Employing Students as Support Staff in Higher Education: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations from Careers Professionals

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Abstract

Recently, there has been greater emphasis by higher education institutions on graduate employability, recruitment, and retention and the professionalization of students through work experience (Dumbrigue et al., Keeping students in higher education: successful practices and strategies for retention. Routledge, London, 2013; Mourshed et al., Education to employment: designing a system that works. McKinsey Center for Government. http://www.compromisorse.com/upload/estudios/000/222/Education-to-Employment_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017, 2012). Institutions are developing strategies to address these priorities and challenges, with a particular focus on the provision of a holistic student experience that involves opportunities such as volunteering, work experience, and on-campus student employment. This chapter focuses on a strategic approach to employing students as support staff in higher education in ways that meet the needs of the institution from a human resources perspective, as well as the needs of students in terms of their developing graduate employability.

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On-campus employment provides benefits to students and institutions, including making links between employment and curricular experiences and embedding the articulation of employability skills into the student experience. The focus of this chapter is on the development of a consistent and quality approach to student employee recruitment and support to ensure on-campus student employment extends beyond a traditional recruitment and training support process to include a specified and holistically supported professional learning process from advertisement through to exiting of student staff in higher education.

Employing a critically reflexive framework to staff experiences and evaluations of a suite of peer programs employing students in on-campus support roles, the authors outline a number of processes and identified challenges and opportunities. A number of lessons are discussed that highlight the ways career development and learning can remain at the heart of on-campus employment.

Keywords

On-campus employment · Peer programs · Graduate employability · Student staff · Professional identity · Careers education · Student employment

Introduction

In the last decade, students have increasingly been playing a role as support staff across a range of functions in the higher education sector. There has been particular emphasis on the inclusion of peer leadership positions for students to contribute to priorities around increasing retention and the success of fellow students. This has been in response to a number of priorities including the less inspiring reality of tightening budgets and the more positive benefit that students can act as partners in the co-creation of learning spaces (Shook and Keup 2012). Students can provide insights into the living culture of a higher education institution and act as ambassadors for the university in which they work. In addition, contemporary sector-wide priorities in higher education include emphasis on graduate employability and the professionalization of students through work experience (Mourshed et al. 2012; Dumbrigue et al. 2013). This has enabled students taking on support roles as staff in higher education to effectively allow universities to provide work experiences that both value add to the student experience and the organization.

Critical to enabling students to be effective support staff in higher education requires the provision of opportunities for these students to develop more than a broad base of discipline-specific skills but also to identify, demonstrate, and effectively transfer a broader range of skills and competencies relevant to any workplace. Traditionally this has been provided through the opportunities seen to support a holistic student experience that might include volunteering, involvement in clubs and societies, or contributions to the broader institutional community through on-campus employment opportunities (Shook and Keup 2012). Recent years have seen an increased emphasis around the provision of on-campus student employment to enhance the overall student experience, develop graduate employability, offer

supplementary income while studying, provide cost-effective support across the institution, and contribute to student retention and academic success (Kuh et al. 2011; Mitchell and Kay 2012).

Students who are employed on-campus can become more connected and familiar with their fellow students, as well as university staff and systems. Such connections allow them to build, strengthen, and extend meaningful social and professional networks, in effect creating mutual benefit to themselves and the reputation of the institution (Shook and Keup 2012). Development of professional networks through on-campus employment teaches students to more readily identify professional opportunities for change and progression within an organization – a skill which is increasingly essential in a rapidly changing workplace (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015). Additionally, research has shown that network building through on-campus employment can also provide a strong sense of belonging and self-efficacy, which are key drivers of student motivation and persistence and enable positive academic outcomes (Freudenberg et al. 2010; Tinto 2015).

