



Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc

## HERDSA Grant Application Form

**Amount of funding sought: \$5000.00**

### Project Title

*Curricula Integration of Student Wellbeing Resources:  
Exploring Australian and New Zealand perspectives*

### Project Leaders

**Dr Gavin Mount, UNSW (HERDSA #: 8918, ACT Branch)** – Associate Head of School, School of Humanities and Social Sciences in Canberra. Gavin is an Education Focused Scholar who has been co-leader of the UNSW Student Wellbeing Community of Practice (SW CoP) since 2018. Gavin has received two Teaching Awards (2010 and 2020) for excellence in classroom teaching and innovative approaches to online delivery. In 2018, Gavin presented a HERDSA paper entitled “Replicating Classroom Intimacy and Engagement Online” which was described as a 'highlight of the conference' (*HERDSA Connect* 41(2):8).

**Associate Professor Melissa Davis, ECU (HERDSA # 5857, WA Branch)** - Associate Dean (Psychology and Criminology), School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, WA. Melissa is a Teaching Focused Scholar who is currently leading the development of a new postgraduate training program in psychology. She has received a Teaching Fellowship in 2012 and an Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2017. She has recently published in *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 60(1), 2020; *Studies in Continuing Education* (2020), *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 16(3) 2018 and *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 58(2), 2018.

### Other Project Members

**Associate Professor Linda Ferrington (UNSW)** (HERDSA Member – NSW Branch). Linda is the academic coordinator of the Phase 1 medicine programme for the Rural Clinical School in Port Macquarie. Within this role, Linda has a key responsibility in designing and delivering engaging, challenging learning experiences and is actively engaged in developing innovative resources to improve teaching practice. Linda is a passionate and vocal advocate for rural students and strives to find ways to enhance their wellbeing and learning experience. In addition to Phase 1 teaching, Linda has an active role in co-ordination and supervision of year 4 research projects for rural students. She has been the co-leader of the UNSW SW CoP since 2020 and actively contributed to our Curriculum integration research.

**Dr Denise Taylor (VUW)** (HERDSA Member – Wellington branch) - Te Herenga Waka,

Victoria University of Wellington, NZ. Denise has had extensive experience in conducting cross institutional pedagogic research. Her twelve teaching and learning publications, include three Interprofessional education (IPE) publications. The latter were co-designed and piloted with medical, nursing and pharmacist clinicians and delivered to undergraduate students. As Interprofessional Programme lead at the University of Bath, England, she developed a tripartite agreement with three local universities (Schools of Nursing, Pharmacy and Medicine), to design and deliver IPE learning events for each year of the curricula, for 450 students across Bristol and Bath. She has a strong national network across New Zealand and regularly attends and/or presents at the annual national IPE conference in Auckland to share learning and experience.

**Dr Benjamin Kelly (UNSW)** (HERDSA Member – NSW Branch) - Nura Gili Centre for Indigenous Programs, UNSW. Drawing on his training in Sociology, Philosophy, Psychology and Education, Ben teaches a range of courses across the Indigenous Studies Major. Taking inspiration from self-determination theory, culturally responsive pedagogy, and Universal Design for Learning, his teaching practice strives to cultivate learning environments where students feel safe, connected, and confident to pursue their learning goals and academic interests

#### **Indigenous/First nations engagement (if relevant)**

While not exclusively focused on indigenous engagement, the project will include consideration of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori or Pacific Nations students and student wellbeing services that are focused upon this cohort. Denise Taylor will ensure the project addresses issues relevant for students from Māori and, or Pacific Nations are addressed. Benjamin Kelly will ensure similar issues are addressed within UNSW Nura Gili Centre for Indigenous Programs. Ben is the co-leader of the Teaching for Equity and Diversity Community of Practice.

#### **The Project Focus**

This project will compare how student wellbeing resources have been integrated among academic and professional staff and into the teaching curriculum in three universities (ECU, VUW, UNSW). Building upon established communities of practice and internal studies from each tertiary setting, we seek to consolidate and extend our previous human ethics approved studies into a comprehensive framework for comparison across three tertiary settings.

