Report from the

Academic Development Symposium:
Supporting Academics Over Their Career

Friday, October 27, 2017

Victoria University of Wellington, Kelburn Campus

From the Symposium Organisers

We are delighted to provide this short report summarising the main messages and capturing the key discussion points from the Academic Development Symposium, held on October 27, 2017, at Victoria University of Wellington.

The event was attended by almost 40 staff members from all of the universities in New Zealand:
- Auckland University of Technology,
- Lincoln University,
- Massey University,
- University of Auckland,
- University of Canterbury,
- University of Otago,
- University of Waikato, and
- Victoria University of Wellington.

The participants represented the following role types:
- academic developer,
- academic,
- human resources officer,
- learning and research technology manager,
- learning and teaching coordinator,
- technology capability support officer, and
- director of teaching and learning.

We hope that this short report will not only provide participants (as well as those who could not attend the symposium) with a brief recap of the day, but also serve to guide future discussions about academic development in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In this respect, we believe that the points captured from the roundtable discussions will prove particularly valuable in future years.

The symposium organisers:
Luk Swiatek, Erik Brogt, John Milne and Kathryn Sutherland

Note on Structure

The report is structured according to the symposium program. That is, it comprises summaries from all of the sections, which are provided chronologically over the following pages. The program is reproduced below. The report ends with an overview of the feedback received from a survey conducted at the end of the event.

HERDSA NEW ZEALAND

AKO AOTEAROA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TERTIARY TEACHING
EXCELLENCE

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM:
Supporting Academics Over Their Career

Friday, October 27, 2017
Victoria University of Wellington

PROGRAMME

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:30	Coffee
09:30 – 09:45	Mihi and welcome
09:45 – 10:30	**The past, present and future of academic development:** Keynote speaker, Associate Professor Mark Barrow (University of Auckland)
10:30 – 11:00	Expo and morning tea
11:00 – 12:30	**Supporting early, mid, and late career academics:** what is needed to better support academics over their career?
12:30 – 13:15	Lunch
13:15 – 14:00	**Panel discussion: What are academic / professional support needs in the short-, medium- and long-terms, and how do we incentivise academic development?**
14:00 – 15:00	**Professional standards and recognition of tertiary teaching:** Special guest, Dr Stanley Frielick (Ako Aotearoa)
15:00 – 15:15	Afternoon tea
15:15 – 16:00	**Where to from here? Academic development in New Zealand universities in the future**

The Past, Present and Future of Academic Development (Keynote Speaker: Associate Professor Mark Barrow, University of Auckland)

Mark provided what he described as 'a Janus-view' of academic development – looking back and looking forward – in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In presenting a critical history of academic development in the country, he drew on research projects that included a collaboration between Australian and New Zealand researchers. He outlined the two key waves (in the 1970s and 1980s) of academic development, as well as several 'historical moments' in this area.

Mark also noted, from a critical and Foucauldian perspective, that interesting power relations have been activated over the last few decades. These shifts have affected academic development, and have included the rise of institutional mandates of various kinds, the creation of formal academic development units within universities and the movement of academic development from the periphery to the centre, as well as the normalisation of various technologies of measurement (such as student evaluation surveys).

Mark made several further comments about the future of academic development. He asked whether academic developers, in universities that are very much now part of neoliberal structures, can speak back to universities or whether they are just agents. He also noted that academic development has a history of coat-tailing and serendipity (in using things such as LMSs, digital learning and learning analytics). Additionally, an area in which more engagement will be needed in future will be curriculum change; part of that change will include challenging Western paradigms, postcolonial approaches, and including Mātauranga Māori more effectively.

Expo

The expo provided participants with the opportunity to see the different academic development strategies being undertaken by each university across the country. One or two representatives from each institution were asked before the symposium to bring with them details and resources about these strategies. The resources included flyers and pamphlets about particular academic development programs (for early career researchers, for example). The symposium participants were divided into eight groups and moved around the room, from university representative to representative, spending roughly a minute finding out about each university's activities.

Relational and Holistic Academic Development for Early Career Academics: Dr. Kathryn Sutherland (Victoria University of Wellington)

Kathryn's presentation preceded a roundtable discussion about supporting early-, mid-, and late-career academics. The presentation had two components: a summary of key findings published in her new book *Early career academics in New Zealand: Challenges and prospects in comparative perspective* (Springer, 2017), and a case study of the work being done through the Victoria Early Career Academic Programme (VECAP), which is designed to support early career academics in establishing their academic careers, building supportive peer and mentoring networks, and developing their teaching and research. She shared strategies from VECAP that she and the programme participants have found to be particularly effective (including inviting senior leadership team members to retreats for early career academics, for example).

