 11 Int 1) in order for all the student services to look "[A] bit more seamless" (p. 13 Int 1).

5. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff)*

The quality of student leaders (ie students who are paid as staff to facilitate SS&P, need to be suitable for the role. Staff identified that they have heard situations where student leaders stated personal opinions or false statements which is misleading to more junior students. Staff members stated that their character and personalities and motivation needed to be very clear. One staff member mentioned that it was important to employ a diverse group of student leaders and "[N]ot just the good looking people" (p. 8 Int 1); [A]gain it kind of comes down to the leader, but they've been very good about picking some good PASS leaders, I think, that can facilitate the learning and not necessarily do it for them (Int 1).

One participant also highlighted that at times, there are insufficient applicants and this situation leads to less qualified students are appointed to role. Staff also commented that the reputation of a student leader in a mentor or PASS role, often spreads quickly and potentially casts reservations about a particularly SS&P. This also potentially affects the student leaders underlying belief that they "[D]on't see themselves as actual staff members" (p. 5 Int 3)..

6. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff); Structural influences (1 – Culture)*

Staff mentioned that a major factor to the success of program uptake was general and academic staff acceptance, awareness and attitudes towards the SS&P. It was suggested that improved awareness would enable staff to streamline support to their students and positively impact on institutional culture. It is recognised that staff have good intentions, "[I] think there's a lot of goodwill from staff. I think that staff are - they're at risk of switching off and burning out" (p. 6 Int 6) however this is not sustainable. Overall, all participants agreed that "[R]etention is one of the foundation planks now" (p. 7 Int 5) and that the infrastructure for support service is in place, although not functioning at its full potential. One barrier to this functionality is effective communication between SS&P and both general and academic staff. One staff member raised the issue regarding the time it can potentially take to deal with a student which can actually act as a "[P]erverse disincentive to engage with students" (p. 5 Int 6). This participant was referring to academic staffs' research loads and the incentive to invest time into research, as it is being awarded, rather than helping students by engaging with them.

7. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (14 – Emotion; 16 – Skills; 18 – Self-efficacy) - Student Engagement (25-Interaction)*

Several staff identified that face to face support is crucial for students transitioning from a high school environment to a higher education environment. This type of interaction is essential for their wellbeing and emotional status. It was suggested that information website are useful however at times, students often feel like "[I] am not a frequently asked question" (p.8 Int 1) type of student. Their self-efficacy with regards to seeking

help appears to be very limited for younger students and also for mature aged students, who have not studied for a while. In addition, “[R]esilience and emotional intelligence is a key skill in student success” (p. 1 Int 3), however, there were no recommendations made as to how this could be achieved, and whether and to what extent those skills are already represented in the different programs offered by FedUni. Students across the board seem to have gaps in their basic skills (academic skills and interpersonal skills), and they require support with developing those skills, before the course content can be taught effectively. Participants identified that several of the SS&P cater for a wide variety of skills. The challenge is identifying what skills students are lacking and how to provide timely support to those students. Staff also commented that interactivity in how the services were promoted would be beneficial to those involved; [V]ery day someone from Student Connect, one or two services turn up and do ten minutes and they just talk about their service. I would like to see, rather than just standing in front of the room talking, I’d like to see some really meaningful interactions. And so that’s what we are trying to do with counselling and leadership, we are trying to demonstrate that this is what we do, if you enjoy this, and you’re engaged, then you’ll come back and do more stuff with us later in the year.

8. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Psychosocial influences (11- Staff; 12 – Support); Proximal consequences (30 – Well-being)*

All staff agreed that peer interaction is irreplaceable and is strongly linked with positive outcomes for general student well-being as student leaders, “[A]re much less threatening” (p.2 Int 2) to engage with; [A]nd I think from what I can gather, there’s a lot of personal relationships grow out of the groups of the people that are going. A sense of belonging within that little PASS session which is a great add benefit. That being a support that they seem to get from each other, it’s like I’m not the only one that doesn’t understand this (Int 1).

However, on occasion, mature aged students may find it easier to approach a formally recognised staff member (ie academic or senior professional staff member), rather than someone considerably younger than them.

Section 2: Student Themes

1. *Relationship with Kahu - Psychosocial influences (12 – Support); Proximal consequences (21 –Belonging; 29 – Satisfaction; 30 – Well-being); Distal consequence (31 – Retention)*

The students overwhelmingly commented on the level of support that they felt with interactions specific to the institutional wide SS&P; “[M]ost fantastic thing ever” (p. 4 Int 1), “I felt more comfortable and relaxed. And I think that if I didn’t do FedReady I would have come in on the Monday and gone, oh my God, and I probably wouldn’t have come back after the Monday, because that was so overwhelming anyway” (p. 6 Int 1). Students also reported a direct association between their level of engagement with the SS&P and their levels of confidence, decrease of anxiety (regardless of the student’s age and background), and the feeling of being connected to the uni. Many of these factors lead to an increased sense of positive achievement/choice and a sense of belonging.