This chapter explores the experience of one higher education institution in Australia, the University of Tasmania (UTAS), which has recently strengthened its focus on the provision of on-campus employment opportunities to enhance the student experience. The range of on-campus employment opportunities for students will be explored; however, a particular focus will be on the employment of staff in peer-led programs, as it is these roles that best situate the student staff member in a support role for learning and teaching. Moving beyond description of these opportunities, the authors draw on the work of Brookfield (1998) and Skalicky et al. (2016), as they apply a critically reflective framework to evaluate and plan strategies and activities associated with supporting students in on-campus roles. Brookfield's four lenses of critical reflection guided the authors to consider their collective personal experiences, stakeholder and peer feedback through formal evaluation of services, and relevant literature. This critically reflective process was then grounded in the Developing and Supporting Student Leadership (DaSSL) framework. The DaSSL framework was developed by Skalicky et al. (2016) as part of an international learning and teaching project aimed to build the capacity of higher education institutions to support the development of student leaders employed in on-campus roles. The DaSSL framework provides a set of Good Practice Principles and Guidelines based around five integrated domains of good program design – purpose, people, positioning, practice, and progress. The framework guides users through a self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement in each of the five domains. Those areas identified for improvement are then provided with resources and a step-by-step tool for planning actions to develop those areas in an integrated way. The Good Practice Principles and Guidelines provide a standard to which the self-assessment can be benchmarked. The open education resource used to access the DaSSL framework was used to guide the critical reflection and self-assessment of the on-campus employment opportunities offered at UTAS. This chapter identifies and discusses a series of opportunities and challenges to supporting on-campus student employment in support roles highlighting a number of lessons learned.

Employment of Students at the University of Tasmania

UTAS is considered a midsized, regional higher education provider, offering under-graduate, postgraduate, and research-focused educative experiences to almost 34,000 students in campus-based, online, and blended modes of study. As the only higher education provider in the island state of Tasmania, the institution is committed to providing high-quality teaching and research programs across a broad range of degree areas. Currently, Tasmania has an unemployment rate of 6.3% which is above the national rate (6.1%) with a much higher rate of 15.1% in the 15–24-year-old bracket (Department of Employment 2016). The Tasmanian population between 22 and 34 years that hold a bachelor degree or higher is 22% which is 10% lower than the national rate (Department of Employment 2013).The realization of these statistics has led to state-wide strategies and collaborations to increase the articulation of students from senior secondary to university as well as providing pathways for nontraditional students developed by the university and supported by all tiers of government.

With a state population of just over half a million, UTAS is Tasmania's third largest employer (University of Tasmania 2014). The University employs almost 6,000 staff, and over half of those are employed on a casual, contract basis. A basic survey of individual service departments across the University in 2015 revealed that of those casual staff, around 1,400 were also enrolled as students at the time of their employment. A follow-up survey conducted midyear in 2016 revealed that over 2,000 staff members were currently enrolled as students. It is noted that this number includes staff members who had chosen to enroll in further education simultaneous to their employment. Those employees identified primarily as students (i.e., more than a 50% student load) fulfil a broad spectrum of roles from sessional tutors, laboratory assistants, administrative roles, through to baristas at the campus cafes. A number of specifically designed student roles are also offered as degree-enhancing experiences. These include peer mentoring roles, student union representatives, and student ambassadors.

The University's Student Experience Strategy (2016–2020) affirms the positive impact employment has on student learning and graduate outcomes (Hall 2013; Coates 2015). The Strategy (2016–2020) articulates a number of actions the University will take to enhance the student experience, including highlighting "the value of participation in the holistic student experience through volunteering, overseas experiences, employment, and work-integrated learning" and the graduate experience through "supporting the student to transition to employment and work-based opportunities" (University of Tasmania 2016, pp. 5–6). In 2016, the University committed to increasing opportunities for student on-campus employment across the institution, with the aim of ensuring a significant amount of UTAS students would have access to employment that would enhance both their individual UTAS experience and the broader culture of the institution. The commitment to this goal was articulated in each letter of offer to new students in 2016. As part of this commitment, 32 of the most prestigious scholarship offers made to new students in 2016 were accompanied by an on-campus job opportunity. This offer recognizes

the role that part-time employment can play in enhancing a student's university experience, specifically in supporting the development of graduate capabilities (Muldoon 2009).