Note: a short question-and-answer session followed Kathryn's presentation. The questions and answers have not been reproduced here.

Supporting Early-, Mid-, and Late-Career Academics: What is Needed to Better Support Academics Over Their Career?

This roundtable discussion drew on participants' own experiences of academic development, the ideas presented by Kathryn in the previous session, as well as the different strategies encountered during the expo before morning tea. In answering the question "what is needed to better support academics over their career?", the participants made the following points with regard to the early, mid, and late career stages.

Supporting Early Career Academics

- There is a need to realise that leadership can occur at all stages of a career.
- There is also a need to realise the importance of adjusting life-work balance and taking better care of oneself.
- It is important to remember that early career staff can be older. In discussing the results of her book, Kathryn mentioned that 36% of early career academics are 40 or older. In her book, she also mentioned that we do not use these academics' expertise enough.
- The observation was made that some academics are very scared of changing careers, but need to find a place in their new career.
- The use of a life-cycle model rather than a career-focused model was suggested. The point was made that a career is about work and what the industry wants; a life-cycle model is what it takes to have a healthy life.
- Some people, it was noted, in the mid- to late-career stage may want to develop as people and may not be interested in promotion. The person may want to do things that interest and reward them rather than crawling up the job ladder.
- Institutions need people to step up and step out. How can academic developers help academics do this? One example was encouraging staff to take short secondments at other organisations.
- In terms of academic citizenship, and thinking about how individuals can contribute to institutions, it was suggested that a programme can help people step up and out.

Supporting Mid-Career Academics

- There is a big question mark, it was summarised, about how we help staff manage careers.
- There is a need to minimise the tension in the 40-40-20 ratio of research, teaching, service.
- A comment was made that it is important to find one's own purpose: to bring one's own strengths and values to a role.
- Another participant observed that there is often a lack of leadership in organisations.
- There is a need for acculturation. Changing contexts or changing jobs requires acculturation, and having the courage to take on the new culture. In the mid-career phase, this needs to be self-directed.
- In terms of student evaluation, there is a risk that academic developers become the police if the academic is 'bad'. There is a need to push back – in terms of the life-cycle – and think about strengths, consider one's legacy, and consider what one's wisdom is.
- Drawing on the Maori view, there are valuable concepts such as tamariki (early career), Kaumātua (mid-late). It's good to have emotional support using this approach.
- Canterbury University runs a PG Certificate in Tertiary Teaching. Someone in their mid-career stage asked what is after the PG Cert. The answer was that they could do a master in education.

However, they do not want to become an educational researcher. The question then arises: what is next for people with a scholarly interest in teaching?

- The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Victoria University of Wellington twice ran a course on enhancing scholarly practice for mid-career staff. Many who participated then went on to become heads of school. This took a similar approach to the early career programme, but was shorter in duration and featured different questions (e.g. what does it mean to be a *mid-career academic?*)
- The Leading People Programme at Victoria University of Wellington for professional and academic staff (aimed at more senior staff) was also noted.
- The HEA Fellowship categories have a progress option for staff. This is based on self-reflection. For example, one can get Fellow status and then go for Senior Fellow status.
- The comment was made that some mid-career people need to move from complacency. They need to look again at what they are doing. They need to use technology differently now. Some uncertainty can be good.
- Some staff are happy to experiment with teaching as long as it does not affect student evaluation results. This is unrealistic, as often experiments do not work as intended.
- The deans have progress for leadership in teaching and learning. It can help to have a year of meeting regularly to work within one's own faculty with the support of an associate dean academic. It's vital to build up a cohort of people. It can be low cost, as it is an 0.2-time release.
- Lincoln University has given half a million dollars to experiment with teaching. Lecturers applied for $15,000 each and do a staff development programme to innovate their teaching.
- The University of Auckland gives 25 sets of $5,000 grants to mid-career staff, thanks to a generous philanthropic grant.

Supporting Late Career Academics

- The comment was made that there is a real need for life-academics. A couple of key questions were raised in this respect. How does one hand-over to mid-career staff? How do organisations bring people along? How do they help people out the door, in a nice way? How do we bridge from early to mid to late? It is a continuum. There need to be career-life programmes.
- Thinking in terms of legacy is a good idea.
- The question arose again: how do more established people leave behind their wisdom and knowledge?
- Another question arose: how can we ensure a healthy succession?

Panel Discussion: What Are Academic / Professional Support Needs in the Short-, Medium- and Long-Terms, and How Do We Incentivise Academic Development?