#### **The Significance of the Project and its Contribution to the Work of HERDSA and relationship to a HERDSA portfolio or SIG**

Research into the pedagogy and institutional practices of Student Wellbeing is a growing field of inquiry which aligns with the HERDSA SIG Academic Development in a number of ways. Our existing community of practice has successfully demonstrated how academic and professional staff from across all faculties and services of the university can collaborate with

each other to introduce and develop resources that support 'academic development, professional development, teaching and learning support, and similar activities to support academic staff'. Prominent members of our existing community are world leaders in theory building, particularly in the application of self-determination theory to student wellbeing curriculum integration (Cranney, 2016). The SW CoP has already begun to build national and international networks in this space, including members from partner universities (ECU, VUW, Syd) and keynote presentations from leading scholars such as Chi Baik.

The inspiration for the present application came from the positive response to a Conference paper presented at ISSOTL (Mount et.al. 2021) which documented staff perceptions of student wellbeing resources. The discussion revealed that, while most universities have now established extensive student wellbeing resources, few had formed truly representative and SOTL informed communities of practice like ours.

### **What the literature and/or Experience Tell us about the Project**

Studies addressing student wellbeing have identified the need for a 'whole of university' response (Headspace, 2016; Neeves & Hillman 2019). While, professional services in the tertiary sector have significantly enhanced their capacity to identify and address student success and wellbeing resources, leading pedagogic research have identified the challenges of integrating student wellbeing and student success tools into 'the curriculum environment' (Cranney et.al. 2016). It is now increasingly recognised that universities need to actively 'build the capacity of academic educators to... better support student mental wellbeing' (Baik et al., 2017). More research is needed on how this curricula integration can be most effective and on the student response to these approaches (Bore et.al, 2016).

Our respective universities are establishing strong track records in three areas of practice: (1) whole of university approach; (2) curriculum integration; and (3) student perceptions. Supporting and maintaining positive health and wellbeing is of particular importance, especially in these times of enforced isolation in pandemic situations. We have made inroads into each of these areas and now want to share our insights and practice. In November 2021, UNSW hosted a Student Wellbeing EduFest session which included twenty presentations. The keynote conversation was between UNSW and VUW Student Success teams who demonstrated the value of comparing our experiences and sharing practice.

VUW established a Student Wellbeing Research Team, founded in November 2018. Their studies have been measuring and monitoring student self-reported health and wellbeing twice annually since 2019 and used these two time periods in the academic year to reflect expected student stressors on starting (or returning to) university and over the examination period. The study aim has been to monitor the same cohort over a three-year period and then interrogate the data for change in wellbeing status. The data is being analysed during early 2022 and may correlate with findings from UNSW

Since 2018, the UNSW SW CoP has grown to 77 academic and professional staff representing all faculties and services. The group meets monthly and shares practice. It has also been focused on pedagogic research among its members and has secured three human ethics approvals (HC190900 staff survey; HC3398 curriculum integration and HC210248

student focus groups).

The proposed project is clearly grounded in current pedagogic theory and our respective practice. Addressing the three domains (institutional coordination, curriculum integration and student perceptions), the research seeks to understand the most effective strategies for creating a whole of university approach to student wellbeing.

#### Works Cited

- [Baik-2019](#) Enhancing student mental wellbeing
- [Bore et.al. 2016](#) Predictors of psychological distress and well-being
- [Brooker et.al 2017](#) Understanding academic educators' work in supporting student wellbeing.
- [Cranney-2016](#) Developing self-management capacity in student learning
- [Headspace-2016](#) National Student Wellbeing Survey Report
- Mount-2021 Student Wellbeing Community of Practice (ISSOTL Paper)
- [Neeves-2019](#) Student Academic Experience Survey
- [Ryan & Deci-2000](#) Self-determination theory

### **The Innovation/Contribution of the Project**

HERDSA is the leading organisation for Research and Development of Higher Education scholarship across Australasia. Our project draws upon research published in the *Higher Education Research and Development journal* (Bore, 2016 and Baik, 2017). Our respective studies in this area are sufficiently advanced with Human Ethics approvals and longitudinal data. These strong findings will be consolidated and extended by the proposed project. We are very confident that a substantial cross institutional study on student wellbeing will attract strong interest among the HERDSA membership and is likely to lead to further studies.

### **Project Methods**

The goal of this study is to consolidate existing studies on student wellbeing and expand these understandings through a cross-institutional study. This study has three interrelated aims: (1) investigate how academic and professional staff understand student wellbeing resources; (2) consider how wellbeing resources can be integrated into the curriculum and; (3) incorporate students views on how these resources can be more accessible, relevant and useful to students.