To support an increase of student employment opportunities in 2015, UTAS strategically expanded its career service to target efforts increasing on-campus student employment. The incorporation of a new student employment team raised the profile of on-campus employment opportunities while ensuring career development education was recognized as a key aspect and responsibility of the institution. The new student employment team are responsible for coordinating the recruitment, training, and support for student employees across a wide variety of on-campus positions. The student employment team consists of one manager with extensive experience in coordinating and supporting peer-led programs, along with two staff members with broad human resources experience both internal and external to the University. A strategic alliance was formed with the Human Resources (HR) department of the University to ensure consistent and equitable student recruitment processes across the institution. In addition to streamlining and quality assuring the paperwork associated with recruitment to include identified opportunities for student employees, the student employment team also now cross-lists positions advertised through HR on the UTAS online jobs' portal for students. This connection has allowed the student employment team to engage in conversations regarding resource development, such as position descriptions for peer and graduate recruitment positions. This relationship is also driving conversations about student employment conditions as part of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, which is currently under negotiation.

An important distinction between the function of the student employment team and HR is the educative function the team is able to provide in the student employment process through their being situated within central career services. Through the provision of career education services for all students, the University provides targeted support to students applying for, and evidencing, experience in part-time work in on-campus roles. These supports include online modules, workshops about job readiness and evidencing skills in resume and job application presentation, peer review of job application packages, and career conversations to help guide students into pathways as their awareness of their skills, interests, and motivations is discovered. An important addition to the existing suite of educative supports was the establishment of a student leadership development program and recognition scheme in 2016 that rewarded the contributions of student leaders in on-campus peer leadership roles. In the UTAS context, HR services continue to provide student employees with a platform through which they are recognized as employees, and the addition of the student employment team linked to a central careers service has prioritized the needs of these staff members as students who are learning and gaining experience as part of their full educational package.

There are also critical points of complement allowed by the relationship between the University's HR team and the student employment team. For example, HR addresses engagement and participation rates with specific cohorts through a number of programs and initiatives designed to promote and support diversity in the

workplace. These include promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students through close collaboration with the University's Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education and the University's Aboriginal Leadership Group. This is supported by the University being a signatory of the Racism Stops with Me campaign and the Recognise Charter. The University also promotes gender equity through the Ally Network and the Athena SWAN Charter. The student employment team adheres to and complements these university commitments. The University has a diverse student population, and the employment of students in on-campus positions enables this to be reflected in the staff population. In 2016, of the 120 students employed as peer leaders within centrally funded peer programs, 33.64% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which is in line with that of the general university staff population. The University's central careers service delivers work-ready preparation programs, designed to engage minority student cohorts, to support engagement in employment on-campus and beyond. These programs are open to all students studying at the University. Shook and Keup (2012) found that programs that specifically further cultural connections through peer interactions, leadership, and mentorship, such as the UTAS work-ready program for international students, have a positive influence on the perseverance of students from minority groups. To ensure on-campus student employment continues to have diversity as a core value, the team uses the Good Practice Principles and Guidelines of the DaSSL framework (Skalicky et al. 2016) to guide the recruitment and training processes of all on-campus student employment it is responsible for, with particular attention to the centrally coordinated peer-led programs.

UTAS Peer Programs

UTAS has had a purposeful focus on peer-led programs to promote student leadership opportunities across a broad range of support roles in higher education. Over the last decade, UTAS has established and grown peer-led roles for students with an intentional structure of support for the students taking up these roles. This has included attention to the organizational design of central support services to include, develop, and support peer programs and their coordinators to ensure professional learning, support, and recognition for students are provided at every level of involvement of peer-led programs. The establishment of the Peer Learning Framework (Skalicky and Brown 2009) as an organizing principle led to the institution being recognized as a leader in the peer-led space, eventually leading to the DaSSL framework that now organizes the full suite of peer-led programs at UTAS around the Good Practice Principles and Guidelines. The DaSSL framework has enabled peer-led program coordinators at UTAS to adhere to principles of good program design and explicitly plan for and evaluate student leadership development and diversity as core components of supporting the development of student leaders through on-campus employment.

