Leadership Development for Women

Leadership Development for Women (LDW) aims to improve the status, career development and decision making contribution of women at CSU. This is achieved through supporting women to further develop their leadership skills and by encouraging cultural change towards organisational and management practices that value and are more inclusive of diversity, and that actively seek the input and perspective of women.

The Leadership Development for Women Steering Committee

The Leadership Development for Women Steering Committee serves as a forum for the identification and consideration of issues in regard to women and leadership and recommends strategies that support the inclusion of women's contributions to leadership within CSU. It designs, implements, supports and reviews leadership development opportunities for women and aspiring leaders at CSU. Leadership Development for Women programs are designed to build trust, networking between participants and leadership capabilities. The Committee is represented on the University Equity and Diversity Committee. The Committee from time to time works collaboratively with the Senior Women’s Forum that represents all CSU women and is comprised of women at Academic levels D and above and Professional staff Level 10 and above.

Committee membership

The Committee meets quarterly although there may be additional meetings under special circumstances. Committee members are expected to attend all meetings and may be asked to represent the Committee on other relevant CSU working groups or committees. Their membership may also involve assessment of potential Committee membership applications, LDW Program applications and small grant and scholarship applications. The Committee has Terms of Reference.

Leadership Development Opportunities for Women at CSU

The following opportunities are coordinated and delivered by the LDW Steering Committee.

- Introduction to Leadership Development for Women Program – An entry level leadership program offered biennially
- Small Grants Program- available to LDWP alumni to support the organisation of events to support the development of women or profile women's issues
- Leadership Development for Women conference – offered biennially (alternate years to the Program)
- Activities for Senior Women Leaders
- Scholarships
- Mentoring

Introduction to Leadership Development for Women Program
Background

Gender equity in the workforce and in the academic sector has been an issue for many years, and in 2005 CSU took concerted steps to address this issue by offering a leadership development program for women in response to issues raised and discussion arising from a Vice-Chancellors Forum and the Stepping Out Program for Women. The numbers of women in senior positions at CSU in 2005 were well below their male counterparts, for example, 3 per cent of women were employed at academic level E compared to 8% of men, and 2% of women were employed at HEW10+ compared to 8% of men. Another way of looking at this is that in 2005 19% of Academic E positions were filled by women, and 27% of HEW10+ Professional staff were filled by women. This is despite women being in the majority of both staff and students.

In 2006 CSU offered the LDW program for the first time as one of the strategies aimed at increasing women’s representation in leadership and management roles at CSU. This concern paralleled international concern regarding poorer remuneration for women compared to men, and fewer women at senior and executive levels. These issues are still current. The CSU LDW program was modelled on a program developed for, and by, the University of Western Australia (UWA) in 1994 and delivered on an ongoing basis not only at UWA but to a range of other universities (e.g. CSU, University of Tasmania, Newcastle University) and government departments. The UWA program, an affirmative action program, has its origins in a vision to redress longstanding disadvantage for women in universities (de Vries 2005). The need for this kind of program had been identified in Australia and worldwide as a positive way to address the underrepresentation of women in senior academic and professional staff positions (Harris & Leberman 2012). The LDW program offered to CSU from 2006-2013 had dual aims: to provide leadership development for individual women and to contribute to changing the broader management and University culture (de Vries 2005). During this period the Program was facilitated and delivered by consultants from UWA.

From 2015 the Program has been delivered by CSU Human Resources, with some significant changes in frequency of interaction between participants and Program coordinator and the inclusion of action learning project teams. As of 2017 a total of 203 academic and professional women have completed the Program.

The LDW Program (Leadership Development for Women) is for existing and aspiring women leaders at CSU. The program is suitable for Academic (Level B and above) and Professional/General Staff (level 6 and above) who have experience in leading and managing people, programs, systems and processes. Applicants must hold a continuing appointment or fixed-term appointment. The program emphasises the theory and practice of leading mindfully and gendered and ethical leadership in the context of personal and professional behaviour. Participants in the program will study as part of a supervised and supported group cohort with other CSU employees. The Program is delivered from May to November and places are limited to 25.

The Program is delivered using online and face to face modalities. There are six elements that make up the Program:
1. Face to face workshops (3)
2. Online sessions
3. Interact2 learning site
4. Personality typing
5. Mentoring
6. Action learning project teams and reflective learning

An evaluation of the Program 2006-2012 was undertaken in 2013 by Dr Penny Davidson. The aim was to evaluate CSU’s LDW program with respect to benefits or outcomes that accrue to the participants and organisation (Davidson, 2013). An evaluation of the programs delivered by CSU Human Resources in 2015 and 2017 was conducted by Dr Davidson to identify potential improvements to the program, and to better communicate the value of the program (Davidson, 2018).