On this panel were: Dr. Erik Brogt (University of Canterbury), Dr. Stephen Marshall (Victoria University of Wellington) and Prof. Wendy Larner (Victoria University of Wellington). Brief summaries of their presentations are provided below.

Dr. Erik Brogt

Erik shared one of the initiatives from the University of Canterbury: his approach of working with colleagues in different departments to develop small-change projects using Ako Aotearoa regional funds. Erik works with his colleagues to make sure that the small-change, scholarship of teaching and learning projects actually work and that the change will be self-sustaining. A wide range of projects has been undertaken to date.

Dr. Stephen Marshall

In reflecting on the topic 'Technology and the future of academic development', Stephen discussed the different ways in which technology enables different forms of practice, in turn influencing academic development. Technology, he pointed out, isn't magic and won't fix everything. The capacity of technology has shifted dramatically; the question is whether our understanding and use of technology has kept up. He also reflected on the fact that we need university spaces of different kinds (that use technology more effectively).

Prof. Wendy Larner

Wendy discussed the problems that Victoria University of Wellington faced in its "broken" promotions process, and outlined the changes that have been made following extensive staff consultation. She presented, and explained, the new framework that has been implemented. Wendy also mentioned that she is convinced that we're in a "sea-change moment" in universities; to her mind, Victoria University of Wellington has captured an important desire to work in universities that are part of global systems but are also civically oriented.

Note: a question-and-answer session followed the panel discussion. The questions and answers have not been reproduced here.

Professional Standards and Recognition of Tertiary Teaching: Dr. Stanley Frielick (Ako Aotearoa)

Stanley's presentation discussed the different professional standards and approaches to the recognition of tertiary teaching currently in place in New Zealand. This was preceded by a brief overview of Ako Aotearoa as an organisation, the work that it has been doing over the last couple of years, its impacts, and its "strategic intent" for future years.

Stanley then examined several key issues in the area of professional standards. Among them was the concern over university teachers who have no evidence of teaching quality, the notion of 'educational capability ', and key questions about what these standards should look like and how they should be articulated. Ako's role, he noted, is to provide advice on professional standards and help to secure professional recognitions against those standards.

With regard to the recognition of tertiary teaching, Stanley discussed the role that the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) is playing, and the increasing uptake of the HEA Fellowships in New Zealand (and Australia). He underlined the fact that the UKPSF is an inclusive framework. Key questions for academic development are: how do we reach the hard-to-reach teachers, and how do we increase the status of teaching? He stated that Ako will certainly be assisting in helping the sector answer these questions, but Ako also can't be a one-stop shop to fix things; it's vital for individual institutions take part and lend their support. In terms of future work, Ako will be looking at the small project funding process, building networks and communities of practice that can sustain change, and investigating new modes of recognition (e.g. micro-credentialling).

Note: a question-and-answer session followed Stanley's speech. The questions and answers have not been reproduced here.

Where to from Here? Academic Development in New Zealand Universities in the Future
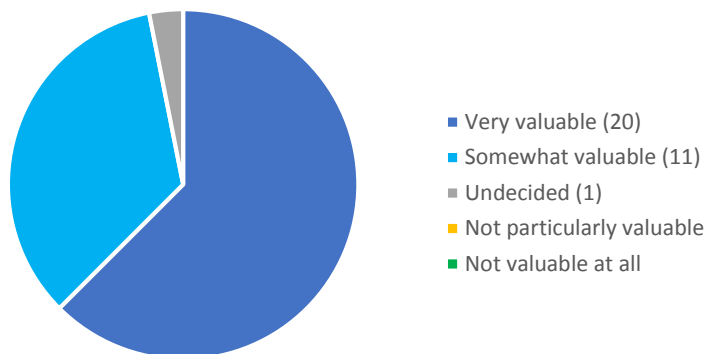
The final plenary discussion session provided an opportunity for all of the participants to offer their thoughts about how academic development can be further improved across the sector, and share ideas about how that can be achieved. The following points were made.

- A great idea is to encourage staff to undertake secondments as ambassadors and scholars. The University of Windsor, for example, saves a position to bring in visiting scholars. Doing such a secondment can be extremely beneficial, because it provides the opportunity to learn from others.
- Another excellent idea is to look for opportunities around the university (for example, to become an Associate Dean or even Assistant VC). Sometimes, this is more a case of stepping out than stepping up. It can be enormously beneficial to be proactive like this and take leadership positions, because it helps us learn.
- The comment was made that there are many unknowns at the moment in terms of the new government. These unknowns include funding, the role of Iwi settlements, adult education, and how the new government is going to look at tertiary teacher qualification.
- The observation was made that we all do similar sorts of work, but the way we are "sliced and diced" within our institutions is quite different.
- We need to think of students.
- We also need to think of academics as whole people.
- The advice was given for staff to make sure that they meet other allied staff at their institutions, and work out how those staff can help each other.
- A future goal will be to get different pockets working together. Currently, there are many different pockets of individuals and groups doing different academic development-related things.
- It was also suggested that Ako Aotearoa develop a publicly available calendar of New Zealand higher education events, so that they don't all clash with each other.