At UTAS, students are employed to support their peers in a range of ways, including academic development, enrolment assistance, building social networks,

and assisting with identification and articulation of employability skills through job application support. These broad roles recognize the positive influence of "near peers" – those with experience of the institution – on fellow students throughout their university careers (Arendale 2014). Importantly, UTAS offers a suite of peer-led programs that have been designed to complement each other, provide holistic support to students, and enhance their university experience. With peer programs providing services across the areas of student learning, student administration, retention and transition, student engagement, and career education, student staff and coordinators of those programs are invited to work more closely with colleagues in existing peer-led programs. Shared information and training sessions promote further cross fertilization of the programs, and the streamlined recruitment practices between the programs allow the student employment team to identify and recommend pathways for students to engage in on-campus roles across the range of programs on offer.

Peer programs at UTAS began in 2007 when the internationally accredited Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) program was introduced. This program identifies units, predominantly first year units, that are challenging for students, through high attrition and failure rates, and trains students that have been successful in that unit to deliver supplemental instruction study sessions for all students enrolled in the specific unit. These collaborative learning opportunities enable the consolidation of unit content and the development of discipline-specific study skills. This was followed in 2009 with the establishment of the Student Learning Drop In (Drop In) peer program, a generic academic and study skill service, to complement the discipline-specific nature of PASS. Drop In mentors are successful students who are trained to work with their peers to develop their academic and study skills.

Two new programs were developed and implemented in 2013 (Student Success and Community Friends and Networks): one in 2015 (Roving Information Officers) and two more in 2016 (Career Peers and International Peer Leaders). Student Success Leaders are trained in communication skills and basic well-being strategies and are aware of referral services and University programs and procedures. They contact students at specific times during their university calendar, for example welcome calls prior to commencement, to engage with students and refer them on to appropriate service teams within the University. The Community Friends and Network's Student Engagement Leaders provide a diverse range of social activities on campus that are designed to build connections between international and domestic students and a sense of belonging across the University community. The Roving Information Officers are employed in the lead up to orientation and the first few weeks of semester to work with fellow students to resolve basic enrolment and administrative issues. Career Peers provide mentoring sessions to develop students' articulation of employability skills, assist in job searches, and guide their peers through the employment process. The latest addition to the suite of peer program roles, the International Peer Leaders, is faculty based and provides a drop in referral service as well as organizing events to enable greater social interaction between domestic and international students and liaise with staff to provide specific skill workshops. While all the individual programs have specific purposes, they all aim to assist with student transition, develop student leadership, build self-efficacy, foster

social networks, and cultivate a greater sense of belonging to the University and the wider Tasmanian community.

The authors recognize there are a number of other peer-led roles available on campus including tutoring and sessional teaching; however, the focus of this chapter is on centrally coordinated peer programs that apply the DaSSL framework to their design and evaluation. The value of the DaSSL framework as an organizing principle for these programs is in ensuring support of student staff working as professional support staff in higher education. UTAS peer programs are intended to provide students, who are employed as professional staff, with a number of opportunities including financial income, ability to make links to the curriculum, building social and professional networks, understanding of the tertiary education as a workplace, and the opportunity to develop employability skills. To ensure a clear and consistent approach to the development, delivery, and evaluation of peer programs at UTAS, in 2015 the recruitment and quality assurance of all centrally funded peer programs was supported by the establishment of the peer program manager role.

The peer program manager, with the assistance from the student employment team, works to ensure better consistency of responsibilities and pay scales across all peer program employment opportunities at the institution. One of the first tasks undertaken by this manager was a focused analysis of the paid roles occupied by students in the central portfolio. It was observed that often, pay scales were determined not by the level of duties required of a role but instead by the budget allocated to peer roles in each individual budget center. Additional factors included the type and length of the contract required for an individual to fill a particular role. An added challenge identified were the inequities in how much training and support was provided to different roles and the differing extent to which student employees on casual contracts were paid to attend trainings and professional development activities related to their roles. The risk of not having properly trained student employees is quite high when placing them in situations where they are asked to work with a diverse range of peers who may present a range of challenges. Training in mental health first aid and dealing with difficult behaviors are of key importance to all staff in the higher education sector, and if student employees are not provided with professional learning in these areas, the risk to those employees and the students they work with can increase.

