Mentoring Spotlight

The Graduate School of Government welcomes its new mentors to the mentoring program of the Graduate Diploma in Public Administration. Recent additions to the list of mentors include Geoff Baldwin, Monica Barone, Ray Donovan, Karen Edwards, Paul Ellis, Chris Ford, Patricia Forsythe, Elaine Henry, Sue Lenehan, Raj Logaraj, David Morris, Andrew Refshauge, David Richmond, Phil Sidoti, Mark Skidmore and Wendy Stamp. Many of the new mentors to the program had met their first students at the annual Graduate School of Government Mentor Function which took place on March 19.

The function held at the university, was honoured by the attendance of Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor New South Wales and Chancellor of the University of Sydney.

The Mentor Function which brings together mentors with the new cohort of students was the latest occasion to bring the GSG mentoring program into the spotlight.

In the past two months, the mentoring program has come to public attention with two articles appearing in the press and another on the homepage of the University of Sydney website. The two articles appeared in The Australian, 18 February, and The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 March.

The articles focussed upon what was seen as a unique mentoring relationship between former NSW Government Minister, Leader of the House, Hon. John Aquilina and Rwandan Master of Public Administration student, Alex Semarinyota. Highlighting the particular difficulties of public administration in Rwanda, Alex and John were able to give insight to the GSG mentoring program as part of both the Master and Graduate Diploma in Public Administration.

The appearance of the program in the national press had coincided with a review of mentoring following the feedback from current mentors. The review led to new developments to the mentoring program, of which the first initiative was the publishing of the Mentoring Guidelines.

Whilst the mentor relationship can seem like an abstract concept, the Mentoring Guidelines looked to define the mentoring process between the student and mentor. Mentoring gives the opportunity for student-directed learning opportunities where the student contributes directly to the learning objectives and parameters of the relationship. Mentoring will bring real life experience to the academic contact of the course.

Following the publication of the guidelines, GSG hosted a Mentor Information Session. The session was led by Jon Isaacs with Michael Eyers and John Aquilina. The mentors shared insights gained from their previous mentoring experience with a focus on the mentor/mentee relationship. It gave an opportunity for all mentors to discuss the challenges of being a mentor with a focus towards developing this part of the Graduate Diploma program.

The Mentor Information Session was followed by the annual Mentor Function. Professor Geoff Gallop, Director GSG, invited the Governor and Chancellor to speak. Her Excellency spoke of the importance of mentoring to career development. The Governor was followed by Brad Fitzmaurice representing the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Professor Derrick Armstrong on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney.

The function which brings together students, mentors, alumni and practitioners from the public and private sectors, celebrated the start of the new academic year with its new cohort of students and new mentors, all promising to bring the GSG towards its goal of excellence in public administration.
In co-operation with ALP International Projects the GSG has delivered another Political Advisers’ Course for twenty senior advisers from the Asia Pacific Region in February 2009.

The course involved visits to federal and state ministerial offices and to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The program focussed on leadership, strategic government, political research and communication, issues management, community engagement and consultation, and the administration of a political office.

Participants represented political parties from Timor Leste, South Korea, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cook Islands and Cambodia.

A cocktail reception was held to open the week long course and was attended by Abel Guterres, High Commissioner Timor-Leste and Federal MP Duncan Kerr, Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs.

During the week Professor Geoff Gallop and Stephen Mills from the GSG delivered lectures. Invited lectures were delivered by Hon. Kim Beazley, LT. Gen. John Sanderson, Dennis Glover, John Utting, and Tim Gartrell.

The course is part of the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program.
Alumni and Practitioners’ Networking Function

Hosted by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, the annual function was held on 13 November 2008.
Graduation and an Alumna Honoured

The 2008 graduation ceremony of students from the Graduate School of Government and Australian and New Zealand School of Government was celebrated on October 10. The ceremony was held to confer the Graduate Diploma and Master of Public Administration and the ANZSOG Executive Master of Public Administration.

Many of the Graduate Diploma graduates had commenced their studies in 2007 and after a year and a half of study the graduates knew that they had received more than just a degree.

Shane White (NSW Police) said that not only did he get to know a fair bit more about how the world of public administration works, he saw the benefit to his own career and the benefit to the organisation.

Anne Ratu (Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal) said of the course that she gained new skills directly relevant to her job that lead to a promotion, that the Graduate Diploma encourages a better understanding of “big picture” public service issues and a new network of friends in other Government agencies.

David Lunn (LegalAid) also saw the benefits of the friendships developed. It was an enlightening experience topped off by creating a new network of Public Service professionals.

This year the GSG ceremony also included a return of one of its alumni, Master of Public Administration graduate Jane Spring. The title of Honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon Jane by the Chancellor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir.

The citation read, for nearly two decades Jane Spring has been an inspiration and an example to the University community of how to meet and triumph over adversity and face disability with courage, determination and intelligence. Her story and her accomplishments personify Sydney University’s central ideals and vision.

The full text of the citation can be found at: http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/HonSpring.shtml

Alumni and Practitioners’ Network

GSG continues to support all former ANZSOG and GSG students through the Alumni and Practitioners’ Network. The Network is a lifelong community that connects students, mentors and teaching staff throughout the government, industry and education sectors.

Register and Update Online

Former students can become a part of the GSG Alumni and Practitioners’ Network by registering your details online at the University of Sydney Alumni Web portal. The portal can also be used to update your details as well.

http://www.usyd.edu.au/alumni/

When updating your details, ensure that a current email address is provided. Many invitations to functions and events are sent out by email through our Alumni and Practitioners’ Network.

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