Students stated that they encouraged other students to get involved with SS&P and were quick to highlight the positive outcomes regarding the mentioned programs; “[Y]ou find that once you get involved it’s easy to stay involved” (p. 19 Int 6). Students did list isolated disappointing experiences on occasion. Students frequently comment that the SS&P engagement helped them feel comfortable, understand university structures, influencing their perception on being able to cope and not withdrawing and not feeling overwhelmed within a new socialisation; “[O]bviously feeling connected somewhere is a big part of retention” (Int 6).

Students felt that the SS&P positively impacted on retention and suggested that the programs should be extended to second and third year courses, “[D]efinitely. For mentoring I definitely think so because your mentors, they learn about what each of the.....student services [offer] pretty much in and out” (Int 7). “[I]f you’re having financial issues that you think are making you going to struggle a bit and drop out you can talk to a mentor and a mentor will go, ‘Try this, try the Financial Student Services and they might be able to help you out,’ or if you’re going through some personal issues they can guide you to counselling and stuff like that. I

think with mentoring, that could definitely save a student because when you get to your really, really low stages sometimes the easiest option seems like the only one at one stage until you get kind of shoved into other options, so a mentor is a really good way of providing that, I guess, extra little push to help them out and make them realise that there are more options than just dropping out, so I think mentoring has very high potential for that" (Int 7).

One student also attributed the sense of belonging directly to a SS&P; *[S]o, pretty much by doing the FAST program you don't have to have an ATAR and you don't have to have all these other requirements. It gives you a place at Fed Uni. So you do that degree and then they'll say you can have whatever degree you want. Some people did biomed, some people have done science, some people have done nursing" (Int 1).*

2. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Structural influences (6 – Student background); Proximal consequences (29 – Satisfaction; 30 – Well-being)*

Mature aged students, particularly those with family responsibilities and who have not engaged with study for a long period of time, report high levels of appreciation towards the SS&P; *"[T]he most impact? It would have to be the 'FedReady' program. That was the foundation of it all. That's where it began. That's where it all started. It is. That's where it all started. It would have been different had I come straight from year 12. Things are different now to when I was in high school. So much preparation is done for kids going to uni. And a lot of the subjects that I've done the lecturers have gone 'right, well you kids would have done this in year 12 – really? This is something that never would have even been a subject when I was at school. So, for me the 'FedReady' got me ready (Int 2).*

There is a suggested association between the use of the SS&P and the students background and personality. The participants reported positive associations regarding the current university's support system. They also mentioned the value of knowing at least one person as a starting point, whether that be the mentor or another staff member, which was absolutely invaluable to them regarding their study transition; *"[A] lot of the time you don't know who to speak to or where to go" (p. 6 Int 5); [I]'ve never used so many support services in my life. I was always one that – you did it on your own, you didn't tell anyone your troubles, you just put your head down and you got it done, you know. I don't know whether – I think that was just my era and that was just how I was brought up. Big family, there was no time for complaining or perhaps somebody stopping and going "I can see you're having a hard time", it was "pull your socks up, get over it, get going". And to actually to use these services is just a big step for me. And now I think they see me coming and go "no, not the old lady!" No I don't think they do. They all smile and go "hello"! (Int. 2). One student also reflected on their background in relation to their ATAR score and how their self-perceptions were influenced by this rating system, *[I] think I've developed quite a lot. It's been an interesting journey, because after I got my ATAR score I was quite disappointed" (Int 3).**

3. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Structural influences (14 – Emotion); Proximal consequences (30 – Well-being)*

SS&P engagement is associated with emotional benefit and academic support associated with the development of their skills. A sense of belonging and feeling connected to a larger social group such as a part of a community, is also strongly linked with an overarching feeling of positive well-being. One student commented on their feeling of perception and well-being after being part of the FedReady program, *"[A]nd just the different people that came in, so there were mature aged students that came in and spoke and made you realise, I'm not going to be the oldest person out here, because that was the biggest thing, going, oh, I'm going to be a mature aged student and all these kids are going to be out here, and my whole perception changed of what uni was going to be like after those three days" (Int 1). Face to face, one-on-one interactivity is an important element for students to assimilate into the FedUni higher education context. This may also be influenced due to the nature of secondary school delivery, which is almost entirely based on face to face interaction. It is also timely to remember the situation for our online students and how to engagement these cohorts of students.*