Prior to the introduction of the peer program manager, individual peer program coordinators were responsible for the recruitment, induction, and exiting of student staff. This was in addition to their responsibilities in the coordination of the program and required a knowledge about HR processes that was often outside of the incumbent's skill set. The centralization of recruitment to the student employment team has allowed for the development of a process that meets the needs of all stakeholders that is transparent and equitable. The coordinators, who have specific program knowledge, are still part of the selection process, but from advertisement to offer, the process is overseen by a dedicated student employment team member with human resource management experience. An appreciation of the student life cycle ensures that the timing of the recruitment process is, where possible, flexible and considerate in expectations of student staff. Importantly, a centralized recruitment process has

allowed the identification of pathways for student staff to engage with a broad range of applicable peer professional support roles. Students are made aware of opportunities in other programs, and program coordinators can be notified of skills developed by student staff in complementary programs, which can and does shape subsequent recruitment processes.

To date, evaluations of peer programs have been conducted on an individual basis. These evaluations have identified a number of benefits for stakeholders of on-campus employment of students. Among those is recognition of the links that can be made between on-campus employment and curriculum, which can authenticate and allow for the development of employability skills and leadership skills as transferable learning from the curriculum to the workplace. Student staff members have identified their own development of academic skills and consolidation of content from their degree, as well as network building, belonging, and self-efficacy through their on-campus employment experience. Programs such as PASS, which at UTAS is centrally coordinated, are purposely designed to align with curriculum and deliver faculty and discipline outcomes. The programs develop and validate employability skills through curriculum-situated support roles with an academic enrichment focus. PASS tutors are required to revise and consolidate understanding of their discipline as well as relevant study skills. This can lead to heightened engagement with their studies through a deeper understanding of their own learning and the growth of skills such as critical thinking and communication (Skalicky and Caney 2010). Similarly, Drop In mentors engage with learning theories and share learning skills and strategies and have commented in reflections on how the heightened self-awareness of this activity has enhanced their own engagement with their studies leading to improved academic outcomes (Fuglsang and Newman 2012). These results are supported by studies of similar programs in the United States (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015). The peer program manager will next be focusing on centralizing the evaluation of these programs and their impact on employability of graduates. This integrated approach will help to ensure consistent and comparable data is collected to inform the ongoing development of both individual and pathway-related planning between the programs.

Lessons Learnt: Opportunities from Challenges

The introduction of a consistent and quality student recruitment process through the student employment team has led to an increasing interest to provide more on campus student employment opportunities across the institution. The University had not anticipated the level of interest for support in recruiting students for on-campus employment; this increase in opportunities has identified a need for institution-wide policies and professional development for the staff who are involved in employing students. The centralization of student employment has enabled the breadth of expertise within the team to work together to develop and embed resources and services into each phase of the employment process for students. However, the team recognizes the need to develop resources for staff, such as a recruitment pack, which would guide them through the process of recruitment, on-

boarding and ongoing professional development for students as staff. Such a resource pack would provide for a consistent and transparent process where students and supervising staff are informed and supported through every stage of the recruitment process. In addition to the HR-related support for staff hiring students, the student employment team has also developed a set of online modules to enhance application preparation for students applying for roles. These resources are complemented by information sessions, drop-in services, and workshops to support the application process further.

Following a high level of activity in supporting the recruitment of students to on-campus employment, the authors were able to critically reflect on and analyze the impediments and factors for success in this space. The key challenges identified in the provision of on-campus student employment relate to the consistency and equity of recruitment, roles, and remuneration practices, addressing the perceptions of nonstudent staff about the inclusion of student staff in the workplace, the professional development and supervision of a revolving cohort of student employees, and ensuring the identification and transferability of employability outcomes for students in staff roles. The authors recognize that these challenges may be unique to the UTAS context; however, it is likely that other higher education institutions would face similar challenges, and it is the purpose of this discussion to unpack these for the potential value within the sector. Importantly, this section is drafted to not only highlight the challenges identified but to also draw out the opportunities that these challenges present in progressing support for student staff in higher education.

