Peer Leaders as Partners in Higher Education

Abstract:
The principles underpinning the University of Tasmania’s Retention and Success Strategy promote a whole of student lifecycle approach, that is proactive and developmental, as well as encouraging connectedness. The strategy also recognises that it is a whole of university responsibility to support student retention and success. The Student Experience peer-led programs are intentionally developed and delivered to provide holistic support to students throughout their university lifecycle. Each program nurtures a specific aspect of university life, whether it be social networks, well-being, academic skills or career development. Through the recruitment, training and ongoing professional development of our student leaders, the University works in partnership with our students leaders to support their peers’ wellbeing, transition experience, and academic success.

Student leaders are valued partners who bring insight to their roles and the delivery of our programs and services through their lived experience. The programs themselves are collaborative in nature, modelling and engendering a sense of community. Student participants in the programs are valued as partners, creating a powerful interplay between student, leader, and the broader University community. The continuous improvement of the design and delivery of our programs and services is informed by our student partners. Through the leaders’ actions, evaluations, observations and reflections, the programs continue to enhance the student University experience. This presentation shares how the individual programs work together, and work in partnership with the University, to support student wellbeing, transition and success.

Biography:
Sally Fuglsang is Peer Program, Leadership and Volunteering Team Leader at the University of Tasmania. This role allows Sally to work with peer program coordinators to develop and support student leadership through the delivery of their programs, and to develop best practices across recruitment, training and evaluation of the programs. Sally also teaches into leadership units, including units in the Vice-Chancellor’s Leadership Program.