4. *Relationship with Kahu Model - Proximal consequences (29 - Satisfaction); Distal consequences (35 – Personal growth)*

Students report feeling a positive personal growth experience while having a rewarding and valued connection to the university and to the SS&P available to them. *[I]’m sitting there in the FedReady program, day two, going, oh, I should be at work, and I should be earning money, and I should be doing this. And I’m like, now, hang on a minute, my job now is to sit here and learn, that was a big adjustment that way. And FedReady helped with that because it put that perspective – it was like a dry run. By those three days I went, yeah, I can actually do this. There were a lot of activities that were done in there, like there was an essay that you could write while – you could do an essay and submit it and they would grade it and give you feedback, and that sort of thing, which was really handy (Int 1).* Students reported gaining satisfaction from helping others. Students seek opportunities to stay connected to many of the SS&P opportunities and comment on expanding such opportunities to allow greater number of student leaders to get involved.

5. *Relationship with Kahu Model – Psychosocial influences (11 – Staff)*

Students did mention the quality of student leaders within the SS&P. Students commented that personality, character, work ethic and ability to perform in a student leader role was integral to successfully meeting the needs of the students and performing relative to the program desired outcomes. A number of the students complained that they felt disappointed about their mentors or PASS leaders, and that had a significant negative effect on them; *[I] had some cases where the actual person running the class wasn’t prepared at all, and they weren’t willing to do more. I think they’re just comfortable in their role and they didn’t want to step outside their role. Sometimes that wasn’t great. Another student, she would always try and push you to do the work, and if she’d see you were trying and struggling, then she’d teach you, even though that wasn’t her role. I appreciated that. I wanted to do well because they could see other people were doing well and so I wanted to rise to their level, and that was mainly the student teacher, or the student PASS leader (Int 4).* Student 4 also commented on the motive of student leaders’ involvement which at times was potentially based on financial incentive; *[O]h you’re only really running this program because you want money (Int 4).*

6. *Relationship with Kahu Model – Student Engagement (25 – Interaction); Psychosocial influences (15 – Motivation); Proximal consequences (30-Well-being)*

Students positively commented on the opportunity to meet new people including other students from the same discipline. This interaction is seen as crucial for students’ wellbeing, as an added support relative to interaction that both motivates and inspires their progress at university; These statements were made by mature aged students; *“[FedReady], it was great because it introduced you to other students who were new ... and help you start university as well which was a very good help” (p. 3 Int 6); “FedReady was huge for me. That was one of the things that stuck in my mind. I only attended three days. So if I’d have attended the whole week, I can only imagine what further impact that would have had. But it took away the scary factor of being a university student, because you’re at high school 15 years ago and if you didn’t go to university straightaway then you were never going to go to university. There’s always that perceived – if you didn’t do year 12 you couldn’t go to uni and that was it. So, going to FedReady sort of cancelled out all of those negative attitudes that you had over that 15 years that I had, and it made you go, you know what, you can do this. Before I used to go, oh, I’m not smart enough to go to uni. I’m only smart enough to work in whatever industry or whatever work. Whereas, FedReady gave you that taste of what you’re going to be doing. I’d walked out of the class on the first day of FedReady, I just went, oh, my God, I just want it to be next week (Int 1).*

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Appendix 3: Nodal Frequency

Name	Sources	References
Distal consequences	8	37
Academic	4	19
31. Retention	4	16
32. Work success	0	0
33. Lifelong learning	3	3
Social	8	18
34. Citizenship	2	2
35. Personal Growth	7	16
Proximal consequences	7	56
Academic	6	18
27. Learning	4	9
28. Achievement	4	9
Social	6	38
29. Satisfaction	4	10
30. Well-being	4	28
Psychosocial influences	8	404
14. Emotion	8	48
Student	8	57
15. Motivation	7	18
16. Skills	6	26
17. Identity	2	2
18. Self-efficacy	6	11
University	8	299
10. Teaching	2	5
11. Staff	7	86
12. Support	8	189
13. Workload	2	19
Structural influences	8	77
Student	7	38
6. Background	7	27
7. Support	3	4
8. Family	3	4
9. Life load	2	3
University	7	39
1. Culture	7	35
2. Policies	1	3
3. Curriculum	1	1
4. Assessment	0	0
5. Discipline	0	0
Student Engagement	8	80
Affect	8	31
19. Enthusiasm	1	1
20. Interest	2	3
21. Belonging	8	27
Behaviour	8	41
24. Time and effort	1	1
25. Interaction	8	29
26. Participation	5	11
Cognition	4	8
22. Deep learning	1	1
23. Self-regulation	4	7