As outlined above, the student employment team in its inaugural year has led the establishment and rollout of a consistent recruitment process across the peer programs at UTAS. However, historical interpretations of the individual roles have presented challenges to providing consistent pay scales and employment benefits to students occupying different roles on campus. Student employees at UTAS are primarily employed on a casual, or temporary, basis through short- to medium-term contracts. Often casual contracts require student employees to log and claim pay for the number of hours worked, with a set number of hours prenegotiated for particular tasks. As a large organization, UTAS operations and key functions occur out of a number of separate administrative units, each one organizing their own casual workforce and identifying roles to fulfill the needs of that workforce. As a result, student employee roles, responsibilities, pay scales, and benefits can vary significantly. This reality is a driving motivation for negotiating a student staff clause in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

The economic driver for hiring students presents a potentially significant challenge if student employees are wrongly perceived as the cheaper option, both in terms of their rate of pay and the comparable time commitment a budget center must make for the long-term employment of a student versus a traditional employee. Research has demonstrated that students provide a high-quality and cost-effective form of labor (Shook and Keup 2012). This perspective has dominated the sessional teaching domain, with PhD students frequently being hired as sessional tutors, markers, and lecturers on a casual basis and at a significantly lesser rate than a contracted or permanent academic staff member would attract. The inequities in the

casualization of the academic workforce has notably impacted more than student employees; however, without the full recognition of student employees as a particular type of employee in things like institutional Enterprise Bargaining Agreements, this cohort can become more vulnerable to exploitation.

The objectives of a higher education institution to hire student employees must be clearly articulated and understood by staff across the institution. Statements surrounding the University's purpose of offering entry-level employment opportunities to students (including internships and work-integrated learning opportunities) will not only protect student staff but may also alleviate some of the fears associated with job security that are felt among professional staff on casual tenure. As a regional institution in a state that has the second highest unemployment rate in the country (ABS 2016), the hiring of student employees for less hours and at a lesser rate than similar duties had once attracted can often attract ill will from existent, nonstudent staff. This experience has been of particular challenge to UTAS in recent years, as the institution has undergone a chain of workplace restructures that have resulted in a workforce reduction particularly to administrative and support positions. As a result, the positive goal of hiring student employees to enhance job readiness skills and work experience opportunities has met with some tension.

Addressing the challenge of the perception of why higher education institutions are hiring students as professional staff must be recognized and mitigated through clear communication about the rationale and benefits to graduate employability provided by on-campus student employment opportunities. Yorke (2004) defines employability skills as "a set of achievements – skills, understandings, and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (p. 8). While academically supported work experiences offer opportunities for students to demonstrate application of employability skills, examples derived from real employment arguably have greater impact. The "real-world" experience gained through actual employment is seen to set a student apart from other graduates who have focused only on their degree (Skalicky and Caney 2010). Through the provision of a holistic student experience that involves on-campus employment, higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing graduate employability as a whole-of-institution responsibility and accepting accountability and social responsibility as an employer engaged in developing work-ready graduates.

UTAS strives to act as a model employer and offer an educative aspect to the employment process. As an educational service provider and employer, the University respects a duty of care to its students who are engaged in on-campus employment. The student employment team promotes and supports engagement with educational opportunities, while ensuring the student life cycle is considered through timing of recruitment and rostering. A number of studies (Astin 1984; Rochford et al. 2009; Tinto 2015) suggest full-time study with up to 30 h per week can be achievable but is not ideal for the student's academic success, and there is potential for disengagement with studies. Research has suggested that up to 15 h of employment can lead to improved engagement and academic achievement, through application of improved time management and organizational skills developed through experience in the workplace (Astin 1984).