A Qualtrics survey will be used to develop and deliver online surveys of staff and students. Participants will be invited to participate in a short follow up interview (20 mins) and/or focus group discussion. Students who agree to participate in the focus groups will receive an online shopping voucher. All activities can be conducted online. Face to face sessions are, however, the preference for the focus groups. All data will be anonymous but given an institutional association. With consent, some demographic data will also be collected. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim.

## Project Timeline

We intend to start in the second quarter of 2022, with key milestones below:

Apr-Jun 2022

- **Academic Investigators** (Planning meeting to clarify academic roles; EOI and appoint Project Officer and Research Assistants; and Gather resources and set up SharePoint)

July-Aug 2022

- **Academic Investigators** (Confirm survey and focus group questions; and work in progress presentation at host universities)
- **Project Officer** (Gather previous ethics approvals; consolidate new ethics approvals for Aus/NZ; create Qualtrics site; draft guidance for Research Assistant roles – surveys and focus groups; Prepare vouchers)

Sep-Nov 2022

- **Academic Investigators** (Prepare draft pedagogic analysis and institutional descriptions)
- **Project Officer** (Coordinate RAs with weekly updates)
- **Research Assistants** (Distribute and collate surveys; Conduct focus group discussions)

[WELLBEING BREAK Dec 22-Jan 23]

Feb-Mar 2023

- **Academic Investigators** (Analyse results; Revise draft article and presentation)
- **Project Officer** (Collate, analyse and present findings; Prepare draft HERDSA presentation and article; Prepare final report)
- **Research Assistants** (Present and analyse findings - subject to additional funding)

## Proposed Project Dissemination Activities

UNSW: Work in Progress at SW CoP and Healthy Universities Initiative meetings. Relevant indigenous findings will be presented to Nura Gili.

VUW: An overview of findings will be presented to the VUW Teaching and Learning Group. Specific results pertaining to our Māori and Pasifika students will be presented to the relevant school body ([Āwhina- Māori Student Support](#) - and the [Pasifika Hub](#)).

ECU: Research will be noted in Associate Dean's Faculty communication and Work in Progress report will be presented at Faculty Learning and Teaching Seminar.

Present Work in Progress to ACT, WA, NSW or NZ HERDSA Branches.

We aim to submit short research in progress note to HERDSA Connect (2023); Present Findings at HERDSA 2023 and submit full article to HERDSA Review of Higher Education (2023-24)

## Project Outcomes

At the end of this research project, we will firstly demonstrate through our findings how academics from all faculties and professional staff from a range of services can collaborate to produce a whole of university approach. Secondly, our study will evaluate how student wellbeing resources can be effectively embedded and integrated into the curriculum. Third, our research seeks to present the student voice and evaluate how these resources are received and interpreted by students. Taken together these findings will provide a rich description of student and staff perspectives on the importance of student wellbeing and generate questions for future research

## Project Budget

The HERDSA funded budget will be used to pay salary for a Project Officer and Research Assistants for a range of duties:

1. Project Officer \$1950 (30\* hours @ \$65 – UNSW casual rate 6.2 )  
Project Officer – coordinate and communicate project. Drawing upon existing ethics approvals, prepare an overarching ethics application to support national coverage. The project officer will also begin to prepare and present the data.
2. Research Assistants \$2745 (45\* hours @ \$61 – UNSW Casual Rate 6.1)  
Three RAs x 15 hours to conduct survey and focus groups in each of the participating tertiary institutions (UNSW, ECU and VU). Collate and summarise data.
3. Focus Group vouchers \$305 AUD (~\$327NZD)  
Shopping vouchers (15 x \$21 NZD) will be purchased to reward focus group participation.

### ADDITIONAL FUNDING

\* If successful, the UNSW SW CoP will provide up to a further 30 hours of Project Officer time (\$1950) plus funding all Westfield Shopping Vouchers (up to a maximum of \$3000). If required, UNSW will also address transcription costs (up to \$2000).

\* ECU have agreed to fund additional Research Assistant time if required to assist in data analysis and publication duties.

\* VUW will provide catering for work in progress seminars.

## Project Evaluation

The team will provide work in progress reports at our respective universities (with online attendance) and provide an annual report in accordance with the HERDSA Investigating Impact guidelines.