Feedback from the End-of-Symposium Survey

Below is the feedback from a short, anonymous survey about the symposium conducted at the end of the event. Responses were received from 32 participants.

1. Overall, I found the symposium:

- Very valuable (20)
- Somewhat valuable (11)
- Undecided (1)
- Not particularly valuable
- Not valuable at all

2. I am:

- An academic developer (21)
- An academic (3)
- Both an academic and an academic developer (2)
- A Human Resources officer (1)
- Learning and research technology manager (1)
- Director of a Centre for teaching and Learning (1)
- Technology capability support (1)
- Director (1)
- Learning and Teaching coordinator (1)

**3. Which aspect(s) of the symposium (if any) did you like best?**

- Meeting academic developers from different universities
- Conversation with others in other universities
- Discussion with others
- Panel, group discussion
- The Expo was great to hear what others are doing at their place.
- Great discussion and networking
- Meeting others
- Group discussions, panel presentations
- discussions
- Networking and learning more about the context of ad
- Meeting and talking top colleagues
- networking
- Update on activities of other units, networking
- Stanley
- Kathryn's. Tall on ec academics
- The overview of AD development was very useful to me as I am new to NZ, and Stanley's talk was valuable to think about future directions.

- Discussions
- Collegiality, networking, exchange of ideas & info
- Connecting with colleagues and thinking more holistically
- Presentations & round tables
- keynotes were very interesting & useful
- Networking
- Meeting others and discussions
- Discussion about academic support and the expo tables
- Liked hearing about the history of academic development
- Bringing together academic developers from different institutions
- Meeting academic developers
- Sharing ideas learning about new trends
- Collegiality... excellent host.
- Presentations and discussions were all interesting

4. Which aspect(s) of the symposium (if any) did you like least?

- None (2)
- Nothing (2)
- Too many sessions to listen to
- Na
- None of it
- Fewer discussion roundtables, more producing things
- panel. too much listening then another hour of listening
- n/a
- NA
- Can we have more in-depth debate please?
- None - very well planned & facilitated
- N/a
- panel was a bit disjointed
- 2 minute quick sessions was too rushed
- Would like more about prof dev for academic develipers
- Nothing in particular
- Some presenters like [name removed] need to work on [pronoun removed] slides... a person of [pronoun removed] standing with hardly visible slides is unacceptable.

5. I would like to attend another such one-day symposium in 2018:

- Definitely (23)
- Possibly (9)
- No thanks
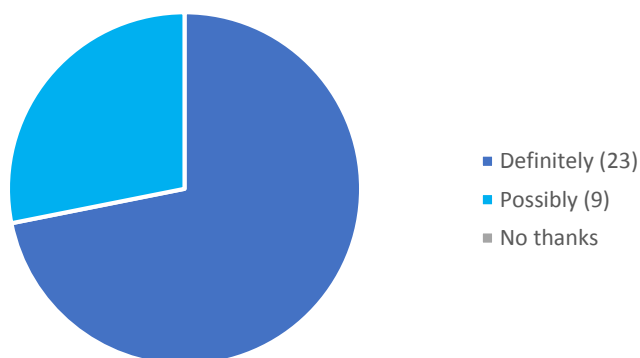
6. If you have any other feedback on the day, topic ideas for future symposia, or any other suggestions, please feel very welcome to add them:

- Perhaps an annual event at different university
- Wifi address
- Great effort - thanks team
- loved it. thanks for your efforts and organisation
- Great day - thanks for organising
- great chance to meet new colleagues and catch up with old friends, important to maintain awareness of academic development in other universities
- Digital interaction increased plse !
- Thank you very much to all the organisers!
- If there could be a means of continuing the conversations or discussions on a regular basis other than the annual symposoum.
- Kathryn's session was tje best. Some presenters need 101 level lessons on preparing PPT's!!!
- Tour from Kwong nui was generous and great, thank you.
- addressing the needs of minority academic developer
- Organisational structures.
- Great food and good hosting
- Probably too much food. But it was yummy.
- Thank you for organising this.
- I didn't realise it was for academic dev rather than academics... but that is probs me not reading the description properly
- More interactive sessions
- Well done to the organising team. This symposium was well organised and run and pitched just right. Tino pai