Kulm and Cramer (2006) suggest on-campus employment may alleviate stressors of off-campus employment and note that students employed on-campus achieved higher levels of academic success. In contrast to the potentially limiting impacts of an additional time burden on study performance, Mitchell and Kay (2012) report that 89% of students employed on-campus during their degree "felt more engaged" with their institution. As discussed, stronger engagement between the student and their institution has a positive impact on retention and graduate success. On-campus employment has the added advantages of students being supported by an employer who is aware of the requirements of student study loads, is more flexible, and can match work to the study load cycles of student life. Centralized opportunities for employment on-campus at UTAS allow students to work around their study loads, enable them to enhance their experience at the university, as well as heighten their employability through applying their content knowledge with experience in a workplace.

The DaSSL reflection tool requires consideration of how elements of good program design work together. Critical reflection on the recruitment processes of students on campus at UTAS alongside consideration of the purpose of on-campus employment revealed the tendency (albeit well intentioned) for student employees identified as top performers to be rehired into positions as they become available. This approach is not unlike other recruitment and hiring practices in other organizations in the "real world," where top performers are identified and placed in new positions within an organization. However, if the aim of the higher education institution in hiring student employees is to build student experience and capacity to develop graduate attributes, providing these opportunities to as broad a range of students as possible would arguably be the best approach. In addition, all student employees are dividing their time between work tasks and study, which can result in either a large number of students sharing small sections of workload hours or a high staff turnover rate indicative of short-term contracts to accommodate semester long roles. One of the challenges of a high turnover workforce worth considering is the potentially significant amount of support that is required to supervise student employees. This challenge can be overcome if the workload for supervising staff is considered and adjusted according to the needs of those undertaking supervisory tasks, and training for supervising staff is also offered.

An additional consideration highlighted through the critical reflection process was the realization that student staff were often unaware of the importance of the development and articulation of a professional identity achieved through their on-campus role. In particular, student staff were not always aware of, or found it hard to articulate, the benefits and skills they gained through their on-campus employment experiences. Arendale and Hane (2016) suggest that students do not always value the opportunity or see the relevance and transferability of skills acquired through on-campus employment. Through the introduction of a recognition program that is now clearly articulated through the ongoing professional development and exit interviews with student staff, the student employment team at UTAS is hopeful that they are enhancing job satisfaction and performance and even increasing their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate experience (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015; Skalicky and Caney 2010).

To address this challenge the student employment team has redeveloped the Position Descriptions and templates for recruiting student staff to highlight the

learning outcomes of each role. In addition to clearly articulating these potential outcomes for incumbents, this process also recognizes that in many roles we are seeking the potential to develop a skill, rather than it needing to be fully present in the applicant. Referral of unsuccessful applicants to resources, both human and online, has also encouraged students to build their skills and, on occasion, realize their development through subsequent successful application. The development of a comprehensive induction and training program for successful applicants, with sessions focusing on articulation of experience, skills, and qualifications into their resume on completion of a role, has further highlighted to students the value of evidencing and articulating their developing skills in their on-campus roles.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed one university's experience with growing and strategically supporting the development of graduate employability through the provision of on-campus employment for students as support staff in higher education. Using a self-guided critical reflection framework, the authors have explored the key challenges and opportunities in providing on-campus employment through peer program roles at the University of Tasmania. The formation of a designated student employment team has been instrumental in ensuring the success of on-campus student employment as an educative experience for all involved. The development of consistent, transparent, and equitable recruitment practices, supported by well-informed and developed educative resources, has ensured that on-campus employment is more than a financial benefit. The authors have recognized the value of clear articulation about the rationale and function of student staff roles in institutional policies and processes, including Enterprise Bargaining Agreements. They have described the approaches taken to ensure professional learning is existent in the recruitment processes for student staff and their supervisors. Consideration was also given to ways to best assist student employees to articulate the benefits and professional learning they achieve through on-campus employment. Importantly, this chapter has highlighted the role that student staff can play in supporting learning and teaching in higher education with particular attention to the value of the student staff population who are in the unique position of viewing the institution through a service recipient lens as well as an employee lens. When these opinions are sought and valued, it enables the institution, and programs within, to be more informed, agile, and responsive to the broader student population.

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